

The Good Sight



January 2023 | www.thegoodsight.org

Champions of Change

*A smile as bright as
her future*

Photo by Muhammad Ali Zaidi

The Good Sight

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Creating a better world for all

Dear Reader,

The world is facing an unprecedented set of challenges, from poverty and inequality to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. But even in the darkest of times, there are always shining lights of hope and inspiration that remind us that another world is possible. This special issue “Champions Of Change” is dedicated to shining a spotlight on some of the most inspiring and impactful non-profits and social enterprises working to achieve the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These organizations are true champions of change, working tirelessly to make the world a better place for all. They are tackling some of the most pressing issues of our time, from fighting poverty and hunger to promoting education and gender equality, to protecting the environment and combatting climate change. They are doing this work in some of the most challenging and difficult conditions, often with limited resources, but always with a deep commitment to making a difference.

These organizations are not only making a difference in the lives of the people they serve, but they are also leading the way in terms of innovative solutions, sustainable practices, and impactful

partnerships. They are examples of how, when we come together, we can achieve so much more than we ever could alone.

At a time when many of us are feeling overwhelmed by the scale of the challenges we face, it is important to remember that we are not alone. These organizations are proof that there are people out there who are working hard every day to make a difference. They are proof that change is possible and that, together, we can create a more just and equitable world for all.

We hope that this special issue of The Good Sight e-magazine will inspire you to learn more about these organizations and to find ways to support their work. Whether it’s through volunteering, donating, or simply spreading the word about their mission and impact, there are many ways to make a difference.

Happy reading!

Editors

Asit Srivastava
Arnav Sinha

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Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: The Missing Ingredient

NIPUN aims to ensure universal FLN by 2026-27, but are our current reforms sufficient to reach this ambitious goal? Or are we missing something important?

A Literacy Crisis of Huge Proportions

Despite increasing recognition of the importance of literacy, children’s literacy rates are at a historic low, thanks to Covid-induced huge disruptions and lengthy school closures. World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF estimate 70% of

10-year-olds in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) are unable to read, write, and do basic arithmetic. In South Asia, the loss has been even more severe – some 78% of children are in learning poverty.¹

“We are looking at a nearly insurmountable scale of loss to children’s schooling,” says Robert

Jenkins, UNICEF Chief of Education, “Just reopening schools is not enough. Students need intensive support to recover lost education.”²

To understand why these low levels of learning are an emergency, we must recognize that global education levels in LMICs were low even before Covid: learning poverty rose from 53% in 2015 to

57% by 2019.³ Going back to ‘business as usual’ is not an option. Indeed, hundreds of millions of children are in danger of being lost to education altogether – with serious social, economic, and political consequences.

NIPUN Bharat and Pathway to Universal FLN by 2026/27



Children learn better through cognition. They also learn better when they take turns and work interactively with each other in a pair. Children of Shravasti, UP, in initial trial of the ALfA pedagogy.

Thankfully, India’s New Education Policy 2020 accords FLN the highest priority. The National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) aims to reach universal FLN from Balvatika to Grade 3 students by 2026-27.

This has led to a flurry of school reforms nationwide including the following:

- *Detailed prescriptions.* Specific instructions for every period including time for learning, revision and practice in pairs and groups
- *Curriculum Add-on’s.* Elaborate workbooks for every child, supplementary hands-on learning materials (like shapes and currency cards), storybooks and print-rich environments
- *Testing and Remedial Measures.* Weekly testing on the key skills supposed to have been learnt, and use the test results to take remedial action in ability-based groups
- *Training.* More intensive teacher training, and provision of detailed and visual teacher guides
- *Supervision & Monitoring.* More rigorous

‘supportive supervision’ and use of innovative apps to monitor practice and teacher attendance

- *Systemic Change.* Appointment of more supervisory staff, and centralized policy and other changes at the system-wide level

What Trajectory Will Ensure India Is Literate By 2026-27?

Despite putting our best foot forward, we have not been able to reach pre-COVID levels one year after schools opened. ASER 2022 report released in January 2023 states that children’s basic reading ability has dropped to ‘pre-2012 levels’, reversing the slow improvement achieved in the intervening years.

What type of trajectory would be required to achieve the FLN goals – all children being able to read, write and do basic arithmetic by 2026-27? To grow from our current 40% of Grade 5 children to universal FLN in four years, a cursory analysis would suggest we need to move

¹World Bank. 2022. *The State of Learning Poverty: 2022 Update*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e52f55322528903b27f1b7e61238e416-0200022022/original/Learning-poverty-report-2022-06-21-final-V7-0-conferenceEdition.pdf>

²UNICEF. 2022. *Scale of Education Loss Nearly Insurmountable, Warns UNICEF*. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid19-scale-education-loss-nearly-insurmountable-warns-unicef>

³World Bank. 2022. *The State of Learning Poverty: 2022 Update*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e52f55322528903b27f1b7e61238e416-0200022022/original/Learning-poverty-report-2022-06-21-final-V7-0-conferenceEdition.pdf>

with great speed to 55%, 70%, 85% and 100% respectively from the 2023-24 session to the 2026-27 session. If we think of Grade 3 children reaching the NIPUN skills, we have to move up a much steeper trajectory at a much faster pace. Are the current measures enough? Are the directions we are taking today sufficient to lead us out of literacy poverty? Maybe, we need to be far more circumspect.

We also need to go back to the drawing board and ask some bold new questions.

1. Are the measures given above both necessary and sufficient to reach the NIPUN goal of universal FLN by 2026-27?
2. What have been the gains this academic year when the entire nation has been working their utmost best, and when it has been India's topmost priority in education post-Covid?
3. How are we going to achieve what we could not accomplish historically in the past decades, when the best historical efforts could only reach FLN to 50% of the children after five years of schooling?
4. What pace of progress do we need now to reach universal FLN in the next four years?
5. What new policies and measures can drastically improve FLN now and change the direction of education?

Let's accept that refinement of the old is not going to work. Education as in the past has had its day. We need new design thinking, new ground-breaking and transformative education that can forever change the fortunes of our children, and make the schooling experience far more empowering for the teacher and the taught. Let such a new education not just deliver on academic skills quickly, but also empower the children with real 6C Skills of the 21st Century: Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Character and Citizenship. These are important outcomes of education in India's New Education Policy 2020.⁴



Children are more engaged when they work without direction and constant vigil of the teacher. Here the children of Shamli schools are learning in pairs. The program has been supported by M3M Foundation.

⁴https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

Let's acknowledge that the old processes are incapable of delivering on the 6Cs. These were designed for an age gone by, for fulfilling the needs of employers in a rapidly industrializing 19th century. Our schools are still working with teacher-led, though often child-centric processes such as more joyful hands-on learning, and children often working in groups and pairs. However, rote learning and teacher-led environments still dominate. It is hard to break the old moulds. We no longer need even the finest of landline phones. We need instead, the smart phone. For this, we need to think dramatically differently.

Not only in the NEP 2020, as early as 1986, India's National Policy on Education stated: "The most important aspect of this reform will be to make education a joyful, inventive and satisfying learning activity, rather than a system of rote."⁵

Ensuring Inputs versus Driving Outcomes

The reforms above are often inputs. They are fine-tuning and incremental changes to the archaic education system – new worksheets, more teacher training, more supervisors, more monitoring, and

⁵https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/npe.pdf

the like. With the teachers being held accountable on the detailed prescriptions, for example, what they do in every period, teachers do not have the time to think, or the freedom to deliver on outcomes.

Imagine the drastic change from a landline to a smartphone – nobody uses a landline anymore! But in education, we remain stuck with the landline: most of our pedagogy is outdated. It is as if we have polished the landline, given it some new buttons – group work, technology in the classroom – but the core remains unchanged. Imagine yourself as a cook who is given an extremely detailed recipe. If you follow it correctly, how will you feel if the dish is still not satisfactory? Instead, let us hold the cook accountable for the outcome, and like the master chefs who choose their own ingredients, deliver on a wonderful meal. This would surely foster the teachers' sense of professionalism and creativity. The same goes for accountability and supervision instead of measuring a to-do list, measure outcomes—how are the children performing on the different goals of NIPUN Bharat, and assist teachers with becoming more innovative with new, more disruptive ideas for change, more sessions for teachers to share with each other their classroom successes, and more. Other input-based prescriptions may also lack the desired

outcome. A print-rich environment is helpful – but how much can it achieve when children are unable to decipher the text? Regular testing can be useful – but merely grouping 'weak' children together may be counterproductive.⁶ Sorting children as 'remedial' can weaken their self-esteem, and become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Without new systemic changes, attempts at tinkering around the edges may amount to little more than a band-aid. Transformative change is urgently needed, no longer incremental change.

The Missing Ingredient: Pedagogical Transformation

Could it be that the detailed recipe we gave the cook is missing a key ingredient? Pedagogy. The way we teach, is at least as important as the books we use to teach, but is often taken for granted. Consider how reading is taught. India's schools continue to use whole language, even though the world's largest meta-analysis of research by Prof. John Hattie shows phonics works far better.⁷ Whole language emphasizes sight words. Using whole language approach, it takes one year or more to teach 'swar' and 'vyanjan', and another year or more to teach 'matras'. It is three years before many children can read full text, and even after five years of schooling, by their 10th birthday, over half of children cannot read with understanding.

ALFA Transformation: Beyond FLN in 45 Days

A new disruptive approach is ensuring children are learning the foundational skills in a mere 45 days.



Learning by themselves in Shamli. When the electricity did not work, they went under the trees and sat on pavement but learning in pairs did not stop. Many teachers initially thought it would be impossible to get the children of Grades 1 to work in pairs but soon they began to believe they can. Changing beliefs is one of the outcomes of ALFA. Not only can little children work without a teacher's help, they can also learn to read a newspaper in just 30 days. Teachers changed their beliefs once they saw the rapid learning by their children.

⁶Bright Hub Education. 2008. *The Pros and Cons of Ability Grouping*. <https://www.brighthouseeducation.com/classroom-management/19620-pros-and-cons-of-ability-grouping/>

⁷Hattie, John. 2018. *Visible Learning*. <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>

The Secretary, MOE, invited DEVI Sansthan in 2022 to work on FLN in two of India's Low-Performing Districts: Sambalpur in Odisha and Shamli in Uttar Pradesh. The results from the field were so compelling that after 30-school-days, the DM Shamli asked DEVI to expand its work from 20 to 290 schools (80 of these in the control group). Within 5 months of starting implementation, DEVI Sansthan received an MOU from office of the Director-General for School Education to work in 15 of the 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh, in some 3000 schools.

In this unique approach called ALfA—Accelerating Learning for all, the children work in pairs as the entire modality for learning. They take turns to ask each other questions, decode and blend sounds to make words from the very first lesson. There is no need to learn the letters of the alphabet first – this saves a year or more. In this process, they learn 10 letters a day instead of 1 letter a week. In ten to fifteen days, the children not only master the letters in this upside-down manner and by working in pairs on their own, they also read some 400 words.

The lessons unfold easily for the children as the pedagogy is based entirely on going from known to unknown. Teachers do not need to interfere, teach, or facilitate. They need to demonstrate



Signing of MOU with Shri Vijay Kiran Anand, Director-General for School Education, UP in November 2022 to work in 15 districts of UP.

the lesson and what the children are expected to do. They prepare the environment and motivate. They act as 'galvanisers' to a pair-led discovery process. Children use visuals from their daily life

as provided in the modules of the ALfA booklets like batak (known) and derive its first sound /b/ (also known). They then blend first sounds of two or more objects to make words from day one. It

is interesting to note as our research shows: The children begin to associate with the unknown sound symbols very quickly.

In numeracy, ALfA adopts a concrete-to-abstract approach: children use manipulables like ice-cream sticks and matchsticks. They make or bring their own counters: leaves, pebbles, buttons, crumpled paper balls, and develop initiative, resourcefulness, and creativity.

Three Thin Booklets to FLN—that's all

There are three thin booklets that enable the children to quickly acquire the FLN skills: Reading (28 pages), Writing (12 pages) and Numeracy (28 pages).

The lessons are presented in half or one-page modules that are visual and easy for the children to understand by themselves. Teachers use the prompts provided at the bottom of each module to demonstrate the tasks for the pairs. Learning explodes. Children make questions for each other, and learn crucial critical thinking skills and creativity. They write more than in the traditional system. A starting point to making questions is given in the prompts. Teachers learn valuable skills on the job and learn-by-implementing change. Children learn all 6C skills by design.



It is a winning proposition when the booklets are thin. The children ask, "Is this all? We can do these in no time!" Pink book is for reading, blue for writing and green for numeracy.

Children enjoy taking responsibility for each other's learning. One makes a question, the other answers, then they reverse roles. There is random pairing, not pairing by performance level, nor grouping by ability. Children change pairs every day to learn the 6Cs.



The ALfA process is not only more enjoyable but learning also explodes. Primary-aged children can now learn basic FLN skills in just 90 working days on average. This is the kind of speed that will ensure every child in India and worldwide is reading, writing and doing arithmetic above grade level – within weeks and months, not years.

Speed Matters Most

One wonderful official was heard saying to one of our colleagues, “Why are you in such a hurry. We have until 2026/27!” What will happen to that child today in Grade 5 who is likely to drop out in Grade 6 without requisite foundational skills today? We don’t only need all hands on the deck but we also need to disruptive new pedagogies that can demonstrate massive impact in a short time.

Two ‘speeds’ that matter the most are:

- The speed with which children learn the FLN skills. It cannot be three to five years to learn to read and write, for example.
- The speed with which the governments embrace the disruptive methods. Old methods that take time to deliver on FLN need to give way to the new methods in a system-wide systemic change.

It is worth quoting here at length from a World Bank report:⁸

“Without recovery measures, learning losses may grow even more after children return to school, if the curriculum and teaching do not adjust to meet students’ learning needs. As students fall further behind the curriculum, the risk grows that many will become disengaged and ultimately drop out of school... Actions that countries take in the short term—even over just the next year—could therefore make a big difference for the longer-term learning trajectory of a generation at risk. Without action, the current generation of students now risks losing \$21 trillion in lifetime earnings in present value, or the equivalent of 17 percent of today’s global GDP.”

Embracing the ‘New’

Whenever something ‘new’ comes up, the ‘experts’ dismiss it. How many innovations we use today have had their critics who dismissed them for one reason or the other?

We need to be circumspect about:

- About ‘assuming’ what will work without evidence of its efficacy
- About ‘historical’ claims without dramatic impact on learning levels
- Shunning what ‘challenges’ established practices

Instead, we need to think afresh and trial the

new, just like we embraced the mobile phone and shunned the old landline phone. Mobile phones are doing a lot more than just connecting the world, they are completely changing the fundamentals of how we live.

NGOs need the opportunity to scale-up idea-in-action that are supported by evidence. A better enabling environment will truly help, for example, removal of overlapping teacher mandates, and a clearer path to scaling up those ideas that work at a district or wider level. Though they can leverage change, act as catalyst, or knowledge partners, NGOs cannot create the volume of change that a system-wide approach can create. Even the biggest NGOs in India continue to labour away as they have done for years and decades.

We need widespread change today by the acceleration of disruptive approaches to education’s transformation and measure 10x impact at the system-wide level, not 10%.

⁸World Bank. 2022. *The State of Learning Poverty: 2022 Update*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e52f55322528903b27f1b7e61238e416-0200022022/original/Learning-poverty-report-2022-06-21-final-V7-0-conferenceEdition.pdf>

The ALfA Program is

- **Swift and Effective**—2 periods a day for 45 school days (<9% of a year’s academic time)
- **Zero to Low cost**—Online version is free, printed version is low-cost (see Special Features below)
- **Quickly replicable in a new language**—takes just a month (currently available in 14 Indian and 15 International languages)
- **Expanding quickly**—from 20 schools to 290 schools in 1 district, to 3000 schools in 15 districts within 5 months of starting the program in UP

It took 8 years of trial and error to come with ALfA’s disruptive pedagogy by working in the slums and villages of Lucknow, leading to its first implementation in government schools by governments own teachers in 2022.

ALfA addresses:

- Gender equality
- Climate Change

ALfA’s Special Features are:

- Three very thin booklets 28-12-28 pages for FLN—reduces impact on climate
- Two children share the same set—halves the number of booklets required
- Schools keep the booklets—used for two or more years if maintained
- Workbooks are not required—saves tons of paper year after year
- Hands-on learning materials use recycled materials like newspaper, fallen leaves, beans, ice cream sticks—no plastic materials



Children learning FLN the ALfA Way in the Low Performing District of Sambalpur in Odisha.



These three thin booklets have the potential to make India literate and numerate in months, not years.



Two children share one book between them. Once they have understood their task is, they set aside the book and carry on with the learning with each other, taking turns to learn-by-doing.

Calls to Action

It is time to shift the focus towards outcomes – ensuring that all children learn the foundational skills – and help teachers adopt innovative approaches that accelerate learning for all. The program is available in 14 Indian and another 15 International languages including Swahili, French, Arabic and Spanish. The ALfA Toolkits can be replicated into any language within a month. We invite governments at all levels to implement:

Call to Action 1:

“Beyond-FLN-in-45-Days” Challenge

Using the 45*45 approach to ALfA’s implementation below, government schools have been going beyond NIPUN goals in 45-school-days for Kindergarten (Balvatika) to Grade 5. In another 45-school-days, the children have completed their textbooks.

- **45 minutes per day:** Spend just one period a day on either of literacy and numeracy, or two periods a day for both literacy and numeracy
- **45 instructional days:** Implement for 45 instructional days (with training and pre-test prior to implementation and a post-test after 45 days)

This may be implemented in a smaller or larger geography, at district levels, or as system-wide systemic reform at the State level. In UP, for

example, we grew in less than 5 months from 10 implementation + 10 control schools in mid-August to 290 (210+80) schools by 10 October, and from 290 schools in 1 district to an MOU with UP to work in 3000 schools in 15 districts by 20 November. DEVI already began with its 45-Day Challenge in three of the 15 districts of UP allocated to it, starting with training on 23 and 24 January 2023 near the end of the school year. The stakes in implementing ALfA are low. Two periods per day for 45 days represents just 9% of a year’s academic time (2 periods per day out of 6, 45 days out of 180). This minimal time investment can leverage the remaining 90% plus of learning at any level of implementation. In another 45 days, and often in less time, the children complete with greater understanding their own textbooks. They work in pairs and make questions for each other. They learn the 6C skills of the 21st Century: Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Character and Citizenship.

In another 45 days after ALfA’s implementation in Shamli, for example, not only did attendance improve, but many teachers also completed their entire year’s coursework over the next 45 days—in 90-school-days, or half the time they would have taken over a year (*Watch video ‘Beyond NIPUN Goals in 45 Days’ and other evidence and testimonies on www.YouTube.com/links*).

Call to Action 2:

Massive Open Online Training—MOOT

*3957 government teachers of Balvatika to Grade 5 being trained by DEVI Sansthan to carry out one-of-its-kind door-to-door literacy survey of 396,000 households covering 1.5 million 6–60-year-olds in 2015. This led to mainstreaming of 10,000 children, publishing of two policy reports and a research article in *Illiteracy Inequalities in Economic and Political Weekly of India**



Tom Delaney, DEVI Volunteer and Trainer, fielding questions from the trainees at the two-day teacher empowerment of teachers from three districts of UP 23-24 January, 2023.



It's literacy hands-on learning-by-doing. Teachers were engaged and empowered by the recent most training in January 2023. Immediately following the training, most of them have started to work with ALfA in their classes from the next day onwards.

Transforming teacher belief and practice are both important. DEVI Sansthan has developed a one-day free online training program for the training of the nation's teachers on a massive scale, and also teachers from across the world.

DEVI Sansthan has launched Massive Open

Online Training in 2023. An open online course was provided to 1500 school heads, MOE staff and teachers of the Maldives at the end of September 2022 as a pre-cursor to the MOOT launch in 2023. We also trained 1200 teachers of three districts in UP on 23 and 24 January, 2023, to develop a large-scale model of teaching. Our

First MOOT will be launched in February 2023.

Besides MOOT, a MOOC—Massive Open Online Course for teachers is underway for learning in asynchronous mode in their own time. We are seeking partners for this development.



Honouring of Shri Ravindra Kumar Baliyan, Headmaster, PS Kairi, Shamli, and Shri Arvind Kumar Baliyan, Teacher, Grade 2, also from PS Kairi by Shri Alok Ranjan, Former Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, 24 January 2023.



A 78-member delegation of school heads and MOE staff from the Republic of Maldives in India studying the ALfA pedagogy hands-on, September 2022.

Training methodology includes empowerment in new and advanced processes of ALfA FLN implementation that the teachers can put to use immediately. It will empower teachers with a free online dashboard along with resources and processes they can use right-away to improve FLN levels.

DEVI Sansthan invites all governments to sign up for the free MOOT:

- a) All teachers of Balvatika to Grade 5 at government and budget private schools
- b) Principals and School Heads
- c) Government Middle-Level Managers like BSAs, SRGs, DCs, ARPs, BEOs, BRCCs, and others

India can reach NIPUN goals within 2023. Reach out today to work together for a fully literate India within months, not years. We look forward to our partnership.

Dr Sunita Gandhi

Founder-CEO, DEVI Sansthan, India
Former Economist, The World Bank, USA
PhD (Physics), Cambridge University, UK
Chief Academic Advisor, City Montessori School
(world's largest school)

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About DEVI Sansthan

DEVI Sansthan, based in Lucknow, UP, works on FLN both nationally and internationally. DEVI started its work on literacy in 2014 by creating its first Global Dream Toolkit which allowed a volunteer student as young as ten, to adopt a learner of any age and teach them to read within a month. Over 500,000 student volunteers from across India used the toolkits to teach someone (in 13 Indian languages before the Covid). During the Covid years, DEVI developed two important Ed-Tech solutions—the Pragati and the Literacy Now Apps.

In India, since 2022 DEVI Sansthan has been working with government schools in UP, Odisha, and Mizoram, and on women and adult literacy with foundations in West Bengal and UP.

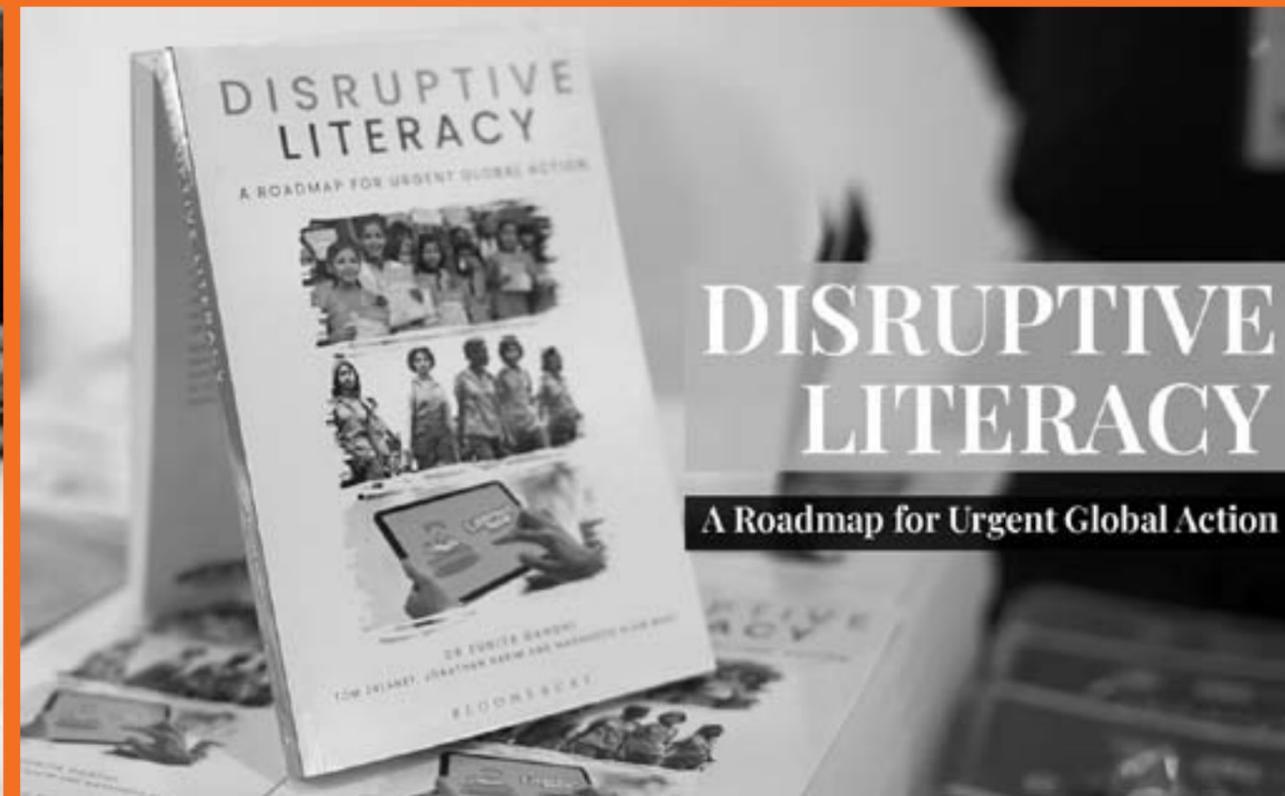
Internationally, DEVI has been working since 2022 at FLN implementation system-wide national level in the Maldives, and at pilot levels in several countries.

In July 2022, DEVI Sansthan held a Synergy Summit in Delhi for Stakeholders in FLN.

www.dignityeducation.org/links
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A private school student volunteer (on the right) teaching a child from a nearby slum. Children have been provided uniforms and lunch. They are learning literacy skills using the mobile app supported by SBI Foundation.



DISRUPTIVE LITERACY

A Roadmap for Urgent Global Action

DEVI Founder and members also launched: Disruptive Literacy: A Roadmap for Urgent Global Action, published by Bloomsbury, India, July 2022.



Supporting communities in rising out of poverty.

Creating pathways to prosperity

Trickle Up's programs prioritize empowering women to identify new income streams and build a sustainable pathway out of poverty



Trickle Up Partners with women to forge resilient pathways out of poverty.



Trickle Up's Graduation program prioritizes empowering women.

Women living in extreme poverty are vulnerable to income, health, climate, social shocks with limited scope to mitigate the consequences.

Trickle Up's mission is to partner with them to build economic opportunity and drive inclusion. Its work is anchored in the belief of creating sustainable and scalable change. It is built on robust evidence from the field of Graduation and the organization's decades of experience across different geographies and partnering with different populations.

By 2030, Trickle Up will have reached 5 million people living in extreme poverty by delivering programming to a total of 1 million women. For the last 43 years, Trickle Up has been investing in the process of identifying people living in extreme poverty and to design social interventions to put an end to their cycle of poverty. Often, this segment of the population is ignored because of high risk of investment and perceived low returns.

Trickle Up's programs package livelihoods support, financial inclusion, social inclusion, and social safety nets, which Trickle Up has adapted from the tested Graduation Approach. Trickle Up's programs are time-bound interventions that

combine livelihood development, savings, and social protection.

In India, Trickle Up works in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, serving 29,655 people directly as project participants, with a reach of 184,205 people in rural areas that are often home to many members of scheduled castes and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Trickle Up's programs prioritize empowering women to identify new income streams and build a sustainable pathway out of poverty.

At the close of the "Pathways out of Poverty" project, 900 participating households, on average, performed 3.7 livelihood activities each (activity diversification is a crucial factor in building resilience to setbacks), and 95% of participating women had at least two means of generating income. Besides, annual household income from all sources increased by more than 160%. Greater economic stability from diverse and remunerative livelihoods and access to savings and credit significantly decreased distress migration amongst people, including those searching for wage labor, often in undignified, dangerous, and ill-paid tasks. The project also allowed women to engage in economic activities

requiring year-round attention and their children remained in school.

Interestingly, almost all participating households had savings at the project close. Their debt to moneylenders reduced precipitously, and their families' food consumption improved (in regularity, variety, and quality).

Of tremendous importance, women reported playing a significant role in household decision-making by the close of the project. In turn, they felt more valued by their community, took pride in earning income and paying off debt, and enjoyed enough latitude to be creative in their daily lives.

Trickle Up India Foundation has been supported by Tata Communications and the Walmart Foundation to implement the MPOWERED project (2,800 participants) and the Ultra-Poor Market Access project (1,000 participants), respectively. Trickle Up's field-based partner NGOs are Lokadrusti, Mahashakti Foundation, Nirman, Sewa, Nydhee (in Odisha), Pravah and Srijan in Jharkhand. Furthermore, Trickle Up has capacity building partnerships with SEWA and Pravah.

Like most non-profit organizations Trickle

Up is dedicated to diminishing risks and uncertainties to the continuity of its work, especially with regards to funding and staffing. Funding opportunities are becoming increasingly competitive and unpredictable. Secondly, attracting and retaining high quality staff is the backbone to any successful program.

Trickle Up is also aware of and exposed to



"No Poverty" is the primary goal that guides Trickle Up's work.



In India, Trickle Up works in Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.

external risks such as climate change and exogenous global shocks, like the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, working in Odisha and Jharkhand makes climate change an immediate concern as both regions are disaster prone and communities living in extreme poverty are at highest risk, which can slow program delivery. However, Trickle Up continues to explore mitigation strategies to effectively offset these risks and ensure continuity for its participants. In line with 2030 global agreements, Trickle Up has ensured that its work connects to and strengthens the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to tackle some of the world's most urgent problems.

SDG Linkages

SDG 1: "No Poverty" is the primary goal that guides Trickle Up's work. While working with populations in extreme poverty requires more resource-intensive programs, Trickle Up is determined to reach these populations to create longer lasting and more resilient transformations in people's lives.



SDG 2: "No Hunger" is a key part of sustainable pathways out of poverty. In order to meet their basic needs, Trickle Up's programs often connect participants to consumption support to eliminate food security as a worry and giving participants more opportunity to focus financial and physical resources on other needs. When participants have higher incomes, the first ensured outcome is essential nutrition and three meals daily.



SDG 3: At Trickle Up, "Good health and well-being" is critical to the success of any livelihood program. As participants living in extreme poverty have greater income, their overall wellbeing has time to flourish.



SDG 5: "Gender equality" is the lens through which Trickle Up designs all its programs. It is committed to enabling equitable gender parity at the ground level and up.



SDG 8: "Decent work and economic growth" is the founding principle upon which Trickle Up's programs guide participants to pathways out of poverty by engaging them in meaningful income-generating livelihood activities.



SDG 10: Trickle Up's effort to eradicate extreme poverty is one slice of "Reduced inequalities." Reducing the disparity between urban and rural populations while also ensuring a fairer market for marginalized communities is a component of Trickle Up's long-term programming.



Sushant Verma, Asia Regional Director, Trickle Up, underlines the importance of coaches, referring to them as 'Champions of Change'. He says, "The need-based tailored support provided by them not only ensures the well-being of participants, but their involvement at the village level developmental work has enabled them to take up leadership roles in their respective villages and Panchayats."

Strengthening schools as empowering spaces

The latest edition of Room to Read India's Girls Education Program reinforced the importance of creating spaces where girls can lead and represent themselves



Let me guide you on the right path.



She the power.

As a global organization, Room to Read works to develop literacy skills and reading habits in early graders and life skills in adolescent girls. In India, it directs its efforts towards literacy and gender equality in education.

The organization has been working on Indian soil since 2003. It has spread its roots to 12 states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi NCR, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

Over the past three years, the nationwide support for Room to Read India's Girls Education Program campaign, #HarKadamBetiKeSang, continues to grow multi-fold. This year, the organization is focused on understanding and measuring the safety and security of adolescent girls in schools. With this thought, this year's campaign is themed on the idea of School Se Sashakt Bane Hum (Strengthening Schools as safe spaces). The theme reiterates the belief that education can bring a fundamental change in realizing rights and aspirations in girls' life and ecosystem.

Initially rolled out during its national seminar on November 7, Life Skills Education: Education

and Empowerment, the campaign was a collective voice of the nation to understand and empower the school environment for young girls. The concerned organization also brought together multiple stakeholders to explore and address the safety, security, and related challenges for girls, in continuing their education.

To make the campaign a targeted and successful endeavor, Room to Read India has devised a safety mapping tool derived from the Government of India's Safety and Security Guidelines and published by the Department of School Education. Using the Safety mapping tool, the empowered Girls Education Program participants led the survey directly with the idea- 'for the girls, by the girls.' The campaign this year thus voiced one of the essential components of National Education Policy 2022, which talks about understanding the current status and the scope of improvement for the safety and security of young adolescent girls in the school.

Focusing on school as an institution and drivers of change toward closing the gender-related inequalities in society, Room to Read India strengthened the school as an empowering space for young girls to feel heard, enabled, and supported by their peers. It started the campaign by conducting a safety mapping exercise led



Connecting with confidence.

by girls in 9 Indian states to understand safety and enabling mechanisms input by the school authorities. Several on-ground workshops followed this to orient girls and community stakeholders on POCSO, positive discipline, and related issues.

Interestingly, Room to Read India organized a 'Kishori Mela' in all the intervention schools across 9 states. For this, activities were planned for girls and teachers around the theme #meraschool (my school) and #merijagah (my space). Finally, the campaign ended on a high note with a social media live event that reflected the insights from the campaign.

Through offline channels, the organization

reached more than 2 lakh people, from adolescent girls to parents, caregivers, teachers, and government officials across nine different states in India – Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, it gathered 1.85 lakh impressions online worldwide. The campaign, thus, supported positive steps toward a conducive environment by reaching out to the following multitude of stakeholders:

- 1,79,038 Adolescent girls**
- 10,842 Teachers**
- 9,255 Family and Community Stakeholders**
- 443 Government Officials**

Room to Read India consistently devises solutions to deal with the challenges for adolescent girls. In the future, its emphasis will continue to be on promoting a safer environment and empowering spaces through a multi-stakeholder engagement approach.

Through awareness generation campaigns, the organization plans to assess, adapt, and act on the pressing needs of young girls through life skills interventions and initiatives. Thus, the campaign will promote the cause by creating a mass movement for safety and security for young girls, driving action and investment from stakeholders in girls' agencies and aspirations.



‘At Room to Read India, we feel schools should be a guiding space for future women leaders. Schools should enable girls to think critically, develop character, and value relationships. Schools should be a space where they feel seen and heard.’

- Poornima Garg
Deputy Country Director
Room to Read India



Enjoying their rights.



Seeing the unseen... hearing the unspoken

This community-based health intervention by SNEHA is addressing psychological concerns among adolescents in urban informal settlements in Mumbai

Most mental disorders are often set during adolescence.



Sensitising the community on the ill-effects of child marriage through wall paintings.

“It is all about picking up the signs while being a good listener,” reflected Rupa, as she described her journey as a *HumRaahi* (co-traveller in English) – a barefoot counsellor addressing common mental health concerns among young people in urban informal settlements of Mumbai. Rupa has been a frontline worker with the Empowerment, Health and Sexuality (EHSAS) programme run by SNEHA, a secular non-profit organisation in Mumbai. While Rupa had been using a few mental health screening tools to assess psychological concerns among young people, this is the first time she went through a two-month long course to learn how she can provide psychosocial first aid and counselling post screening. There are 53 such *HumRaahis* who are currently providing psychosocial first aid to young people in their neighbourhoods. They go about quietly, explaining the significance of addressing these concerns to the parents of young people, even as they refer moderate and severe cases to clinical psychologists.

Addressing mental health concerns is important across the life-cycle. However, since most mental disorders in adults begin by the age of 25, and are often set during adolescence¹, it is a crucial developmental period for laying the foundation². The situation of young people in India is unique and grim. While every fifth person here is an

adolescent, various social determinants like poverty, gender-based discrimination and violence, child marriages, teenage pregnancies, child labour, peer pressure, bullying, various infectious diseases, poor hygiene and sanitation, has increased the risk and prevalence of mental distress and disorders. Suicide is the highest cause of mortality for this age group. India’s national mental health survey³ undertaken in 2015-16 showed that 7.3% young people aged 13-17 years (c. nine million) suffer from mental health problems and the prevalence is almost equal across boys and girls. These situations have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic⁴.

SNEHA’s programme facilitates comprehensive sexuality education with adolescents, with processes that involve providing community-based psychosocial support to adolescents in urban informal settlements in Dharavi and Kandivali in Mumbai and Kalwa in Thane district of Maharashtra. Non-specialist community workers use HEADSS⁵ Adolescent Psychosocial Assessment, Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) and RCADS⁶ for mental health screening. With 200 young people screened per month, approximately 40% indicate red flags prompting further diagnosis by clinical psychologists. Out of this 40%, 14-15% require



Raising awareness through street plays.

¹Patton G.C. et al. 2016. *Our future: A Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing in The Lancet* 387 (10036): p. 2423-2478

²Barry M.M. et al. 2013. *A systematic review of the effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions for young people in low and middle income countries in BMC Public Health*: p. 835

³Gururaj G, Varghese M, Benegal V, et al. 2016. *National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16: Prevalence, patterns and outcomes. NIMHANS Publication No. 129; Bengaluru, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences*

⁴<https://www.unicef.org/media/114636/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf>

⁵HEADSS – H-Home; E-Education and employment, eating and exercise; A-Activities and peer relationships, social media; D-Drug use, including prescribed medications, cigarettes, vaping, alcohol and other drugs; S-Sexuality and gender; S-Suicide, self-harm, safety and spirituality

⁶RCADS – Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale

therapeutic support while 1-2% need further referral to tertiary public hospitals for psychiatric medications. For every three year-long cohort cycle, SNEHA screens 4000 young people and engages with them and their parents to build emotional resilience, parental skills and help seeking behaviour to address mental health concerns.

In the course of the programme, qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with young people identified with effects of domestic violence helped understand imprints on various aspects of their development. Normalisation of violence, power and control as part of family relationships and expressions of intimacy and affection emerged significantly. Physical conditions like trouble with sleep, constant somatic complaints, numbness and anxiety related to academic underperformance emerged as other consequences. Continuous learning for more than five years has enabled

the implementing team to utilise the services of clinical psychologists who are keen on working in a community setting – an extremely challenging situation, with parents in constant denial amidst prying neighbours and easy stigmatisation.

SNEHA's mental health intervention with young people has chosen the unbeaten path of wrenching mental health out of a 'biomedical prism' and laying bare, the various stressors related to social, structural and accessibility issues. A situational analysis carried out in 2021 showed that low parent-child communication, disrupted routine and negative virtual body image issues, financial distress, exposure to violence, bullying, abuse, unsafe neighbourhoods, internet addiction, substance abuse and trade-off between education and aspirations were core-stressors for adolescents and their parents in these settlements. Each of these stressors can have multiple implications. Communication gap can potentially lead to a compromise on

education, increased distress, and neglect of emotional needs, increased misunderstandings and silent bearings of distress. Disruptive routine can potentially lead to compromise on nutrition and emotional needs. Material deprivation and financial distress can increase conflicts at home, and reduce family interaction. Exposure to violence and addiction can further increase normalisation of abuse and increase susceptibility to violence. Having to trade-off between education and aspirations can potentially reduce their interest in education and push for early entry into the workforce. Very low awareness on mental health and help-seeking behaviour makes these stressors and their implications inter-generational and constantly reinforce each other. As described earlier, inadequate awareness on adolescent mental health concerns pushed the SNEHA team to undertake an intervention study to build a community-based stepped care model to address common mental disorders among young people. While non-specialised workers (*HumRaahis*) can deliver first-level counselling and address the human-resource gaps in the field of mental health, SNEHA believes that the role of non-specialised workers can go beyond providing counselling, to addressing social determinants of mental health. With non-specialised workers most likely being from the communities they work in, they have the unique perspective, cultural



Equipping adolescents with skills to manage emotions.



Health and nutrition session in Kahwa.



Addressing mental health concerns is important across the life-cycle.

empathy and strong connectedness to know that services need to be delivered holistically. Additionally, their ability to network within, be resourceful and respond immediately, can play a significant role in linking mental health services

to allied health and social welfare services, which specialists may not be able to undertake effectively.

Exemplifying the services of *HumRaahis* is

23-year-old Neera who pursues daily rigorous physical training, working towards the police recruitment drive. A youth volunteer with the programme, Neera enrolled when she was 16 years old, completed various modules on

nutrition, sex and gender, pubertal changes, emotional resilience, sexuality and citizenship education. She was “diagnosed with mild depression, was supported with therapy at SNEHA and gathered myself to challenge

gender-based stereotypes. Coming from a community of denotified tribes where girls are married off by the age of 17, I am the only 23-year-old unmarried girl around, on a mission to prove my worth.” Neera has committed herself

to extend psychosocial support to young people around her and also assists the SNEHA team with field-based data entry.

Just the other day, a friend reached out to ask about NGOs working on children’s mental health; we could find none in Mumbai that engaged with young people at the community level, except for the SNEHA programme. Just like Neera, we are also on a mission...to chalk out a future trajectory for non-specialist counsellors to address both resilience and social determinants of mental health stressors among young people to address this pervasive concern! We are working on partnering with non-profits and the public health system alike to gently layer their activities with awareness on mental health as a significant and complementary aspect to addressing physical health concerns. After learning about the mental health spectrum, “*I have ceased to be judgemental about people’s behaviour; I try and empathise more, trying to listen to what people may not speak out; relationships with my partner, daughters and in-laws at home have improved after I got trained as a HumRaahi*”. We resonate with this empathy and will strive to spread this light!

Authors: Rama Shyam; with Anu Balasubramanyam, Arati Mitra, Neeta Karandikar, Nikhat Shaikh, Seema Sharma, Tanya Raj and Vinita Ajgaonkar (SNEHA)



*Your smile travels a
thousand miles.*



Changing lives, bringing smiles

SRF Foundation's well-thought-out interventions relating to education and vocational skills are empowering communities across the country



Inside a computer lab.

The SRF Foundation, formerly known as the Society for Education and Welfare, was setup in 1982 as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of SRF Ltd. The Foundation builds on the heritage of its founders, the Late Sir Shri Ram and Late Dr. Bharat Ram, who both believed in contributing to the society through education. Currently, SRF Foundation is creating sustainable impact to bring smile to the faces of the vulnerable members of the society through high impact interventions in Education, Vocational Skills, Livelihood, Health, Environment, Art & Culture across India.

Rural Education

India has 138 crore (1.38 billion) people, who are further divided into urban and rural areas. Around 88 crore people, or 65% of the country's total population, live in rural areas. India's rural areas had a literacy rate of about 73.5%. In India's rural areas, 65% of women and 81% of men are literate. And also, Indian economy depends on literacy in rural areas because these economies currently make up 25–30% of the GDP of the nation. Currently, India seeks to achieve and ***“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*** by 2030.

Focusing on India's mission, SRF Foundation turns the government schools into a dynamic centre of education by creating 'Centre of

Excellence'. These schools are transformed into “Model Schools” by working in the areas of Physical-Infra Development, Digital, Academic and School Leadership Transformation which are in alignment with SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 10, and SDG 17. Through the education programmes, the Foundation directly brings a difference to the lives of 44,271 students, in 121 schools at 11 locations of rural disadvantaged districts of India.

The Rural Education Program started with the India's one of the most aspirational districts of Mewat and it prevalent in eleven other locations of the country which are Bhind, Bhopal & Dhar in Madhya Pradesh, Bharuch in Gujarat, Kamrup(M) in Assam and Bhiwadi in Rajasthan. The capacity, leadership and participation of Headmasters, SMCs and village Panchayat, developed through this program, which will remain with the community and schools and ensure the project continuation and sustainability.

Result of this program, there has been increased school enrolments, accountability, and reliability of Govt. schools among parents and community. The parents found improvement in the health of the students because of access to clean drinking water and functional toilets, in the SRF Foundation intervention schools. The Foundation has also been successful in ensuring inclusive education in the region. This has greatly enabled girls to take admission in large numbers in these schools, bridging the gender gap in school



Vocational training is the need of the hour.

education along with ensuring long neglected gender justice.

Early Education

The early years (2-6 years) are one of the most important periods in the growth and development of the child's life. The foundation of learnings is laid during these critical years of development. Strong foundation leads to better school performance and attainment of higher education, which results in major social and economic gains for the society. Promoting early childhood education in the rural sector will enable better alignment of preschool and school curriculum to support all children in acquiring the required cognitive, pre-literacy and numeracy, physical, socio-emotional skills to make the most of their schooling years.

According to UNICEF more than 175 million children i.e., nearly half of all pre-primary-age children globally, are not enrolled in pre-primary education. In India approximately 20 million children do not attend any preschool program, and of these, more than a third (or 35 per cent) of children are from the poorest families. There is a considerable difference in enrolment between rural and urban areas in almost all states and UTs. The Government of India supports pre-school education through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is provided at the



Growing the workforce of the future.

Anganwadi Centres (AWC), an arm of the ICDS scheme. India has 1.37 million anganwadi centres, where pre-school education is one of the six basic services provided in addition to immunization, health check-up, referral, food supplementation, growth monitoring and health and nutrition education.

SRF Foundation is directly supporting 9,240 Children in 308 Anganwadi from 7 intervention locations across 5 states and aims to strengthen systems to improve on the provision of quality ECCE in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy and UNICEF's Sustainable Development Goals, Target 4.2.

Training of the Anganwadi Workers (AWW) with the right knowledge, attitude and skill is an integral part of this program. The trainings equip the AWW with and understanding of preschool curriculum and the social emotional needs of the children in 2-6 years of age group. This will empower the AWW to transact the content effectively at the Anganwadi Centers (AWC). The curriculum has been designed in sync with the government requirements and references have been taken from NEP 2020. The training sessions enable the AWW to build an understanding of the curriculum content and its objectives along with understanding the needs of children for a healthy social emotional development. The sessions also

encourage AWW to approach the contents in the curriculum in totality, which enables them to take the curriculum in an integrated manner in the classroom. This method of teaching would effectively facilitate for school readiness among the children.

Activities taken up during the sessions cater to all the primary domains of development and thereby the holistic development of the children. Some of the activities include storytelling, circle time, rhymes, worksheets, art and craft to name a few. These activities are compiled in a handbook for easy reference of the AWW. This handbook has less of text and more of visuals to aid the understanding of the concepts.

Along with the activity handbook, teaching learning material is provided in a neatly labeled box. Thus, empowering the AWW to deliver engaging and meaningful lessons to the children.

Other than training, SRF Foundation also improves the infrastructure of AWC by providing drinking water campers, setting up outdoor play areas, beautification of AWC (painting, gardening) and provision of furniture. This helps in providing a conducive learning environment and encourage enrollment and regular attendance of the children.



Providing a comfortable learning space to students.



Learning through experiments.

Vocational Skills

One of the biggest challenges India faces even today after the country has made significant progress, is employment generation. While it is a challenge for all youth seeking jobs, it is certainly more difficult for the youth coming from marginalized sections. Lack of proper skill trainings and employment opportunities for deprived youth has increased unskilled labour practices and rate of migration which has in turn enhanced vulnerability and social insecurity amongst youth. Youth aged between 18 and 25 are highly vulnerable and equally restless and it is important to work towards enhancing their life skills and livelihood opportunities.

The Foundation is integrating school dropouts and unemployed youth and women into mainstream workforce by equipping them with appropriate skills meeting the demands of supply chain. Under the skill development programme, the Foundation has started skill centres for Spoken English; Basic Computer Literacy program and Basic Electrician Training Program, Digital Literacy Centres, Digital Innovation Hubs and Livelihood program, training nearly 20,000 youths in 14 locations across 8 states.

SRF Foundation's flagship program called Rural Vocational Program (RVP) is spearheading social, cultural, and economic development by way of training, education, vocational training

and entrepreneur development initiatives to underprivileged school and college dropout youth in the field of electricity and solar energy through its training partners supporting them for gainful employment. Basic Electrician Training Course is a four-month duration program. The training capsule is comprised of life skills module, spoken and written English, basics of computer, soft skills, entrepreneurship, and yoga offered to all the trainees. The project aims to instil proper functional skills to underprivileged school dropout and youth in the age bracket of 18-35 making them financially sounder and more viable. Targeting to train on an average twelve hundred underprivileged and unemployed youth per year from all thirteen centres and fifty-eight hundred between 2021 to 2025.

The training program has adopted a practical method of developing skill by devoting eighty percent of practical learning and twenty percent of theory classes. Duration of the training program is of four months consistently pursuing the program in four months has helped many youths to lead a meaningful and purposeful shop after starting their own shops and businesses. Its Entrepreneurship Development Sessions have been a big boost for students becoming skill smart in every aspect.



Green Workers in material recovery facility (MRF) centre.

Sustainable sanitation solutions

Financial Inclusion Improves Sanitation & Health (FINISH) Society aims to address sanitation challenges uniquely by applying a multi-stakeholder approach



Door-to-door waste collection in segregated form.

FINISH Society is a non-profit organization working to promote sustainable and equitable development of the sanitation sector in India.

It leverages financial inclusion to address sanitation challenges with a focus on safe sanitation, circular economy, livelihood, and employment generation. The organization's waste management interventions foster a circular economy, create local livelihood, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It happens through designing and implementing commercially viable solutions to tackle solid and liquid waste management that are effective, socially acceptable, and institutionally compatible.

One of the organization's flagship programs is 'Impact investment in sanitation.' Incepted in 2019, the program targets 35,000 families and has impacted 1,75,000 people to date.

Using the Diamond Model, a multi-stakeholder ecosystem approach, Sanitation impact investment converges multiple stakeholders for integrating financial inclusion with demand for toilets and enhanced capacities at the local level to meet the needs. ACTIAM (a globally operating Dutch asset management company established in 1997) has provided a loan of US\$ 3M to Cashpor Micro Credit (CMC) with outcome-based

incentives from WASTE Foundation and FINISH Society (non-profit) as the facilitating agency. It was a pilot project to help understand the potential and define the process for the ambitious FM program (targeting 4 million households in 6 countries) and the introduction of the Sanitation Impact Fund EUR 250M. For this, 325 branches were identified to provide 35,000 sanitation loans in three years, spread across their 15 operational regions. 36,843 loans were disbursed from Feb 2019 to March 2022.

Community Health Facilitators (CHF), women selected from their loan clients, were engaged in creating awareness and demand for safe and hygienic sanitation practices and monitoring toilet construction and its usage. Masons were trained to construct environmentally safe sanitation across all the selected geographies.

Another program that the organization has been focusing on is 'Climate change mitigation through sustainable waste management.' It came into being in 2016, and since then, it has changed the lives of around 10,00,000 people.

FINISH works towards finding new approaches to involve the key stakeholders in the reconstruction of local waste management systems through changing attitudes, strengthening the role of

“Financial inclusion as a tool for empowerment wherein the ‘power to decide is transferred to the client.’ The client, mostly women, decides ‘what, where, and how’ to build the infrastructure. It is a holistic model where both demand and supply side issues are addressed. It is both sustainable and scalable,” says Abhijit Banerji, Member Secretary, FINISH Society.



Doing our duty to maintain Earth's beauty.

the informal sector, involving local government and communities, and building capacities. Its waste management programs actively implement innovations in closing the resources loop with waste valorization by improving the value chains in solid and liquid waste to advance India towards a circular economy.

Every month around 2,00,000 families are practicing waste segregation under solid waste management programs across ten states in India. On average, 22,000+ tons of solid waste per year are managed, treated, and recycled. The organization is creating a positive impact on the environment by saving 3600+ tons of CO₂ equivalent greenhouse gas emissions per year.



Clean spaces, happy faces.



Toilet construction in progress.



Women are all ears at a village meeting on safe sanitation.



“With 3 million truckloads of untreated garbage being offloaded daily, it is both a challenge and an opportunity. On the environmental side, proper management removes plastic waste from contaminating land and water. The better management of organic waste reduces waste disposal costs and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, it can create businesses and enable livelihoods, leading to healthier and cleaner cities and an improved environment! It’s a win-win situation!”

- Abhijit Banerji
Member Secretary
FINISH Society



When you see someone littering, stop them albeit gently.



Waste unloaded: Think holistically and act positively.



Segregating waste: A small step can make a big difference.

Healthy eating for tea communities

GAIN as part of its Workforce Nutrition project has piloted an innovative supply chain model to improve the accessibility of nutritious foods in tea estates of Assam through ‘Healthy Line Shops (HLS)’



Healthy nutrition for tea communities.



Fresh vegetables and other food items.

The tea workers and their families remain nutritionally vulnerable on the account of poor dietary habits. They consume foods that are major sources of carbohydrates, low in protein, and almost negligible in vitamins and micro-nutrients. Access to different food groups is limited as these are not stocked in the neighborhood retail shops which happen to be the most convenient purchase point. Accessing different food groups a few kilometers outside the tea estate is inconvenient and therefore not commonly practiced. The tea communities also access the 'haat bazaar' (fortnightly organized temporary market) for some food, but the choice of nutritionally diverse food remains unchanged.

Workforce Nutrition

GAIN as part of its Workforce Nutrition project has piloted an innovative supply chain model to improve the accessibility of nutritious foods in tea estates of the state of Assam through the neighbourhood retail shops. Branded as 'Healthy Line Shops (HLS)', these shops located inside the residential colonies have helped improve the availability of different nutrition and hygiene products amongst tea communities.

To understand the existing gaps in the food ecosystem in tea estates, the project first gathered

insights on the food consumption patterns of the community, market access, and the business dynamics of retailers. The tea worker households were found to consume foods that are available in nearby retail shops. But these shops, that are locally known as 'line shops' did not stock fresh, nutritious, and fortified food items mainly due to the lack of a reliable linkage with the wholesalers. On their front, it was unviable for the wholesalers located 20-30 km away to service these shops due to very low order volume from the individual shops.

Based on the insights, the project worked on a two-pronged approach. First, a list of nutritious food items was identified that the community could consume if made available. The identified food items were based on the food choices of the community, their affordability, and availability with the wholesalers in the nearby town. These food items included fortified cooking oil, pasteurized and packaged milk, lentils, pulses, eggs, soya crumbs, nuts, vegetables, fruits, and iodized salt, etc.

Next was to develop a reliable supply chain to ensure a regular supply of identified food products in the line shops. There was a need to aggregate the demand from individual lines to achieve business viability for any wholesaler.



A vehicles laden with products meant for Healthy Line Shops.

For this purpose, an ‘Aggregator’ to act as an interface between the wholesalers and the line shops was created to supply the entire basket of products. Systematic business operations have been set up whereby every fortnight, the aggregator creates a consolidated supply list by collecting orders from HLSs. The aggregator then procures food products from different wholesalers at a competitive price, and delivers them to each HLS on their doorstep, a service non-existent before. The entire model operates on a market principle - the communities get better access to nutritious foods; the retailers get doorstep delivery of products at no additional cost, the aggregator earns a margin for the supply, and the wholesalers gain new customers.

The project paid the initial transportation cost till the aggregator was able to generate sufficient business volume to offset this cost. Training and handholding support to the aggregator as well as retailers were provided to create an effective single-point order mechanism. To provide a unique identity to these line shops, they are branded as ‘Healthy Line Shops (HLS)’ using danglers and shelves displaying nutrition-sensitive messages. To push the business volume, the project also extended the credit purchase facility for HLSs.

Beginning in 2020, the model has evolved and matured over the last two years. As on date, 32 HLS covering 8 tea estates reaching approximately 15,000 tea communities are part of the program. The initial support from the project has been phased out and the supply chain is now operating on its own providing a regular supply of nutritious and other food products worth USD 8400 (INR 630,000) every month. With its



Ready for supply.

positive result, the model has now been scaled up to 120 shops across 7 districts of Assam.

Direct linkage of the project is with SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture – as GAIN is trying to make food items affordable and accessible within the tea estate.



“Healthy Line Shop is an innovative model of bringing nutritional shift among the most vulnerable community. The model has uniquely utilized the existing structures such as line shops in the tea estates to improve the accessibility of the tea workers to more healthier and nutritious food options.”

- Tarun Vij
GAIN India
Country Director



Healthy Line Shops are access points for tea workers for their daily nutritious products.



Akaliya Sardar at his pond in Mahuldiha.

Adopting a holistic approach towards rural development

In its attempt to positively impact the targeted community members, Centre for World Solidarity follows a holistic approach that encompasses Livelihood, Natural Resource Management, Nutrition, Education, and Non-conventional Energy Sources



Goat for livelihood support.

Saraikele-Kharsawan is one of the most backward districts of Jharkhand state, as about 49.4% of its total population falls Below Poverty Line (BPL).

The operational area of the district, Rajnagar block, is hardly 15 km. away from the district headquarters yet all development indices are below the national average.

Center for World Solidarity (CWS) is closely working with the Santhal tribe, who are in the majority. The local economy is primarily an agricultural economy that highly depends upon monsoon and is thus mono-cropped in nature. Farming is a significant source of livelihood. Paddy is the main crop cultivated during monsoon. The rest of the year, agricultural land remains fallow. Most of the farmers come under small or marginal farmers whose land holding size ranges from 0.5 to 1.5 acres. Insufficient source of irrigation, small land holding size, lack of crop diversification, lack of knowledge on modern agricultural practices, and improper utilization of available natural resources (land, water, forest, etc.) collectively results in poor yield.

Due to the dominance of rain-fed subsistence agriculture in the area, communities depend heavily on forest resources, livestock rearing,

and wage labor for income. Adivasi communities, particularly rear goats, pigs, sheep, and backyard poultry, and depend upon the same in the time of distress. Still, poorer families are often unable to harness their full potential. The main reason for this is the high rate of mortality, poor quality of livestock due to inbreeding, lack of access to vet services and medicines and insurance services (physically and financially both), and most importantly, the lack of knowledge on improving rearing practices.

Next to agriculture, daily wage earning is another source of family income. So, except during monsoon season, in search of jobs, they visit nearby industrial avenues like Adityapur and Jamshedpur and migrate to states like West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, and Southern States in search of livelihood.

Food security and livelihoods are intrinsically linked. The fragile nature of livelihood leads to financial constraints that, in turn, lead to the consumption of cheap, high-energy staple foods, primarily carbohydrates and fats, rather than nutritionally dense food. As a result, the community lacks physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food; therefore, cases of malnutrition are common, particularly among women and children. As per NFHS-05



Night view of a village supported with solar street lights.

data for Saraikela – Kharsawan district, about 70.2 % of females aged between 15-49 years are anemic, whereas 48.7 % of children below five years are underweight. Household-level kitchen gardening can be vital in fighting malnutrition but is not common in practice.

In rural areas, working people used to mingle during the evening time and spend quality time with peers. This practice helps build social capital and develop a broad understanding of the issues affecting their lives. However, the lack of reliable sources of light in the commonplace limits the scope of discussion and sharing of thoughts, especially for youths who return from work late. On the other hand, women have to stay home after dark for safety reasons; to harness a sense of safety and security and enrich social capital, a reliable and cost-effective light source is necessary.

To bring positive change in the life of the targeted community members, the Centre for World Solidarity follows a holistic approach that covers Livelihood, Natural Resource Management, Nutrition, Education, and Non-conventional Energy Source.

Livelihood: The livelihood pattern of the targeted community is fragile; hence along with farm-

based livelihood, support was also provided for non-farm livelihood. In addition, special attention is given to the skill up-gradation of the targeted community. The livelihood initiatives are:

- Support for the pond-based integrated farming system. The components included fingerlings, banana plants, vegetable seeds, and a duck with a shed.
- Considering the existing livelihood practices of the community, support is given for promoting livestock-based livelihood. Before support, beneficiaries were screened based on existing resources, skills, and, most importantly, willingness. After classification, support was provided on dairy/goat/indigenous chicken/duck and pig along with vet and insurance services.
- Support for village-level micro-enterprise promotion includes a puffed rice-making unit, Pulverizer unit, Haler unit, etc.
- Considering the abundance of lac-hosting plants (Ber and Plash), lac cultivation was introduced in the area. For lac cultivation, the selected community members have first imparted skill development training followed by brood lac (Seed lac) distribution. Since it was a new venture for the community, consistent monitoring was done under the supervision of the Indian Lac Research

Institute (ILRI), Ranchi, Jharkhand.

- Skill development /up-gradation training was imparted to the community members on various trades relevant to rural areas, including pump-set repairing, plumbing, and masonry. During the training, participants were exposed to modern machines/tools and techniques pertaining to their trade.

Natural Resource Management: In order to harvest rainwater, enhance land productivity, and utilize it for irrigation during the lean season, several initiatives have been taken, which are mentioned below:

1. Excavation of 46 mini-irrigation ponds.
2. Excavation of 3 big irrigation ponds.
3. Land development activities (Farm bund, Trench cum bund)
4. Renovation of the traditional pond.
5. Construction of 30 rainwater harvesting structures.
6. Agroforestry on 20 acres of land.

Nutrition: To improve nutritional status, firstly, the community was made aware of age and gender-specific nutritional needs and the importance of a balanced diet. As an attempt to diversify their dietary intake, 600 households were given support for a “Kitchen Garden” in the



Pond-based livelihood, Duck farming.



Lift irrigation at Bankathi village- HRDP.



Banana fruiting in a kitchen garden.

‘Sardar’ the leader

Akaliya Sardar belongs to the tribal community and resides in Mahuldiha village with his family of 5 members, including a wife and three school-going children. The family owns 2-acre land, out of which 1 acre is cultivated. Due to a lack of perennial irrigation sources, the family would solely depend upon monsoon for cultivation. In case of delay or failure of monsoon, villagers, including Akaliya, had to skip cultivation and move to cities in search of wage-earning opportunities. Despite best efforts, for Akaliya, it was challenging to ensure the minimum bare needs of the family.

Akaliya used to grow vegetables during the rabi season using water from a pond owned by a Zamindar. Like other villagers, Akaliya had to pay the Zamindar exorbitantly for using the pond water. The mode of payment was in cash and not fixed. Zamindar used to have the sole authority to fix the water charges. Finding no means, Akaliya had to accept the severe terms and conditions.

In the year 2022, under HDFC Bank CSR-supported project, the Gram Sabha meeting resolution was passed to construct an irrigation pond measuring half an acre on Akaliya’s land with the condition that the villagers would also

use the water for vegetable cultivation. During the pond construction, the local zamindar posed several hurdles with the support of a few villagers, but the Gram Sabha stood firmly with Akaliya, and work was completed.

Apart from the pond, Akaliya was supported in starting a Sustainable Integrated Farming System (SIFS). Under SIFS, he was supported with fingerlings, legume and vegetable seeds, chicks of indigenous breed, a kitchen garden kit, and capacity-building training on modern agricultural practices. He was also sent for exposure cum training on fish farming.

Now, instead of working as a daily wage worker, Akaliya is involved full-time in vegetable cultivation. He doesn’t have to pay irrigation water charges to the local zamindar. He is earning significantly from an integrated farming system where

he earns from selling fish, bananas, vegetables, eggs and chicken, and pulse (pigeon pea). Apart from this, the family gets green leafy vegetables throughout the year in his kitchen garden. Only from selling fish did he receive Rs. 25,000. His children are going to the Innovative School (supported by CWS) in the nearby village of Nischintpur. He also has set up a vermicompost unit where his wife is extending a helping hand. Overall, he along with his family is leading a happy life.



Akaliya Sardar along with his wife Baisakhi Sarada and daughter Lakshmi Sardar at his pond embankment.



Inaguration of Smart Class at Nischintpur.

Mini-pond excavation under HRDP.



Smokeless Chulha in Hatnabera village.

backyard. Under the initiative, the community is provided with ten types of vegetable seeds, fruit plants, and hand tools.

Education: In order to minimize the dropout cases and improve the friendly learning environment, seven schools are converted to smart schools; where including the establishment of smart classes; they are provided drinking water and sanitation facility, sports materials, and beautification of school premises. For sustainability and utilization of given support, “School Management Committees” were made aware of their role and responsibility through capacity-building training.

Nov-conventional energy: Abiding by goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), CWS ensures access to clean and affordable energy. In this connection, 180 no. “Solar Street Lights” were erected in the targeted area, and with technical support from IIT-Kharagpur, 18 nos. of “Biogas” units were constructed.

CWS implements its project in close consultation with the targeted community. From the project conception and implementation to monitoring and evaluation, the community is given reasonable space to play its role. Before

project implementation, “Beneficiary / User Groups” were formed and imparted capacity-building training to upkeep the initiative, ensure community contribution, and ensure project sustainability.

In its endeavor, CWS received financial support from international and domestic donors, including KKS Germany, HDFC Bank CSR, BROT, etc. Moreover, the technical support received from India’s prominent institutions excels in their field, like IIT-Kharagpur, Indian Council for Agriculture Research, Indian Lac Research Institute, etc.

There is no challenge because the community is involved in every project implementation phase. But while introducing such project components, which are new for the community, an apathetic attitude towards components was observed. As mitigation measures, such farmers are taken out for exposure visits and organize interactive sessions with successful farmers. In addition, phase-wise training and consistent handholding support were provided to them. CWS encountered such a situation while implementing banana and legume crop cultivation and lac cultivation.

Due to CWS’s effort, the targeted community

members are leading better lives. They are earning their livelihood with dignity, their land productivity is improved, and they are involved in farming meaningfully. Livelihood diversification improves their income and capacitates them to utilize their resource base optimally. The integrated farming system helped them to get additional income significantly.

Earning from livestock is doubled because of adopting the scientific farming method and access to vet services. With the improvement of skills, they are getting better prices for their labour, to the extent nutritional needs of the family of 5 members are fulfilled from their kitchen garden. Children enjoy a joyful learning environment because of intelligent classes and basic functional amenities. Solar street lights impact social life positively and instill a sense of safety and security, especially among women in the community. Installed Biogas is a clean and green energy source, nullifying the dependency on the conventional source of energy (firewood, coal, kerosene) for cooking food. The biogas unit emits cooking gas for four hours (two hours each morning and evening), which is sufficient to meet the household cooking need.

SDG Linkages

The project implemented by CWS directly addresses 07 out of 17 goals mentioned under Sustainable Development Goals.



Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere: Community is supported for utilizing their available resources, including land, water, skills, etc., with improved output.



Goal 2: End hunger, Achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture: Support extended for a kitchen garden and sustainable agriculture



Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all: Support extended for transforming government schools into Smart Schools (support for innovative classes, TLM, Water and Sanitation facilities, etc.).



Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all: Under the project, provision of Street Solar Light and also the provision of Biogas units



Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all: Under the project provision of skill development training for productive employment and income generation. In addition, support is also extended for women-led enterprises.



Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries: Under the project, the tribal community is given priority in the extension of support. Within the community, women are at the core.



Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns: Enriching natural resources through the promotion of agroforestry, land development measures, creation of water harvesting structures, etc.



“Food and Nutritional Security and other indicators laid down in Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved by taking a multi-sectoral approach. Adopting this approach in recent times in its project villages, CWS started reaping positive outcomes.”

- Rajesh Kumar Jha
Jharkhand State Director
CWS

Marching towards educating young India

Bharti Foundation's interventions in the education area are enabling underprivileged children and youth to become economically independent and socially responsible



Using the window rails for learning abacus in Satya Bharti Schools.



Digital Classroom in Satya Bharti School.

Bharti Foundation believes that education is the way forward if we wish to see phenomenal changes in world. With this ardent belief, the Foundation is working steadfastly through its education programs to create opportunities for the holistic development of children and transform them into educated, employable, and responsible citizens of the country. This year the Foundation has already touched the lives of 1 million children across India.

Bharti Foundation's education programs are in alignment with the National Education Policy 2020 and sync with National Programs such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and National Nutrition Mission.

Child-Friendly Infrastructure

Safe, well-ventilated classrooms with BaLA (Building as Learning Aid) technique adopted in schools, green initiatives, ed-tech enablement in schools.

Teacher Development

Capacity building of teachers through skill building workshops, trainings and teacher mentoring programs. Support for teachers in the school for effective teaching, self-directed learning to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Holistic Development Approach

A series of co-curricular activities in schools such as Bal Sabhas, house activities, art & craft activities, sports day, language week, student excursions, participation in external events and competitions besides regular academics.

Community Involvement

School's connect with the community through regular home visits by teachers, structured parent-teacher meetings and community development campaigns. Schools also conduct community volunteering week for the children to learn local traditions, art and craft and community initiatives.

Programs

i) Satya Bharti Schools provide free quality education with the provision of free uniforms, education materials, and nutritious mid-day meals to the children. The schools focus on inculcating a strong value system in children with an emphasis on their social, cognitive, personal, emotional, and physical development that helps them to grow as confident, caring, and contributing citizens of the country. Through Satya Bharti Schools, children experience both scholastic and co-scholastic growth with the help of vibrant classrooms and innovative pedagogy that is experiential, project, and activity-based including art-integrated learning, story-based pedagogy, and ed-tech resources (computer education and advanced technology labs.) The key areas of implementation include:



Satya Bharti Schools
173 Schools | 5 States
5 Senior Secondary | 30 Elementary | 138 Primary
38,810 Students | 50.2% Girls | 76.1% SC/ST/OBC

**data as on 31st December 2022*

Teaching through innovative methods.

ii) Satya Bharti Quality Support Program (QSP), initiated in 2013, aims to improve the overall school quality of Government schools in partnership with school leadership. It supports children, teachers, parents, and administrators to transform schools into vibrant learning institutions by bringing in co-scholastic interventions. The core philosophy of the program is that if schools become engaging and happy spaces, it would result in the holistic development of students as children acquire leadership, communication, collaboration, and other life skills that are critical along with academics. The program's framework is established in a timeframe of three to five years and implemented under the following four pillars:

Students' empowerment: creating student clubs and leadership groups to create opportunities for holistic growth, building aspirations & exposure through lecture series, participation in competitions, etc.

Parents & community involvement: encouraging structured parent-teacher interactions (PTMs) and involving community to support school by bringing in resources, etc.

School leadership & teachers' engagement: encouraging the schools to believe in their ability to bring change; motivating teachers to innovate and to institutionalize new processes in schools.

School environment: supporting improvement in overall cleanliness of the schools, tree plantation, energizing labs/ libraries, building colorful spaces for students' creative work and ensuring child safety processes.

Satya Bharti Quality Support Program (QSP)

808 schools | 11 states/UTs

3,14,702 students | 49.3% girls

53.4 % SC/ST/OBC

**data as on 31st December 2022*

iii) QSP at Scale was conceptualized to create a wider impact by scaling up initiatives and processes from Bharti Foundation's education programs in government schools at the district/ state level. The key areas of intervention include leadership empowerment of heads of schools, building life skills in students, effective classroom transaction through the use of innovative teaching learning materials, improving overall school environment while supporting initiatives under National Education Policy 2020.

Foundation's key initiatives include:

- Strengthening implementation of 'No-Bag Day' in 14,000+ government schools in six districts (Barmer, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Pali and Sirohi) by curating theme based resources in line with the Education Department guidelines and institutionalizing monitoring mechanisms.
- Supporting Directorate of Education Jammu in Student Life Skill Development initiative

for building critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication skills, etc. in children.

- School Excellence Program to improve overall school quality by fostering leadership among the heads of schools; transform schools into vibrant institutions of learning in partnership with Assam State Government.
- Other initiatives are Home Mentoring wherein Government School Teachers are trained to empower parents and provide education support to children at home, supporting government with continuous teacher training and building capacity of DIET students.

QSP at Scale

8,592 Schools | 38,032 Teachers

9,73,344 Students

**data as on 31st December 2022*

The initial part of the journey with Satya Bharti Schools brought a lot of learning regarding the community's aspirations for their children and their belief in quality education. The process of setting up good quality schools in the villages of our country with inherent challenges of infrastructure, and available resources has been a great learning exercise and till today informs their decisions in all that they do. The impacts of the Bharti Foundation's programs are as follows:

- **Energized school environment:** More than 76% of students in Satya Bharti Schools belong to marginalized communities and more than 50% are girls. More than 3 lakh students from 808 Government schools under the Satya Bharti Quality Support Program are experiencing a better school environment with new activities for their holistic development.
- **Holistic Development of Children:** The Foundation educates children for life and believes in instilling values, ethos, and skills for them to become educated, employable and responsible citizens of the country. The culture in the schools allows each child to learn at his/ her own pace, excel in their areas of strength and equip them for any challenge. The Foundation is grooming them to be leaders from an early age by building requisite life skills, technological abilities and other 21st century skills.
- **Girl Child Education:** Bharti Foundation's Girl Child Policy follows five pillars - Enrolment, Education, Empowerment, Environment, and Exemplar. It ensures that no girl child remains out of school in the areas they operate in and an environment is created to support their continued education. Many girl students have won prestigious awards and hold leadership positions in schools.
- **Empowered Teachers:** Bharti Foundation

empowers its teachers with the right skills, knowledge, tools, and techniques that aid them in delivering quality education. Teachers are encouraged to use innovative Teaching-

Learning materials, to make education joyful. The teachers are facilitators as well as learners themselves in this journey of quality education, thereby setting new benchmarks every day.



She the power.



Satya Bharti School Children engaged in a community campaign.



Robotics Lab in Satya Bharti School.

SDG Linkages

Bharti Foundation runs its programs in partnership with State Governments, corporates, and communities. Since the organization's inception, they have proactively formulated and delivered education programs at primary, elementary, senior secondary, and higher education levels. Bharti Foundation, with its operations since the year 2000, has programs complementing government efforts and supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These programs are aligned with the following SDGs:

- Quality Education (Goal 4)
- Gender Equality (Goal 5)
- Clean Water and Sanitation (Goal 6)
- Partnership for the Goals (Goal 17)



“At Bharti Foundation, we are driven to make quality education available to underprivileged children and to create opportunities for their holistic development. Holistic education remains the core focus of our education programs. The aim is to ensure skills growth in children appropriate to their age and to help them grow as individuals with a sense of commitment to the communities in which they live. In this journey, our partners have played a strategic role and continue to do so in enabling us to innovate and strengthen our programs as well as encouraging us to expand our footprint. We are also grateful to the employees of Bharti Group Companies and Corporate Partners who have not only contributed financially but devoted their valuable time, skills, energy, and resources to strengthen our journey. We stay committed to our motto of creating and supporting programs that bring about changes through education and the use of technology.”

- Mamta Saikia
Chief Executive Officer
Bharti Foundation



Satya Bharti Quality Support
Program - Swachhata Campaign.



*Health awareness programme
for adolescent girls.*

Health on wheels

The mobile health services launched in Ambaji, Gujarat by Solidaridad Asia and Unilever – and with the support of Deepak Foundation – are reaching the most vulnerable mining communities in this Gujarat town



Conducting a medical test.

Thirteen-year-old Merkiben Bhurabhai Dungaisha felt tired all the time. Girls her age are usually bursting with energy. Coming from a joint family that just about manages to make ends meet with a monthly income of Rs 8,000, paying for a doctor's visit never crossed Merkiben's mind.

Then, one day, a mobile health unit (MHU) reached her village Dhareda, near Ambaji town in Banaskantha district of Gujarat. A nurse conducted a haemoglobin test and Merkiben was found to be severely anaemic. A medical officer with the MHU prescribed Merkiben iron-folic acid (IFA) tablets to treat her for iron deficiency. Further, she was enrolled in an adolescent anaemia programme and taught the importance of taking regular IFA tablets and Vitamin C-rich food. Nutritional anaemia is a huge health challenge for India – and often neglected. If left untreated over a prolonged period, it can be the cause of other health problems. An MHU counsellor gave the teenager a food chart describing the benefits of eating nutrition-rich foods like green leafy vegetables, lentils, jaggery etc. She was also told about the importance of menstrual hygiene and sanitation.

With timely check-ups and regular intake of IFA

tablets, her haemoglobin levels improved. Four months later, the haemoglobin test revealed she was no longer anaemic.

The Initiative and Its Objectives

To improve the health and well-being of vulnerable mining communities, which includes families like that of Merkiben's, Solidaridad Asia along with Unilever under the CORE (Code of Responsible Extraction) programme launched mobile health services in Ambaji. The services were launched with the support of Deepak Foundation, which has extensive experience working in Gujarat.

“One of the key pillars of CORE is promoting engagement with communities and stakeholders. Taking this forward, we have been consistently engaging with local communities to ensure underserved settlements get access to health services and remain healthy. This is part of an inclusive and responsible supply chain and contributes to the social license to operate,” says Rajesh Kumar Dubey, Head, Industrial Minerals, Solidaridad.

Between March and October 2022, the MHU services covered 26 villages in Ambaji and provided 7,655 people with primary healthcare and preventive services. Besides raising



Sensitizing about balanced diet.

awareness on anaemia among adolescents, the seven-month drive included sessions on antenatal and postnatal care, busting misconceptions about and providing Covid-19 vaccination.

Access to quality primary healthcare is a challenge in rural India. In the wake of Covid-19, mobile health units have emerged as an effective way to spread awareness about the pandemic, importance of vaccines, use of preventive measures like washing hands and wearing masks, and to provide primary healthcare services to vulnerable population in rural India.

The key objectives of the drive were:

- Facilitate accessibility and availability of basic health care services at village and community level by bridging the accessibility gap.
- Facilitate door-to-door Covid-19 vaccination drive at the village and community level.
- Facilitate community awareness on disease prevention and positive health-specific behavioural change activities.
- To reduce the out-of-pocket expenditure while accessing primary healthcare.
- To implement the programme in collaboration with local health institutions and strengthen the referral system.



4.

Women health matters.

Women health matters.

Strengthening Referral System

The MHUs also act as a link to referral services, connecting the villagers to the nearest healthcare centre for proper and timely treatment.

Take the case of 55-year-old Dharmiben Navabhai Dungaisha. A resident of Jetvas village, Dharmiben is a farm worker. A mother to four, she lost her husband to a road accident three years ago. In the last one year, she has often complained of headache, giddiness, chest pain, heart burn and body ache. Last year, she went to a private practitioner but left the treatment midway because she could not afford the doctor's fee. Her headache aggravated in the last three months and she visited the mobile health unit for treatment. On examination, the doctor found her blood pressure level was high. Besides immediate treatment, the doctor at the MHU referred Dharmiben to the nearest health and wellness centre to ensure her condition was managed better.

Constant monitoring and timely treatment at the Jetvas health and wellness centre helped stabilise Dharmiben's blood pressure levels.

“One of the major objectives of the MHU programme was conducting awareness sessions on various health related issues. Such awareness

sessions help bring behavioural change in the society,” says Pragnesh Pandya, Project Coordinator, Deepak Foundation.

“In the anaemia programme, the designed methodology targeted adolescents and their parents. Over a period of seven months, we were able to improve the anaemia condition in 51 girls. The referral services and doorstep vaccination campaign helped link the villagers living in remote areas with the government medical facilities and aided them in fighting the Covid pandemic in a better way,” added Pandya.



Putting active listening skills into practice.

Empowering adolescents with life skills for the 21st century

Magic Bus India Foundation aims to take life skills education to nearly 2 million adolescents in the next 3-5 years.



Government teachers undergoing life skills training.

Today 253 million^[1] adolescents in India cross the threshold from childhood into livelihood, with only one third of them having a higher secondary qualification^[2]. Out of these, only 2 in 5 will have the life skills and employability skills necessary to secure stable employment^[3].

Over 50%^[4] of employers believe that for young people to succeed, they should be equipped with the right skills to transition from education to employment. If this not addressed, the vicious cycle of poverty will continue to create a cascading effect on society as a whole. A problem of this magnitude and complexity, requires a proven solution at a national scale.

Magic Bus School Completion and Livelihood Enablement Program

The Magic Bus School Completion and Livelihood Enablement program aims to equip adolescents with life skills such as teamwork, communication, learning to learn, problem-solving, and managing self. In addition, this assistance builds their resilience, self-efficacy, agency skills, and decision-making abilities. By supporting adolescents' holistic development, the Foundation enables them to learn better, attend school regularly, complete their education, develop

aspirations and set career goals to build better futures.

Implementation Approach

The Foundation adopts an activity-based approach to building life skills by providing a structured and supportive environment for adolescents to learn and practice these skills. The curriculum comprises games and sessions. Their innovative and scalable delivery approach equips government school teachers to impart life skills education to adolescents from grades 6 to 10. It builds the capacity of the government school system and creates a cascading effect wherein a teacher becomes the catalyst of change for countless students. This approach also strengthens the student-teacher relationship.

The SCALE program is anchored on engaging with the educational system, School Management Committees, parents, and the community. As parents are direct stakeholders in adolescents' development of adolescents, they must understand the role they play in nurturing development and supporting their children to complete their education so they can build better futures.

The adolescents often come from households with limited or no space for them to study. By

Learning teamwork through life skill sessions.



encouraging them to create a personal study corner in their home, the organization boosts their interest in learning, raises their confidence to continue self-learning, and asserts their desire to study.

Under the program in Maharashtra, Magic Bus India Foundation conducts Bal Panchayat elections in government schools. Through this intervention, the organization aims to raise awareness about the Indian democratic system and processes in adolescents. In addition, it builds leadership skills, encourages active citizenship, and moulds them to become agents of change. Under the program, the Foundation also creates peer support structures where adolescents can encourage others to learn and build their interpersonal skills. The organization orients system-level officials and cluster heads on life skills, enabling a collective approach to planning and monitoring school training and interventions. If government schools adopt the program as part of the curriculum, life skills education can be scaled nationally.

In order to mainstream life skills education in line with the new National Education Policy commitments, the program is supported by the Governments of Maharashtra, Mizoram, and Rajasthan. Four esteemed foundations also



Peer leaders conduct life skills sessions.

support them; Azim Premji Foundation, Echidna Giving, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and the Kadoori Charitable Foundation. Several long-term funders, including Nestle, JSW Foundation, WPP Foundation, Mondelez India, and Dhanam Foundation, also back the Foundation's programs.

Impact

- Since 1999, Magic Bus India Foundation has worked with over one million adolescents across 1300 government schools, supporting each for three years.
- 98% of adolescents in the Foundation's programs showed a 46% improvement in school regularity.
- 75% of adolescents completed secondary education until grade 10 and transitioned to higher secondary, compared to the national average of 69%.
- The adolescents have a 26% improvement in perceived self-efficacy and 17.5% in resilience.

The organization aims to take life skills education to nearly 2 million adolescents in the next 3-5 years.

SDG Linkages

The Foundation's interventions are linked with the following SDGs:

- **Sustainable Development Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- **Sustainable Development Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Sustainable Development Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Sustainable Development Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all



Sources:

- ^[1] Census 2011
- ^[2] Secondary Education Flash Statistics 2014-15. DISE
- ^[3] India Skills Report
- ^[4] World Economic Forum Study, 2021



Reflecting and internalising life skills learnings.

The expectation from teachers in imparting life skills are:
Teachers required training as well as pedagogy gradually



“SCALE was selected by HundrEd.org as one of the top 100 education innovations out of 3000+ global organizations. The recognition is a validation that our program delivery model is effective, innovative, and scalable. Embedding this in the government school system will go a long way to address India’s education challenges and kindle systemic change.”

- Jayant Rastogi
Global CEO
Magic Bus India Foundation



Breaking gender barriers through collaboration and communication.



THP aims to empower the extremely poor women.



Designed for the ultra-poor

Targeting the Hard-core Poor (THP) Programme is a rigorously evaluated and proven model that brings sustainable and transformative change in the lives of the extremely poor



A beneficiary with her business enterprise.

Bandhan-Konnagar (BK) was registered as Society in 2001 under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. Since 2006, BK has addressed extreme poverty through a unique model of graduating women leading ultra-poor households to emerge as successful entrepreneurs through Targeting the Hardcore Poor Programme (THP).

At present, THP covers 5494 Gram Panchayats in 72 districts across 13 states that include Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal.

Women leading 'ultra-poor' households in the age group of 18 to 59 years and living in extreme poverty are the prime beneficiaries of THP. Keeping to "deprivation criteria" under Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, the households selected for THP have no male earning member between ages 16 to 59 years. The THP beneficiaries are the sole bread winners for their family. They lack confidence, skills, financial support, savings and credible productive assets for sustainable livelihood and need economic security required to lead a life of dignity.

THP Objectives

- Ensure economic, social and inspirational changes in the lives of the 'ultra-poor' households
- Ensure holistic assistance to capacitate the hard-core or 'ultra-poor' in building self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods with improvement in overall quality of life
- Ensure convergence with Government schemes & entitlements
- Ensure graduation of the hard-core poor into socio-economic mainstream within 24 months

India's phenomenal economic growth story in the last 3 decades has an underlying chapter on extreme poverty. The SECC 2011 with deprivation criteria set, estimates a significant number of households that are identified as 'ultra-poor' households since they fail to meet basic consumption needs and remain trapped in poverty. THP is a unique model designed by Bandhan-Konnagar in 2006. It has been evolving since then, keeping to dynamics of social & economic challenges continuing and emerging across the country that endanger and push households within vicious circle of poverty. Believing in engendered approach to support women-led households being pushed down to deplorable assetless conditions, THP programme identifies the beneficiaries through



Village committee meeting.

a PRA process, household surveys and local stakeholder's involvement. Each beneficiary is taken through a 18 to 24 months of rigorous process that involves continuous motivational and capacity enhancement support, mentoring, motivation and coaching in micro-enterprise development and management of farm & non-farm segments as per beneficiary choice and local market factors.

The unique feature of Bandhan-Konnagar model compared to other such 'graduation model' approaches adopted by diverse agencies in India and other countries is that assets are transferred in kind only; consumption stipends provided for motivation and sustenance during the preparatory phase; handholding in business management for 6-8 months with encouragement to diversify assets and enterprises; and finally convergence with linkage for beneficiaries through all eligible social security schemes and banking and micro-credit facilities. The intensive programme support ensures that after 24 months beneficiaries confidently assume enterprise success in diverse trades and mix of enterprises in farm and non-farm with confirmed asset multiplication and economic security at household level. Eventually the households showcase access to education, better health and nutrition outcomes with coverage under diverse social security schemes,

insurance coverage, credit access and banking services. Each household emerges out of poverty with HH income multiplied by at least 5 times for over 90 percent of beneficiaries. THP success has supported Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society or JEEViKA design and implement the Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana (SJY) programme targeting 2 lakh households in the state of Bihar wherein Bandhan-Konnagar provides the Technical Assistance support to SJY. THP goal is to bring economic, social and inspirational changes in the lives of the poorest and marginalized women and support circular economy in remote and rural India.

Justification

Around 69.43 lakh women headed households in India fall under three or more deprivation indicators as per SECC 2011 and many communities have historically remained at the bottom of the development pyramid since they are far from access to social and economic resources or opportunities. Poverty induces zero or low literacy, little or no capital, minimal skills and as a result the 'ultra-poor' remain tied to low wage, insecure or infrequent occupations. Without productive assets or sustainable sources of income, 'ultra-poor' cannot meet basic consumption needs. THP Programme as studied by world's renowned economists, remains a

rigorously evaluated and proven model that brings sustainable and transformative change in the lives of the extremely poor. THP empowers 'ultra-poor' households to find solutions that cater to household needs, fits to local market needs and sets to social and economic dimensions in the community. The impact studies indicate that asset growth and capital build up for majority of beneficiaries continue even 10 years post intervention.

THP: Major Activities

- Identification of the beneficiaries through a participatory process to ensure unbiased selection.
- Capacity building of selected beneficiaries on Enterprise Development & Management.
- Formation of Village Committee-Ati Daridra Sahayak Committee (ADSC) for support.
- Productive asset transfer for initiating farm-non-farm combination of enterprises.
- Consumption stipend during capacity building and enterprise set-up for motivation.
- Hand holding and mentoring through weekly group meeting with home/ enterprise visits.
- Ensure access and linkages to different social security schemes and financial services.
- Financial literacy and development of saving habit with asset investment.
- Main streaming of beneficiaries with social consciousness.

Impact: As evidence depicts

Bandhan-Konnagar has implemented the THP model since 2006 with so far 1.72 lakh ultra-poor households, moving them successfully out of poverty across 13 states in India and another cohort of 1.46 lakh through Technical support extended to JEEViKA in Bihar since 2019.

In 2006, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) South Asia based at the Institute for Financial Management and Research and established at the Department of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA in 2003, began a randomized evaluation of the THP programme in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The study revealed that THP caused broad and lasting economic impacts including increased consumption, growth in assets and increased savings of households. Long-term studies by researchers suggest that the impact has been even bigger ten years after intervention completion.

In 2016, Deloitte assessed the programme impact in the districts of South 24 Parganas and Murshidabad of West Bengal. The assessment found average annual income of beneficiary households to have increased by 778%.

In 2018, J-PAL assessed THP programme impact in Jhalawar- Rajasthan, where it revealed that average monthly income of beneficiaries tripled with average monthly household-income also recorded to be more than double and overall, the average value of assets held by the beneficiaries nearly doubled, from Rs. 12,085 to Rs. 21,017.

Ref: <https://economics.mit.edu/files/12015>
https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publications/92_12_The-Long-Impact-of-Graduation-Program_TUP_Sept2016.pdf
<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publications/building-stable-livelihoods.pdf>

Impact: At a Glance

- The program has reached 1.72 lakh ultra-poor households and helped them to graduate out of extreme poverty with high aspirations.
- Over 1.30 lakh graduated ultra-poor households have been mainstreamed and became economically self-reliant and socially included.
- Over 1.66 lakh households have been involved in the larger financial and social eco-system with convergence support from government schemes and entitlements.

Challenges

- Unbiased beneficiary selection—free from any local pressure with community acceptance and proper functioning of village committees like Ati Daridra Sahayak Committee.
- Any unforeseen shocks- natural calamities, diseases-deaths that affects regular beneficiary enterprise operations.



“Poverty is a social and economic phenomenon historically influenced by social systems in India. At Bandhan-Konnagar, we believe in igniting potential and hence every ultra-poor household when guided, motivated and coached, successfully establishes enterprises that help to sustain livelihood and create assets to take a quantum leap out of poverty. The THP story is known across the world. Bandhan-Konnagar has developed the model that has put in IT enabled MIS and outcome tracking in 13 states. We are now technical leaders in

the country on one of ‘ultra-poor’ poverty alleviation model through enterprise approach and aspire to support State Rural Development Missions for at scale solution. We are indebted to our donors Bandhan Bank Limited, Bajaj Finserve, Bandhan Financial Services Limited, ITC, Founders Pledge and many others in the present and the past and seek support of investors and donors to reach out to the farthest corners of the country and every year resolve extreme poverty affecting at least 200,000 households. Our dream is to create significant impacts as THP is a very cost-effective model whereby through a onetime investment we permanently reduce financial burden of subsidies, cash support and other grants that go to support the extreme poor survive. The ultimate goal for us at Bandhan-Konnagar is to support the Government reach SDG 1 and Zero Extreme Poverty in India.”

- Shantamay Chatterjee
Vice President
Bandhan-Konnagar

Ensuring education for migrant children

AIF's Learning and Migration Program (LAMP) works with children at risk of distress migration by facilitating their access to quality education opportunities

Students attending LAMP's Learning Resource Center in Dhadgaon block, Nandurbar, Maharashtra.

Students attending LAMP's Learning Enrichment Program in Bramer, Rajasthan.



American India Foundation (AIF) is committed to improving the lives of India's underprivileged, with a special focus on women, children, and youth through high impact interventions in education, health, and livelihoods. AIF's unique value proposition is its broad engagement between communities, civil society, and expertise, thereby building a lasting bridge between the United States and India.

Learning and Migration Program (LAMP)

Distress seasonal migration of the underprivileged communities affects the education of millions of children, as they accompany their parents, likely to end up in work. AIF's Learning and Migration Program (LAMP) works with children at risk of distress migration by facilitating their access to seasonal hostels, to quality education opportunities, while also training school teachers, and empowering communities on the Right to Education Act (2009).

Leveraging the experience of working with the government and communities, LAMP focuses on children in pre-primary to secondary grades, to improve their learning outcomes and mitigate learning losses through a compelling

mix of remediation, online, home-based, and community-based learning support. Building sustainability, LAMP also trains government school teachers on learning recovery and the use of digital tools and media, engages with government and other agencies to promote policy and programs for the education of migrant communities, and increases community ownership through active engagement of multiple stakeholders. As part of AIF's flagship education initiatives, LAMP aims to contribute to SDG 2030 and strengthen the education ecosystem for 10 million children across the country.

LAMP: At a Glance

Year of inception: 2006

Target population: Children impacted by distressed seasonal migration

Number of lives impacted: Since its inception in 2006, AIF's LAMP has impacted 940,566 children across 3,269 villages in 17 states of the country and has also supported 1,651 seasonal hostels across Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Odisha in India.



Students at LAMP's Learning Resource Center at Sevaron-ki-Dhani Govt. Upper Primary School.



Dinesh, a student of Learning Enrichment Program under LAMP, with his mother Dhodi Devi.



“Attuned to the evolving growth dynamics, AIF has dedicated its sustained efforts to improving the lives of India’s disadvantaged since its inception. With poverty alleviation as a guiding pillar, we have created a transformative impact across the remotest parts of India, impacting over 12.9 million lives across 35 States of UTs in India over the past two decades ”

- Mathew Joseph
Country Director
AIF



” As parents of a child with disabilities, we used to worry about his well-being. **AIF’s LAMP** has transformed our lives and filled us with hope and confidence by recognizing Harish’s true potential as a student. He has started getting the teacher’s attention, he has also been participating in the group activities and is curious to know about the result of his unit tests. He shares with us whatever he learns in the schools, we no longer feel that his disability will be an obstacle in his educational journey.

Baldau and Rampyari Patel



Seeing 10-year-old Harishchandra, who lives with speech and hearing disability along with locomotor disability; solve Math equations with such gusto brings joy to his parents, Baldau and Rampyari Patel.

I have become confident after attending the session on **Child Protection Policy**, as now, I am aware of my rights. When I went back home during the lockdown, my parents were forcing me to get married. Since I am aware that marriage before 18 years for girls is a punishable offence, I convinced them not to get me married. They now fully support me studying further.



Lalita Jamatia
15-year-old, grade 8 student,
Laxman Para High School,
Gomati district, Tripura

Lalita 15, a grade-8 student from Tripura shares her experience of undergoing an orientation session on Child Protection Policy conducted by LAMP.



Mitarani Sabar,
grade 4, Government
Upgraded High School,
Nuapada

Mitarani Sabar shares her experience on attending LAMP's Learning Enrichment Program at the Seasonal Hostel supported by LAMP in Odisha.

Earlier I used to migrate constantly with my parents, but now, I no longer have to do that as I stay at the Seasonal Hostel. I enjoy attending **LAMP's Learning Enrichment Program**, love to read stories from its library and solve Math calculations. I stood first in my class recently, and my parents were extremely proud and happy. While I miss my parents a lot, I also understand that they want me to focus on my studies.

Once, even scared to handle a mobile phone, now I code interactive artwork, animated stories and games using open-source coding software. I have become more confident as **LAMP** has helped me identify my passion for **technology** and I am more determined to follow my dream to become a **Computer Engineer**.



Ritu Amardas Manikpuri,
Grade 8, Government Middle
School, Chhattisgarh

At just 14, once a shy student with low scores in Science and Math, Ritu is now a champion in using open-source coding applications, provided to her at school under LAMP.



Girls having a lively discussion.

Making HER shine and grow

empowHER India through its grassroots-level interventions and innovative solutions ensures that rural girls are empowered to get educated and stay in school, have healthy meals, have their own income source, and are not left behind



Handmade soaps prepared by students.

Rural girls are faced with gender-based discrimination, social isolation, economic vulnerability, a lack of higher education, and inadequate health information and services – factors that prevent a healthy transition from girlhood into womanhood. Adolescent girls’ needs (10-19 years old) are multifaceted and different from the rest of the population. Girls find it difficult to be assertive about their wants and lack the confidence to become decision-makers because of their weak social, health, and economic assets. India has a large bridge to cross over to achieve gender parity because it ranks 135 out of 146 nations in the Global Gender Gap Index.

Adolescence is a personal journey through which one develops a clear and evolving understanding of themselves in the world, accompanied by increasing agency (ability to make choices that will impact their lives) and assets (e.g., physical and mental assets, social networks, financial assets, skills, time). The issues adult women face are often rooted in their adolescence, as adolescence is a critical bridging phase. Thus, by hand-holding adolescent girls with life skills in a friendly environment, they are more likely to discover their potential, pursue their goals, and give back to society. When adolescent girls are

empowered, everyone benefits exponentially. The cornerstone of empowering adolescent girls is ensuring that they have access to basic necessities like education, sanitation, and basic life skills, which lay the foundation for well-rounded sustenance. Hence, empowHER India focuses on these essential areas through the following programs:

- A. Setu- Adolescent Girls Program,
- B. School toilet construction and WaSH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Program
- C. Education Program

Implementation Program Setu

empowHER India is building a bridge (known in Hindi as ‘Setu’), between a girl’s unequal present and a certain future, by working at a village grassroots level to improve infrastructure and gender parity so that girls can participate equally in the community’s prosperity. The two-year Setu program with adolescents includes weekly, village mentor-led, girls’ group sessions on life skills, health, gender and safety, and financial literacy for 40 hours. Additionally, older adolescent girls are linked to vocational training programs and become agents of change for collective empowerment while younger girls continue their education. The organization also works with



Parents making charts.



Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.

all village stakeholders having direct contact with the girls to ensure that they are sensitized and accustomed to the young empowered girls. It ensures a complete upliftment and transformation of the girls in their communities.

The School toilet construction and WaSH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Program

A sustainable school toilet construction with a robust hygiene program can significantly improve student attendance, health, and cognitive development. empowHER India provides sanitation facilities through the construction process, complete with a 10-month positive hygiene program. The hygiene program is available for parents and other school stakeholders in addition to a dedicated hygiene program for the students from the 2nd to 7th standard. The students, parents, teachers, village and school stakeholders are all involved in the process through a tailor-made curriculum with 10-month activities to imbibe good sanitation practices.

Education Program

A holistic approach has been adopted by the institution wherein along with providing academic education to 450 students from 5th to 10th- they are nurtured in the field of arts, culture, and sports. Active efforts are made

continuously to develop their vocational skills to increase their future employability. empowHER India uses a student-centered pedagogical approach and has adopted classroom e-learning. Extra-curricular activities are encouraged like music instrument training, traditional dance, sports, learning ethnic art, participating in inter-school science exhibitions, career counselling, psychology counselling for students, and psychology counselling for teachers.

Challenges

Some of the challenges with respect to the program implementation have been listed below:

- It is a challenge to schedule time with the girls throughout the school day, particularly during examinations, other school activities, and the holiday season.
- While parents are not barriers as such for girls to come to classes, they, especially the fathers do not take a keen interest in learning what their daughter is being taught in the sessions
- Operational challenges include finding quality trainers in remote rural areas.
- Lack of transport is also a huge problem for monitoring in remote villages.

Impact

- Since 2020, the organization has reached out to more than 1900 adolescent girls from 75

villages.

- From the end of 2021, empowHER India reached 7 government schools including 700+ students, 1000+ parents, and 100 village stakeholders.
- As many as 2500+ students have passed out from Rakesh Jain Secondary School, Panvel since its inception in 2000.



Adolescent girl with the Setu book.

Girls engaged in an activity.



When adolescent girls are empowered, everyone benefits exponentially.



“Women have repeatedly proved to be worthy investments because when women benefit- society benefits, yet our social norms act as barriers to their development. Working with women alone is not enough; we must include all stakeholders who impact the lives of women as a part of the solution.”

- Anamara Baig
CEO
empowHER India

SDG Linkages

empowHER’s work has linkages with multiple targets of Sustainable Development Goals summarized below:

SDG 5: End all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere. empowHER India is actively working with one of the most neglected populations which are both ‘women’ and ‘tribal’. The goal of the program is to assist girls to become more aware of their rights, and safety, and how to confidently speak up when they encounter injustice.



SDG 10: Reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind are integral to achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The organization works with adolescent girls from tribal and rural regions to ensure that they are not left behind.



Through SDG 5–Gender Equality and SDG 10- Reduced Inequalities, empowHER is indirectly influencing the SDGs like
SDG1- No poverty,
SDG 2- Zero hunger,
SDG 3- Good health and well-being,
SDG 4- Quality education, and SDG 8- Decent work and economic growth.



The non-profit through its grassroots-level interventions, government partnerships, and innovative solutions ensures that rural girls are empowered to get educated and stay in school, have healthy meals, have their own income source, and are not left behind.



Street champions

CINI has been building the capacities of more than 3000 most vulnerable urban children living in slums, on the streets, in red-light areas and railway stations as informed and responsible rights-holders



Child leaders after contributing to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.



Street Champion raising a question to the United Nations.

The Asian Development Bank has flagged that Asia is urbanizing very rapidly and the urbanization rate is much faster than the rest of the world. Children in street situations and their families are the result of rural-to-urban movements, as an impact of climate crisis as well as poverty. Children are those who suffer the most from the consequences of displacement, losing family members, possessions, and experiencing trauma and depression. The result of such crises may continue over the entire life span of the child when s/he resorts to early marriage, child labour, teenage pregnancy as coping or survival mechanisms.

Building Capacities of Children

For almost 50 years, GCINI's focus has been on engaging children and adolescents in their own development process supported by adult duty bearers. In strong collaboration with the local government, CINI is designing good practice models of child participation among the most vulnerable groups in eastern parts of India. One of the core components of CINI's child participation portfolio is building the capacities of children as advocates.

On a yearly basis, through innovative training mechanisms, CINI has been building the capacities of more than 3000 most vulnerable

urban children living in slums, on the streets, in red-light areas and railway stations; as informed and responsible rights-holders. Among them, more than 30 children living or working on streets, have been trained as child leaders taking responsibility to interact with local, national, and international duty bearers.

Those children named as Street Champions, identify the issues that violate the rights of children in their communities through their own experiences as well as collective analysis of the issues along with their peer groups, and highlight them at various platforms, advocating for appropriate solutions. At local level, government officials such as the Mayor of a city as well as Urban Local Bodies positively encourage those child leaders in reporting the issues to them through various interactions and discussing with them about the solutions that are localised and sustainable.

At international level, those child leaders have highlighted the global concerns of migrant children's rights to entitlements, issues related to homelessness and climate change, participation of children in developmental planning and reporting processes. At the international platforms where those issues were highlighted were Human Rights Council of the United Nations, United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural

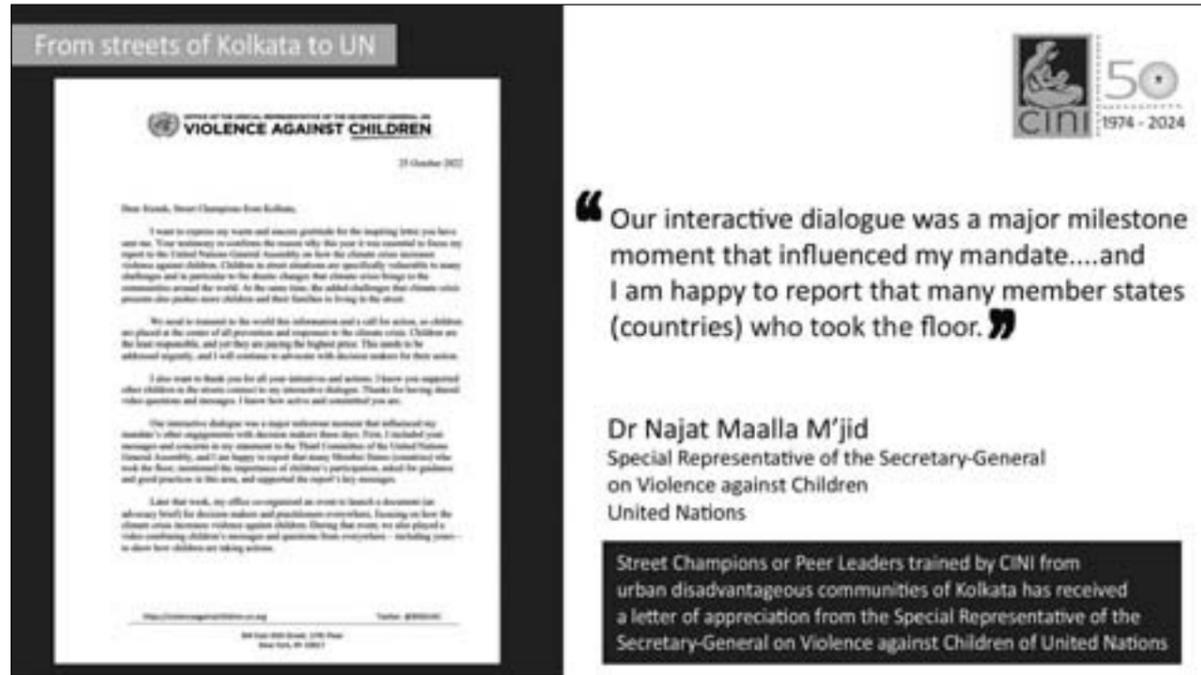


Child leader hands over a charter of solutions based on issues related to child rights to the Mayor of a city.

Rights (CESCR) and United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. Deaf children were also trained to participate in dialogues with the United Nations where they highlighted the concerns related to sound pollution and deafness. Recently a letter of appreciation has been received from Dr. Najat Maalla M’jid, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Violence Against Children, thanking those children for their initiatives and actions. The letter concluded with the following encouraging words from the world leader to the children – “I know you are at the forefront of actions, and I want to leave you with one message: Don’t stop! Continue doing what you are doing. Please do not give up. The world needs you, so together, we can make it safer, healthier, more just, and inclusive.”

SDG Linkages

CINI continuously strives to fulfil the SDGs of Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable cities and communities and Climate Action. CINI also ensures participation of children in the status report of the SDGs submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).



Letter from United Nations to Street Champions.



“In its journey of almost 50 years, CINI has got the opportunity to build strong partnerships with the Government for implementation of programmes to bring developmental changes on the ground level. However, we believe that the children like the Street Champions have been at the forefront of contributing towards bringing those changes, thus acting as our own Champions of Change.”

- Dr. Indrani Bhattacharyya
CEO
CINI



Child leaders visualising the components of a child-friendly city before presenting to the Mayor of a city.



Restoring tanks has resulted in increased water availability for irrigation.

From drought to prosperity

How a 2019-launched initiative is uplifting the lives of Bundelkhand's rural communities by restoring historical tanks and augmenting agrarian livelihoods



After being associated with SRIJAN, Lakshmi Kushwaha has encouraged many women to adopt organic agriculture.

Bundelkhand Initiative for Water, Agriculture, and Livelihoods (BIWAL) is an attempt to revive the Bundelkhand region's traditional water bodies and the surrounding ecosystem. The region is hilly and undulating and comprises 14 contiguous districts in the Southern belt of Uttar Pradesh and the Northern area of Madhya Pradesh states. Bundelkhand has historically been a water-scarce region as it is bereft of significant river systems, and the adverse geological conditions lead to suboptimal recharge.

The fact was known by the ancient communities living in the region that had built an estimated 8000 traditional water bodies between the 8th to the 12th century, funded by the then reigning Chandela and Bundela kings. However, most of these tanks were disused due to the siltation of beds, encroachment in the catchments, and illegal occupation of the tank beds. Coupled with this, the heavy dependence on groundwater resources such as tubewells has further deteriorated the water condition of the region.

BIWAL: Facts & Figures

- It is a joint undertaking by six civil action organizations led by SRIJAN and the communities to collectively revive the water harvesting culture of the region. This consortium is led by SRIJAN and intends to work on rural Bundelkhand's holistic and comprehensive social and economic development.
- Since the program's launch in 2019, it has positively impacted the lives of 24,309 farmers in more than 310 villages.
- It is through the restoration of 222 historic tanks, excavation of 1072 Dohas (Water harvesting structures), setting up of 173 Prakritik Krishi Kendras (bioresource centers), establishing of 470 multi-layer farms, and nurturing 17 Tapovans (mini-forests).



Restoration of a tank underway.

Water Management: A Brief History

In ancient and medieval India, water management was undertaken by the local community themselves; the kingdoms were responsible for providing monetary support. The site selection, planning, construction, distribution, and maintenance of the rainwater harvesting structures were all community-led and managed. India had a wealth of different water harvesting structures and techniques suited to the local geographical and geological contexts. The ancients knew the importance of harvesting rainwater received on the 120-odd rainy days so that it could be used year-long to meet the consumptive and livelihood requirements. Grand water harvesting structures were built across the country and funded by different kingdoms. The culture of building tanks was widespread in the Bundelkhand region, which Chandela and Bundela Kings ruled. 8000 Chandela and Bundela Tanks were built between 800 to 1200 AD.

Similarly, Keres was built in Karnataka, Eri tanks in Tamil Nadu, and Chevuru tanks in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Three states of South India, namely Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, have more than 1,43,000 traditional tanks. Bihar had the famous Ahar Pynes to store water, and Gond Kings funded huge Katas, three-sided reservoirs, in Gondwana comprising

Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh.

This wisdom was lost as the control over water resources shifted to the state, beginning with colonial times. The gradual erosion of local control over resources marked the era of rule by the Britishers. The policies of Independent India also favored state control over water resources with the government's fascination with building huge reservoirs across rivers.

It led to the disrepair of most water harvesting structures and the decay of local community management systems. The shift of water control from the community to the government also had many other unwelcome repercussions, such as the low-cost recovery of canal systems, high cost of water supply, lack of source sustainability, lack of financial sustainability of water schemes, abysmal repair and maintenance and reduced supply resulting from poor management. Tank management systems were also disused due to the erosion of traditional community ownership structures. Since the community no longer controls the resource, they do not feel liable to manage tanks. Some reasons for the decline in tank irrigation are siltation of the tank bed, siltation of the feed channels, encroachments in the tank bed and catchment area, and development of good irrigation in the command

area of tanks (Gomathinayagam et al., 2005).

While tanks were an important source of irrigation during the pre-independence era, in the 1970s area under tank irrigation was less than 3% (MOSPI, 2017). By the 1970s, due to the government subsidies on pump sets and due to dysfunctional surface irrigation structures, the community started moving towards groundwater-based irrigation systems. Today, India ranks at the topmost position in terms of groundwater usage, with 90% of the groundwater being used for irrigation as against 40% (the global average) (Suhag, 2016).

Understanding Bundelkhand

The Bundelkhand region straddles 13 contiguous districts; 7 are located in Southern Uttar Pradesh and the other 6 in Northern Madhya Pradesh. The region has a recorded history of droughts and water scarcity. It is due to the absence of any river systems, adverse geological conditions leading to suboptimal recharge, and recently the over-extraction of groundwater resources. It has led to high inter-generational incidences of poverty.

Many water harvesting structures, namely the Chandela and Bundela tanks, were built several centuries ago to provide water in times of scarcity and in years of normal rainfall for irrigation utility during the non-monsoon

Bundelkhand Region Map



months. These tanks served as a lifeline for the people for hundreds of years and were managed by communities before the British invasion. However, with the responsibility of maintenance shifted to the government, these structures fell into disrepair. Over the years the region has faced the brunt of droughts and water scarcity again due to deforestation, the diversion of catchment areas for other purposes, underscoring their

continued relevance, and increased dependence on groundwater.

Bundelkhand is an agro-climatically and socio-culturally distinct region. It has languished behind other regions, even within these states, which by themselves rank low amongst India's economic development states. Geographically it straddles the Vindhyan plateau (overwhelmingly in Madhya Pradesh) and the Gangetic plains (mostly in Uttar Pradesh but also in Madhya Pradesh). Beset with light soils with poor moisture retention capacity, agriculture here has suffered from the vagaries of monsoons over the ages. Primary cultivators comprise 47.5% of the population, while 38.9% are laborers with a predominance of agriculture laborers. 40% of the farmers in the region are marginal farmers, 25.5% are small farmers, and only 5.4% are large farmers. Rainfed single-annual cropping systems sustain most of the population, barring a few tracks that have received the benefits of canal irrigation. With erratic rainfall, the agricultural lands in the vicinity of the small streams are left with a limited water source for irrigation. These shallow streams often run dry 2-3 months post-monsoon without any scope of recharge, which takes its toll on the rabi crop.

Access to drinking water is a significant issue in the region, and communities, especially women,

bear this brunt. During the summer, they travel around 1.5km or more to fetch water for domestic needs. In villages barely a few kilometers away, people haven't had the time and "luxury" to worry about the Covid-19 pandemic. These villages have a much bigger crisis — water scarcity, which has peaked along with the summer, like every year. For nearly two dozen villages in this Bundelkhand region, water scarcity is common at most times of the year and reaches its peak in the summer months of April to June. Most hand pumps in the region have stopped running water, and wells have dried up.

Two types of tanks were historically built in the region. The first category of tanks was built by impounding the surface flow of rainwater in natural streams by constructing bunds across an undulating topography to store water for household purposes and cattle. The second category of tanks was more significant and, in addition to providing water for consumptive purposes, also provided irrigation to farms downstream of the bunds. Despite lack of maintenance and all-around apathy, most of the historic Chandela and Budela tanks still continue to serve the vital purpose of harvesting water for use by the people although on a much-reduced scale. They continue to have great relevance for the local communities. These tanks are in urgent need of repair and restoration. A historical

legacy and many rural community assets will be preserved if this is achieved.

The hypothesis for the BIWAL program to uplift the rural economy through work on tank restoration is as follows:

Drought-proofing and assured water for agriculture and allied activities can impede economic growth and social empowerment. A historical legacy in water harvesting would have been restored for use well into the future. It would have contributed to the climate-proofing of landscapes in a region where lack or shortfalls in the availability of water has adversely impacted the economic well-being of the people. Building a pool of local cadres on soil and water conservation and climate-smart agriculture.

The repair and rejuvenation of the tanking economy were seen as an opportunity to pave the way toward community-led management of the natural capital endowed upon them. Hence, the additional impetus was given to promote sustainable agriculture practices to expand avenues of on and off-farm employment. The implementation plan of the region-wide venture of BIWAL thus rested on two major focus areas; help expand and deepen livelihood opportunities with backward integration and forward linkages to strengthen the local agroecology.



A Chandeli water body.

The BIWAL initiative was a daunting undertaking due to the large number of tanks spread across several districts, and many attempts had been made in the past to revive tanks on a large scale across the country. But these efforts mainly focussed on repairing physical structures and not on institutional mechanisms to maintain the tank infrastructure. Therefore, it is important to map the socio-economic dynamics around tank infrastructure before initiating any physical works.

In this context, BIWAL, a consortium of CSOs led by SRIJAN with vast experience in work at the grassroots, focussed heavily on fostering relationships with local institutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of the rehabilitation work. As a result, tank Management Committees (TMCs) were formed at every site to mobilize the local community and ensure the village's active participation in the revival and desiltation operations of the tank. These TMCs also worked in close coordination with the Gram Sabha and Panchayati Raj Institutions, which have been vested with the constitutional status as the supreme authority at the village level. This led to participatory decision-making and the long-term sustainability of the tank systems.

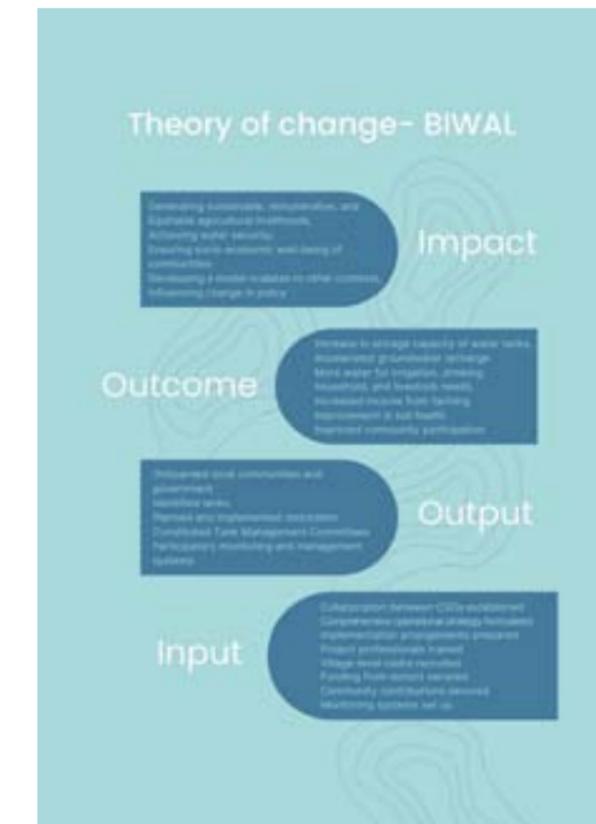
Strengthening the Tank Management Committees (TMC) is an important strategy to empower

the user communities with decision-making responsibilities. It was done by providing access to ready-to-use information on available water and its sparing use, appropriate water budgeting skills, creating an enabling environment, and devolving financial management responsibilities.

The BIWAL worked on more extensive and more comprehensive socio-economic development of the region. Starting with the desilting of ponds and their repair, the initiative worked on building-related water harvesting structures and Climate-smart livelihood practices to optimize production and reduce costs to restore the agroecology of the region. The primary activities undertaken were tank restoration, silt application on farms, institutionalization and capacity building of Tank Management Committees (TMCs), excavation of other water recharge/ harvesting structures such as Dohas and gabions, promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices through training and support, the establishment of Prakritik Krishi Kendra (resource center for natural farming), facilitation of women producer groups, promotion of high-density agricultural production systems such as multi-layer farms, nano orchards, kitchen gardens and creation of micro forests known as Tapovans inspired by the Miyawaki technique.

In the last three years, a lot of ground has

been covered to restore the tank ecosystem and strengthen local livelihoods by promoting innovative climate-resilient practices. A brief description of the various activities undertaken under the BIWAL initiative is below:



Tank Restoration

The first step of the restoration of the tank is its selection. It is a demand-driven process in that the community around the tank has to be interested in repairing the structure and willing to take up the tank management and maintenance responsibilities post-rehabilitation. Also, priority is given to multi-purpose tanks and structures that are relatively free of encroachments, and there are fewer conflicts within the community regarding tank repair and usage. The tank selection is formalized in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Gram Panchayat.

Tank Management Committee (TMC)

A Tank Management Committee (TMC) is constituted at a general meeting with the village community to ensure active community participation from the beginning of the work. Efforts are made to ensure the representation of all habitations/communities in the village. The various terms kept in mind while forming the TMC are; 50% of members must be women. The TMC Charter states that “either the Treasurer or Secretary should preferably be a literate woman who can read and write.” Regular meetings and discussions are held with the TMC to identify problems and issues in the Tank infrastructure.

Detailed problem analysis is conducted, and based on its findings, an action plan is prepared that includes a comprehensive list of interventions to be carried out to rehabilitate the tank.

Desilication

Desilication is often one of the most crucial operations. The program arranges for the excavators for desilication, while the responsibility of transferring the silt from the tank site to agricultural fields is the community’s responsibility. Tank Management Committees (TMCs) play an important role in the management of silt removal. The TMC leads the activities such as hiring tractors for silt transportation, deciding upon timings and shifts of silt removal, collecting names of farmers interested in silt application on their farms, developing norms to ensure equity in silt distribution, and conflict resolution, among others.

TMCs are the anchors of the project in the villages, responsible for the overall management of revival efforts, including water use planning and governance and the redressal of disputes among local stakeholders. Therefore, the capacity building of TMC is crucial for the rehabilitation operations’ success. Training is

provided to community members and TMCs on tank maintenance, water-use planning, water management, well water monitoring, improved farming practices, and horticulture as well as maintaining records and conducting meetings. A hands-on approach is used for training and capacity building wherein the implementation of tasks is assigned to TMC members, and CSOs provide handholding support.

Since the project’s initiation, 224 historical tanks have been desilted by the excavation of over 12.23 lakh cubic meters of silt that 6468 farmers have used. In tank restoration work the project contribution range from 28-32%, and community contribution range from 68-72%.

While addressing the issue of water, based on SRIJAN’s field experiences and interaction with farmers, it was observed that climate change affects land and crop productivity in the region. There are instances of crop failure because of erratic rainfall, poor crop management practices, knowledge gap among farmers, poor soil health, and poor-quality seed availability. Thus, to address the adversity of climate change and build the capacity of the local community towards climate resilience agriculture, SRIJAN started with climate-smart agricultural practices.

Impact

Direct Outcomes of Restoration

After the restoration, a considerable and immediate increase in the storage capacity from the tanks was desilted and repaired. It implies that the tanks can harvest more rainwater and runoff and have improved soil water retention capacity, which has accelerated the recharge of shallow wells downstream of the tank within a radius of around 500-1000 meters. As per the study of 148 respondents from 9 villages in the Niwari district of Madhya Pradesh, a noticeable increase in groundwater levels has been observed. They also reported that the increased availability of water has reduced the drudgery of women as they do not need to make arduous treks to fetch water anymore. Women spent 2.5 hours on average previously fetching water.

Additional income-earning opportunities have also been created due to more water in tanks. People of some villages have started community fishing in the tanks. Some villages harvested and sold indigenous fish species Rohu, Catla, and Common carp after tank restoration. Some revived tanks have also been used to cultivate water chestnut (singhara), and lotus seed (makhana) both of which claim premium rates in the market.

Benefits to Agriculture

Restoring the tanks has resulted in increased water availability for irrigation. Applying the

fertile silt from tank desilication has improved the soil profile of the beneficiary farmers. The surveyed farmers reported growing mungfali (groundnuts), urad, mung, til (sesame), soybean, ginger, and safed muesli in the Kharif and wheat, mustard, peas, black gram, barley, and potatoes during Rabi, with wheat being the primary crop. The black silt from the tanks has improved the soil nutrient content and water retention, leading to improved crop yields, better quality of crops, and reduced the water requirement of most crops. Farmers reported that wheat needed only 3-5 rounds compared to the 7-8 rounds required earlier.

94% of the study’s respondents reported improvement in crop productivity, and 93% reported improvement in soil health. In some villages, the farmers mentioned that their chemical fertilizer requirement had reduced post-silt application. The yield of wheat reported the most significant jump in productivity. Farmers reported a doubling of wheat yield; in the case of other crops, an improvement of as much as 20 quintals per hectare was reported.

The increase in water availability post-restoration has led most prominently to an increase in the cultivated area in Kharif and Rabi seasons. The total cultivated area increased by 16.4% in Kharif and 17.4% in the Rabi season. The area under irrigation for both cropping seasons increased considerably—28% in Kharif and 33% in Rabi in

the tank command. Most farmers reported an increase in both the water level and its duration in the wells. Earlier, most wells of the area would dry up by February or March but post the tank revival, the wells retained water till May. A significant increase in pumping duration has also been reported. Farmers reported that while the motor would pump for 0.5 hours earlier, after the tank restoration, the water motor could pump for 1.5-2.5 hours per day.

Towards Gender Equity

Along with tangible benefits in agriculture and livelihoods, the initiative has led to changing gender dynamics, with women taking the lead to drive change in their homes and societies. Women in Bundelkhand faced stringent restrictions with most not allowed to step outside their doors. All of that is slowly changing, with women renegotiating their space and voice within communities and their own households. Initially, the program faced many challenges in integrating women as the women were reluctant to share a platform with men, and even if they attended, most often, participation in the discussion was minimal. It took many meetings and countless hours of their silent presence before women began to participate in meetings. Today women not only attend meetings but bring others as well. Several women reported improved confidence and self-esteem after their association with the BIWAL initiative.

Kesar's learning journey with SRIJAN

Kesar dreams of attaining higher education and using her skills to improve her life. Interestingly, her association with SRIJAN led to the advancement of her knowledge and brought her village's development

Kesar Kushwaha lives in Kachiyakhera, a small village in the Niwari district of Madhya Pradesh. Married at the tender age of 15, Kesar was a class 10 student when she had to leave her house and education for a life of struggle. She had been a good student and was keen to continue learning, but her lack of money was a significant constraint. Finally, her father came forward to support her higher education by providing his hard-earned wages towards her tuition fees and books. Through his support, she was able to complete her graduation. However, the lack of skilled employment avenues in her village meant she had to turn to agriculture.

The agricultural land owned by the family was meager, and they had cultivated crops on leased land to make some income. However, in recent years, their income from agricultural operations fell dramatically due to a sharp rise in input costs and market uncertainty. In that case, Kesar started offering private tuition to children from her village.

It was during this time that Kesar first got introduced to SRIJAN. The organization had

chosen Kesar's village under the BIWAL project and had initiated working with farmers on organic agriculture practices. Kesar got interested in the concept and regularly attended meetings. She adopted organic agriculture on her farm and was convinced of its utility. She encouraged many other village women to practice organic agriculture by offering free samples of organic fertilizers and biopesticides. Seeing her active participation in the work, Kesar was nominated as a village resource person for SRIJAN.

While organic inputs had reduced the cost, the uncertainty of good harvests was a significant issue. Acute water scarcity had become a daunting reality for the village. Women of the village had to travel 4-5 km daily to ensure drinking water for their household.

SRIJAN organized a village-level meeting in which the desilting of a Chandeli talaab, an old tank in the village, was discussed. The desilting of the ancient tank would not only ensure water security for drinking and consumptive purposes and allow access to irrigation for most village households. Kesar played an active role in the

tank desiltation work. She was responsible for maintaining the site record book, arrangement of tractors, and regular measurements. The potential was created with her effort totalling 31.68 lakh liters of water. Total JCB hours were 135.2 hours, and the number of silts carted away was 2120. The project cost was 1.57 lakhs, and the community contribution was 6.41 lakhs.

During the desiltation work, Kesar encouraged families to apply silt excavated from the talaab site on their farms. She was amongst the first few community members who experienced bumper yields after silt application. A total of 48 farmers have applied silt in more than 20 ha.

A Tank Management Committee has been formed to manage the operations and maintenance of the taalab. As the village resource person, Kesar plays a pivotal role in regularizing meetings of the TMC twice a month. In addition, she has undergone thematic training on water conservation, multi-layer farming, orchards, and agricultural practices.

She went for an exposure visit to see the

successful models in other districts and states, which has helped her widen her knowledge and skills to apply in the field. SRIJAN also helped Kesar to set up a Prakritik Krishi Kendra in her house. She was given the training to prepare various organic manures, biopesticides, and bio-stimulants such as Jeevamrut, Ghan Jeevamrut, Soya tonic, Neemastra, etc.

Regular meetings of women farmers of her village are held at this Kendra, where she encourages them to adopt organic agriculture and other innovative practices. She maintains a small demonstration plot on her farm that has been set up for farmers to try out new agricultural techniques and learn through experimentation. She has provided farmers with good quality seeds for Kharif and rabi crops. Presently, she supports 120 farmers in adopting better crop management practices in crops, resulting in a reduction in the cost of cultivation.

Apart from this, she was actively involved in the plantation of 250 saplings, 3 multi-layer farming, two nano-orchards, setting up 25 kitchen gardens, and providing 20 families with cookstoves and spray machines to women.

She regularly records the water level in the wells within 1 km radius of the Chandeli taalab. Furthermore, with the support of the technical

team, she is conducting crop water budgeting with farmers and TMC members for better crop planning. Because of her strenuous efforts, there is acceptance among farmers towards new farming techniques and practices and making collective efforts towards achieving water sustainability for the village.

On her experience working with SRIJAN, Kesar shares, "I am learning a lot while working with



Kesar enjoys her association with SRIJAN.

SRIJAN. With the help of other women in the village, I am able to contribute towards the development of the village. I wish to continue this learning journey."

Kesar's wish to educate herself and learn has been realized, and it is not just benefitting her but also leading to the advancement of the village and its women.



Kesar has helped setting up 25 kitchen gardens.



Government School teacher engaging students through picture reading activity.

Digital inclusion for all

Pratham InfoTech Foundation has been dedicated to e-education and empowering children, youth, and society since 2004

For more information related to the organisation, you can visit www.pif.org.in



Government Vocational School Teachers trained to initiate Computer Aided Learning and Digital Literacy and Life Skill Program in Government schools.

India has several legislative mechanisms at the Central and State level to boost digitalization in multiple areas. Education is one area where the national government wants to improve the education system and has adopted ICT as a program in schools. However, ground realities are different. There remains a huge scope of improvement in achieving the SDG 4- Quality Education.

Pratham InfoTech Foundation (PIF) has been working for inclusion of Quality Education since early 2000s in collaboration with various organizations through PPP (Public- Private Partnership). The intent is to use information technologies in the best possible ways to advance SDG4. A quality education is one of the foundations of sustainable development. It enables self-reliance, boosts the economic growth by enhancing skills, and improves people's lives by opening up opportunities for better livelihoods.

The Effort

The mission to improve the quality of education in India and to ensure that all children not only attend but also thrive in school is being accomplished by working in collaboration with the government, local communities, parents, teachers, volunteers, and civil society members.

Pratham InfoTech Foundation (PIF) has been working with multiple stakeholders to minimize the 'Information Poverty' in India. PIF's program functions in two areas, i.e. school and community. PIF feels grassroots community level intervention and school-based initiatives are key factors. The Ed-Tech program in school i.e. Computer Aided Learning for primary grade students focuses on building Foundation Literacy and Numeracy skill (FLN). The Digital Literacy as Life skill intervention for upper primary and secondary grade students focuses on Coding and the 21st century skills. My-e school program provides a free learning platform- Digital Sakshar that aims to motivate the school teachers to understand the importance of digital education and the adoption of information technology as a mainstream medium of learning.

The community-based program i.e. India Digital Inclusion primarily focuses on youth with skills that the new global economy demands. All the programs aim to supplement rather than replace governmental efforts. The programs are implemented on a large scale to not only reach as many children and youth as possible, but also to create an adoptable demonstration model for governments. To ensure the desired goals and outcomes are being achieved, Evaluation and Monitoring is done at regular intervals and



Providing career coaching, professional development guidance, on-the-job training opportunities and placement assistance to young adults.

overseen by the PIF's Executive Team. PIF's Programs, products and services stress on the use of IT to address socio-economic problems of the disadvantaged and underserved population. Holistic program development, value-addition to stakeholders and sustainability of efforts are key determinants of success. A low cost, scalable and quality driven operational model that relies on recruiting smart, talented youth from the community should emphasize on capacity building, skill development, social integration and inclusive growth.

The economically disadvantaged communities, stakeholders are looking to equip children with skill sets in education to enhance their ability to compete in the job market and enhance their future employability. The provision of a cost-effective, adaptable, value-for-money solution works at filling this crucial gap in the digital divide. The factors that contribute towards the success of the program involves careful selection of the schools and communities indicating the need and ownership, usage of PIF's own developed localised educational software and

video-based tutorials in indigenous language, transparency and accountability towards key stakeholders at all level in terms of funds and programmatic updates. This fast-growing organization, today has reached out to 1 million+ children through direct intervention and 10 million+ students through various partnerships across 17 states of India. PIF has also trained more than 2 lakh youth in IT and soft skills, thus arming them with employable skills along with connecting them to relevant jobs in the market.



Students participating in learning foundational skill through technology and activities.



Co-Founder & CEO PIF Prem Yadav with Noble Laureate Mr. Abhijeet Banerjee.

SDG Linkages



PIF also abide by one of the Sustainable Development Goals known as '**SDG4 - Quality Education**' as it is significantly relevant to the goals set by the organization. The Sustainable Development targets for 2030 call for ensuring the completion of primary and secondary education by all, and guaranteeing equal access to opportunities for access to quality technical and vocational education for everyone. It enables self-reliance, boosts the economic growth by enhancing skills, and improves people's lives by opening up opportunities for better livelihoods. Providing qualified teachers and to provide teacher training for enhancement of their skills and knowledge are as well a target of SDG4.

SDG 5: Gender Equality - Ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, it's crucial for sustainable future; it's proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development. Enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women



SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth - "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". Their target is to promote youth employment, education and training, promote policies to support job creation, improve resources to gain decent work with equal pay. This SDG is possible by means of developing a global youth employment strategy



SDG Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure-Technological progress is also key to finding lasting solutions to both economic and environmental challenges. Investment in infrastructure and innovation are crucial drivers of economic growth and development.



More than 4 billion people still do not have access to the Internet, and 90 per cent are from the developing world. Bridging this digital divide is crucial to ensure equal access to information and knowledge, as well as foster innovation and entrepreneurship.



Learning through technology can be fun.



*Pratham InfoTech
Foundation's Digital Academy
student's graduation
ceremony.*



“Together with my friends and other associates, with whom I have lived and worked in my life, I have a determined motto to provide opportunities to the underprivileged to help them achieve their maximum potential.

This is why, I have always preferred to invest in my grassroots level employees, build their capacity and promote them to higher positions because of my firm belief in their potential. My friends, have in turn, have formed a second generation of leaders in different parts of the country who will help us reach our objective which is to take every child from “Illiteracy to e-literacy”.

- Prem Yadav
Co-Founder & CEO
Pratham Infotech Foundation

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