



INDIVIDUALL MÄNNISKOHJÄLP
SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

VANI



COORDINATING 15 YEARS OF
SERVING THE INDIAN VOLUNTARY
SECTOR

How Good Governance and Management System Contributed in Organisational Effectiveness

Some Case Studies of the Civil Society Organisations

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

November 2023

Case Studies Contributed by the Indian CSOs

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Preface

Being a national platform of Indian Voluntary Organisations, VANI strives towards strengthening enabling environment. This includes generating knowledge and capacity building interventions. We also work for influencing public narrative of the sector. We all know that internal governance, management, and operating structures of Indian VOs are of high standards, but many times critical questions are raised due to lack of information in public domain. Even some section of society believes that the external pressure of compliance and demand of accountability that forces VOs to create and maintain those standards. However, contrary of this we have observed that there are numerous organisations who evolved as high-quality institutions due to commitment of their top management and governing boards. These organisations could be termed as high-performance institutions. We also recognise the fact that Indian CSOs operate in very limited financial resources and with high demand of their work. The Indian Voluntary Sector has been breeding ground of many internationally acclaimed innovations.

We are pleased to inform you that VANI invited some organisations considered as high performing organisations and ten organisations responded to the survey. We requested them to share their experiences on “What makes your institution one of the best of its size in India?” This could be due to high performing leadership and team but that is not possible without facilitating factors. What could be those factors?

We requested the following information for the survey:

1. Name of your Organisation:
2. Year of Establishment:
3. Mission Statement: (Briefly state your organisation’s mission)
4. Key Achievements: (What changes you could manage to make in the lives of people, constituency, and stakeholders?)
5. Challenges Faced: (Some challenges you faced in this journey and your strategy of overcoming them.)
6. Strategies for Success: (Describe the strategies and approaches that have contributed to your organisation’s success)
7. Lessons Learned: (Share valuable lessons your organization has learned along the way)

8. Impact Assessment: (Provide information on how you assess and measure the impact of your organization's work)
9. What is ultimate strong point of your success?
10. Future Ready: (Outline your organisation's future goals and aspirations)

During the period when country is celebrating its 75th year of independence, society is documenting and sharing its contribution of making India great. Let's add the story of Indian Voluntary Sector in the national narrative of nation building. This will also motivate the new generation who thinks of joining the development field. These ten case studies will be shared widely through electronic media and E-publication.

We genuinely appreciate the dedication of 1. APMAS - Mr. C S Reddy; 2. CRY- Ms. Puja Marwaha; 3. CYSD- Mr. Jagadananda; 4. DA- Dr. Ashok Khosla; 5. PANI- Mr. Bharat Bhushan; 6. PFI - Ms. Punam Muthreja; 7. Society for Sustainable Development- Mr. Arun Jindal; 8. Srijan- Mr. Murlidhar Chandra; 9. UNNATI - Mr. Binoy Acharya; 10. URMAL- Mr. Ramesh Saran by participating in helping us in documenting successful civil society organizations and the positive impact it will have on the sector as a whole. This is going to be a light of hope when negative narratives are dominating the public mind.

It is an IM funded study coordinated by VANI Team.

With Best Regards,

Harsh Jaitli
Chief Executive Officer
Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

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1. Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS)

1. Year of Establishment: 2001

2. Mission Statement:

By 2030, APMAS, a cutting-edge resource organization, engaged in multi-stakeholder partnerships for systemic change; innovating and demonstrating sustainable livelihoods institutional models impacting one million households through:

- Co-creating and promoting quality standards and benchmarks
- Capacity and capabilities development
- Ecosystem services – Access to technology, finance, market, infrastructure
- Interface among women-led and diverse community institutions
- Integration of nutrition, health, education and WASH services
- Evidence based policy advocacy

3. Key Achievements:

Institutional Impact on SHGs and SHG Federations: Through capacity building interventions, APMAS significantly improved the functioning of SHG federations. Repayment rates of bank linkages increased, and the quality of groups improved. The federations showed improved governance, higher participation, and mobilization of funds from external sources. SHGs also benefited from APMAS interventions. There was an increase in SHGs following best practices, better repayment of loans, and improved bookkeeping. Many defunct SHGs were revived, and nearly 95% of target households were covered under SHGs.

Social Benefits for SHG women: Women in SHGs experienced significant social benefits. They gained sustainable assets, actively participated in community affairs, sent their children to school, and prevented child marriages and labor. Women became community leaders and developed social and technical skills.

Impact on farmers: APMAS' livelihood interventions resulted in tangible economic benefits for farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Telangana. Their income increased through improved agricultural practices, increased productivity, and the establishment of microenterprises and small businesses.

Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs): APMAS supported the development of FPOs, helping them become business organizations. FPOs received licenses, financial assistance, and credit linkages, and they engaged in value chain interventions.

Health and Nutrition Impact: APMAS contributed to improved health and sanitation facilities in households, leading to reduced health issues, increased quality of life, and access to health and sanitation loans for over 95% of households.

Quality Assessment and Rating Tools: APMAS developed and used rating and grading tools to assess over 500 SHG federations and cooperatives, leading to improved governance and portfolio quality.

Self-Regulation and Sustainability: APMAS played a crucial role in developing and upscaling a system of self-regulation for the SHG movement in India. This resulted in improved financial management, increased savings, and sustained growth of SHGs and federations.

Research and Policy Advocacy: APMAS conducted 84 research studies and produced 70 thematic publications, influencing policymakers and advocacy institutions. It also anchored the ENABLE Network and engaged in policy advocacy at the national level.

Self-Learning Modules: APMAS developed self-learning modules in multiple languages to enhance capacity building and improve transparency, governance, and management at all levels of SHGs, FPOs and federations.

Overall, APMAS's interventions have brought positive and transformative changes in the lives of stakeholders, empowering women, improving livelihoods, enhancing agricultural practices, and promoting sustainable development at the grassroots level.

4. Challenges Faced:

Over the journey of 22 years, APMAS had a successful yet challenging journey. As a national level capacity building organisation which started its journey with strengthening SHGs and SHG federations, we have seen these institutions develop into strong platforms for women empowerment. However, the government involvement in the promotion of these institutions made it challenging for the NGOs like APMAS to ensure their sustainability.

Even though APMAS is currently engaged in promotion of FPOs at a large scale, due to the delay in release of funds from the donor organisations, it is difficult to ensure smooth functioning and efficiency in our interventions. We try to have diversified sources of funding (international donors, corporates, government etc.) to minimize this risk and to limit the cash flow issues.

In the current external environment, particularly the legal framework, is rigid for the functioning of civil society.

Staff turnover is another major challenge when dealing with the community institutions. It is difficult to retain domain experts for which APMAS focuses on the capacity building of staff on a regular basis

5. Strategies for Success:

Our approach:

- Institution building
- Capacity Building
- Focus on the poor and the marginalized
- Research and advocacy
- Partnerships and collaborations

Community-led development is APMAS's key approach towards it work with the poor and the marginalized. The interventions across sectors are taken-up through community based institutions such as self-help groups, farmer producer organizations, village organizations etc. and development of community resource pool. This strategy ensures that the interventions are sustainable.

Moreover, APMAS always tries to stay relevant according to the development context and the needs of the community. Through rigorous capacity building, continuous handholding and mentoring, APMAS ensures the sustainability of the institutions.

6. Lessons Learned:

Over the 22 years of journey we have learned the importance of partnerships and collaborations in implementing development activities at ground level. It is very important to bring synergies among different players who are working towards the empowerment of marginalized communities in order to maximize the benefit.

We have also learned the importance of creating enabling policy & advocacy environment by facilitation GO-NGO collaborations towards which we have been a pioneer organisation. We also realized that adopting and integrated approach at every stage would ensure the desired outcomes.

7. Impact Assessment:

Most often we have third party assessments for our interventions and to measure the impact. It differs from project to project. In all the assessments we ensure that the qualitative impact is also measured (through interviews, group discussions, comparative analysis etc.) in addition to the quantitative impact.

8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

APMAS has strong leadership and governing board which is the key to its success. Moreover, the ownership of the community is what make our work more sustainable.

9. Future Ready:

We aspire to reach one million households through our interventions. Our goals for the next seven years are:

- To emerge as a partner of choice for government, academic institutions, donors, corporates, NGOs, community based institutions and other key stakeholders through capacity building, incubation, mentoring and knowledge management.
- To promote self-reliant livelihoods institutions which demonstrate high quality standards, engaged in partnerships and linkages resulting in their member households becoming resilient to cope with risks and shocks.
- To support at least 1000 self-reliant and democratic institutions of SHG Federations, FPOs and FPO Federations in providing range of services resulting in tripling of income for their member households.
- Gender mainstreaming resulting in women's leadership and decision making at household and institutional level and asset creation for at least one lakh women.

- Member households of APMAS incubated community institutions access their rights and entitlements and utilize services of health, education, nutrition and WASH resulting in improved quality of life

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2. Child Rights and You (CRY)

1. Year of Establishment: 1979

2. Mission Statement:

To enable people to take responsibility for the situation of deprived Indian children, and to motivate them to seek resolution through individual and collective action, thereby enabling children to realize their full potential, and people to discover their potential for action and sustainable change. Also, to enable people's collectives and movements encompassing diverse segments, to pledge their particular strengths, working in partnership to secure, protect, and honour the rights of India's children.

3. Key Achievements:

Over four decades of experience, CRY has achieved a significant impact on the consciousness and prioritization of the children and their rights in the Indian society. More concretely, CRY has mobilized hundreds and thousands of people to act for children. Here are just a few areas where CRY's work impacted children and communities:

- Empowering grassroots level non-profit organisations in taking initiatives in far-flung corners of the country – CRY has supported almost 800 partnerships over the past 44 years.
- Innovating and finding different ways to address the myriad issues India's children faced – including teacher training programmes, developing bridge schools for child labourers, and many other models.
- Redefining philanthropy in many ways, including urging people to buy CRY greeting cards, where the proceeds would go to various child development programmes and many other forms of donations including individual and corporate partnerships etc.
- Reaching out to people from all the walks of life and encouraging them to volunteer for change in whichever way they could. This includes engaging with painters and organising exhibitions of their works, which they voluntarily donated to CRY.

- Engaging with children, helping them rediscover their childhoods.
- Working closely with parents, teachers, Anganwadi workers, communities, district and state level governments.
- Focusing on changing behaviours and practices at the grass roots level and influencing public policy, thereby striving to create an ecosystem where children are made the nation's priority.

4. Challenges Faced:

If we were to narrow it down to the fundamental challenges, we would say they are the result of two prime factors. The first is that many of us are still not prepared to consider children as rights holders in their own right, just as we adults are. This leads to the lack of awareness about the basic rights our children are entitled to, and also holds us from investing in our children, both in the short and long term.

These factors affect almost every aspect of children's lives – their development, health and nutrition, education, and of course their safety and protection; as well as the primary conditions and basic infrastructure enabling these.

There are various schemes and policies in place that, if implemented optimally, can bring about transformational change. However, their coverage is not universal, and communities are often not aware of their existence. We need to stop looking at children only as the 'future' of our country and worry about them as citizens only after they turn eighteen. We need to become accountable for them as the 'present' of the country, a section that needs our immediate attention.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the condition in which children from marginalized sections of the society live and how their right to protection, education, health and nutrition has been compromised during this time of crisis. To sum up, the need to protect our children and their rights has never been greater.

Nonetheless, the fundamental challenge is perhaps the way the larger society looks at them – the social perception of children. For example, it is almost accepted and normalized in Indian society for a child to work in a dhaba or in a motor garage instead of going to school, or for a girl child to take care of her siblings at home when her brothers go to school, or for a girl being married off before she reaches adolescence.

These things are so deeply embedded in our everyday experiences and thought processes that we take them for granted. This mind set, I believe, is the biggest challenge that children face.

5. Strategies for Success:

CRY's professional capability comes from over four decades of work implementing large-scale programmes aimed at reducing vulnerabilities of children. CRY's work in partnership with more than 100 non-governmental organisations across 19 States in India, extends from the level of rural / urban / local bodies to the national level.

CRY follows a multi-disciplinary approach with a focus on children's participation, mobilization of communities around them, partnerships with local child-related systems like schools, as well as local governance, and going forward to the quasi-government bodies such as National Institute of Disaster Management, National Law University, National/State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, etc. CRY also focuses on creating research based on its regular secondary data analysis, policy review, and evidence-based primary research.

While CRY's core mission of "enabling people to take responsibility for the situation of the deprived Indian child" has remained intact over the past 44 years, our strategies have changed to reflect the changing realities and evolving children's issues.

One such example is how we have changed our strategy to reach out to children in the time of the COVID pandemic. In the wake of the pandemic and the lockdown induced by it, our first thoughts were to respond to the current needs of our children and their communities in that terrible time. Our topmost concern was the survival and health of children and the communities in the remotest regions of our operational areas. Therefore, during the lockdown months, CRY's efforts were concentrated on reaching as many households as possible with basic health and hygiene kits for children and their families.

We also spread awareness, distributed relief materials, advocating for the access and availability of services to the communities and children. The awareness building programmes covered topics like social distancing, best practices related to public health and hygiene and behaviour change, sanitization, use of face masks, following government guidelines during the lockdown period and ways to protect people from community spreading of the epidemic.

Another significant strategy was to share useful information about access of emergency health facilities. As part of the awareness programmes, children and our volunteers created posters, wall paintings, short videos on hand washing, social distancing, vaccination and wearing masks.

Apart from the COVID-response activities to address immediate needs of children, we also started many customized initiatives to address the loss of education that children suffered from during the prolonged closure of schools. One such example is 'Bridge School Initiative' and other psycho-social support programmes which we began to enable children to reconnect with their school education and give them the necessary confidence/nudge to go back to school when they reopened. We successfully ran these initiatives across 433 villages in 48 districts of 15 states.

6. Lessons Learned:

- Clarity about our Theory of change & programming approaches and its rootedness in org values. Since this is always evolved in a collective and inclusive manner, it permeates through all our internal governance processes and work on the ground.
- Ear to the ground and staying abreast of the external developments/factors affecting children. Backed by quick decision – making. Helps us respond quickly and relevantly to changing situations and emergencies.
- Strong accountability and transparency systems that help to hold ourselves and our partners to high standards/increase productivity.
- Multi – function/stakeholder project management has been critical to ensuring timely outcomes, affixing accountability and enhancing effectiveness.
- Proper and clear documentation of all processes and decisions has helped to build a repository and reference for the future. Conversely in instances where this has been absent it has led to confusion, miscommunication and wastage of time/efficiency.

7. Impact Assessment:

Our impact assessment is based on our Results Based Management system to understand specific outcomes, impact, needs and challenges of the children in the

communities that we work with. We assess the effectiveness of our work directly with children and with multiple stakeholders at community and government level across our five goals which are education, health, nutrition, protection and participation. The assessment is done on a half yearly and annual level with some indicators being tracked on a monthly and quarterly basis.

For specific programmes like our life skill modules we have an in – house developed assessment tool which is applied in a sample-based manner to assess the impact of the programme on children.

We also plan Impact assessments by external experts and evaluators towards enhancing quality of our work and to elicit strategic inputs from objective and knowledgeable sources.

8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

There are many things that made CRY what it is today, but the one among them that is its intrinsic inclusiveness. CRY has always been willing to accommodate every individual and empower them to become a change-maker. Since the very beginning, CRY has encouraged people from all walks of life to come forward and join its journey, with a strong belief in every citizen's potential to contribute to the cause of children.

Over the past four decades, CRY has been working continuously with communities, policy makers, volunteers, youth and the civil society at large, in bringing about change for children. CRY has worked with a wide range of people including eminent painters, singers and actors; niche organisations known for their excellence in their own fields; members of rural communities; renowned social thinkers and celebrities; and college students. We entrusted them to conceptualise and execute full-scale awareness campaigns, lead fund-raisers, take up big and small surveys, and, most importantly, we could successfully embed the idea in their mind that every individual is capable of becoming an agent of social change in her own ways.

Take the example of National Child Rights Research Fellowship (NCRRF) a twelve-year-old initiative of CRY, where we encouraged common people to take up serious research works related to children – a programme that ardently strove to build research capacities of people – any people – who demonstrated a passion and interest for children's rights to explore a topic of their interest in a scientific and ethical manner. Over the past decade, as many as 55 researchers have been awarded with the Fellowship.

9. Future Ready:

In the immediate future, we want to see CRY as one of the most trusted organizations working for children's rights in India. It is about ensuring a happy, healthy and creative child whose rights are protected and honored in a society that is built on respect for dignity, justice and equity for all. In keeping with this vision, we will strive to focus on the following:

- CRY as a catalyst for change both in the larger society and with specific duty-bearers, and will keep on working towards bringing in sustainable social change for children.
- Working towards changing attitude of people to children.
- Towards sensitizing people and empower them to come forward and willing to champion the cause of children and become agents for social change.
- Commitment to finding, piloting and institutionalizing irreversible change, with a focus on sustainability through empowering communities and children.
- Focus on strategies that ensures the best return of investment, when it comes to ensuring lasting change for children.

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3. Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD)

1. Year of Establishment: 1982

2. Mission Statement:

To enable marginalized women, men and children to improve their quality of life. CYSD uses issue-based research to influence policies from a pro-poor and rights-based perspective. It also works to ensure transparent, gender sensitive, accountable and democratic governance by building the capacities of people and organizations through participatory planning.

3. Key Achievements:

CYSD, as a Pan Odisha organization was established in 1982, with the objective of improving the quality of lives of the tribal and rural poor focusing on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; educating the marginalized communities to have access to their entitlements; and strengthening institutional mechanism to enhance the quality-of-service delivery. Currently, CYSD reaches out to about 5.2 lakh people spread over 972 villages in 29 blocks of 9 districts in Odisha through direct implementation of various projects. Some of the key achievements of the organisation so far are mentioned below.

- 40 micro watersheds developed, covering 25,353 hectares of treatable area in 140 tribal villages of Odisha.
- 56,828 Households supported through alternative livelihoods options.
- Nutrition-sensitive agriculture promoted through revival of millets in farms and on plates by 9,000 small and marginal farmers.
- 24 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, (VDVKs) involving 7,200 members, formed and strengthened in collaboration with the concerned Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs).
- BANASHREE application & NTFP Mapper developed for the NTFP Gatherers.
- The average household level annual income of the tribal households increased from Rs. 47,256/- in 2018 to Rs. 68,688/- in 2023 through alternative livelihoods options.

- 316 vibrant community leaders and 2,600 youth leaders were developed and nurtured.
- Child-centric development programme benefited 20570 children in 5 tribal dominated districts.
- 23,231 tribal women sensitized on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN), using community-led ICT-mediated videos for improving their nutrition and social well-being.
- About 1.7 million rural women connected with the digital world through orientation on digital literacy and usage of the internet, facilitated by 2,286 Gram Sathinis.
- 20 Migrant Support Service Centres set-up in 20 Gram Panchayats of Malkangiri and Rayagada districts facilitating skill-mapping and tracking of entitlements of the returnee migrants.
- 1,894 returnee migrants were provided skill training during the COVID pandemic to earn their livelihoods.
- Access to entitlements facilitated for 28,279 beneficiaries under Social Security Schemes.
- Over one million people were covered through relief, rehabilitation and livelihood restoration support.
- Village Disaster Mitigation Plans (VDMPs) developed in 530 villages of seven districts; and one Gram Panchayat Disaster Management Plan piloted in collaboration with concerned District administration.

4. Challenges Faced:

Resource mobilisation - Most of the projects are short-term. Much time is devoted towards scouting proposals and mobilise resources.

Human Resource - Scouting competent human resources for the leadership position. Also, substantial time, money and energy are spent towards grooming and nurturing newly recruited staff, as staff turnover rate is high.

Committed projects around Skill, entrepreneurship development and disaster response action are limited.

Technology adaptability at the grassroots is a challenge.

Showcasing best practices, impact stories is a challenge.

5. Strategies for Success:

- Inclusion (including the excluded)
- Strengthening community institutions & community-based organisations
- Strengthening participatory planning and monitoring at the grassroots in collaboration with the local governance (Gram Panchayats)
- Collaboration and Convergence with other development actors
- Research and evidence generation
- Technology integration

6. Lessons Learned:

- Investment on strengthening community institutions, CBOs, Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and frontline workers has paid rich dividend in building resilient communities, more so at the time of crisis.
- Integrated Farming is one of the key strategies to minimize risks in sustainable livelihoods and nutrition security of the tribals and the rural poor.
- Availability of comprehensive database at the Gram Panchayat level has emerged to be a basic and fundamental pre-requisite for good governance.
- Digital literacy is one of the key steps taken towards women's empowerment and successful enterprise promotion in rural Odisha.
- Technical skills and competencies of frontline workers is imperative for improving their efficiency and effectiveness.

- ICT-mediated community videos are a most effective means in building awareness at the community level, and works well across all impact groups and programme domains and areas.

7. Impact Assessment:

A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework has been developed in line with the five-year Strategic Plan (2022-2027) of the organisation. The impact of the programmes is assessed against the impact indicators defined in the M&E framework. For different plan periods, baseline study is undertaken to set the benchmark and the endline study to assess the impact. Mid-term and periodic review-cum-reflection exercises are also undertaken for necessary course corrections. Project specific baseline and endline are also undertaken for the long-term projects as per plan. In addition, the output and outcome level indicators are also monitored on quarterly basis based on the results framework institutionalized at the organization level.

9. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

Clear vision and mission, robust planning and monitoring, strong integration between the programme and programme support team with persistent mentoring of the senior management are the key behind the success.

10. Future Ready:

For the future readiness of the organisation, a comprehensive Strategic Plan (2022-2027) has been developed incorporated with the impact groups, change goals (Theory of Change), milestones and the indicators. The change goals are as follows.

Promote community food system; Strengthen social protection mechanism for the vulnerable groups towards realisation of their entitlements; Facilitate system change processes to improve institutional effectiveness and to improve local governance for development action; Skilling, reskilling and enterprise promotion; Building disaster resilient communities.

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4. Society for Development Alternatives (DA)

1. Year of Establishment: 1982

2. Mission Statement:

To design, deliver, and promote scalable solutions that enable better lives and resilient economies for everyone, especially the vulnerable communities, women, farmers, and young people in India.

3. Key Achievements:

Development Alternatives (DA), the world's first social enterprise dedicated to sustainable development, is a research and action organisation striving to deliver socially equitable, environmentally sound and economically scalable development outcomes. Our green technology innovations for habitat, water, energy and waste management, which deliver basic needs and generate sustainable livelihoods, have reduced poverty and rejuvenated natural ecosystems in the most backward regions of India. So far, through our work across various geographies, we have touched 20 million lives by enabling the formation of 5700 self-help groups and 13,450 community-based organisations through its Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) network of 665 civil society partner organisations. The number of persons we have reached out to with practical solutions, information, education and creation of awareness is well over 6 million. Development Alternatives has spearheaded nearly 48,000 environment conservation initiatives through a network of 1.25 million school children and their communities. For natural resource management, it has built more than 294 check dams resulting in the regeneration of over 10,000 hectares of land, benefiting about a quarter million people. Through our highly innovative learning programme, TARA Akshar, Development Alternatives has taught nearly 250,000 women to read, write and do simple arithmetic.

4. Challenges Faced:

The DA Group addresses global challenges of deep-seated poverty and environmental degradation through the design and dissemination of conceptual, methodological, and technological solutions based on interactions between natural, social, and human-institutional systems. It applies these at the local level, through multi-stakeholder partnerships in a business-oriented approach, builds capacities at local, sub-national and national levels to create enabling conditions for the replication and sustainability of these solutions and advocates for the mainstreaming of eco-solutions in policy and market regimes at national and global levels.

Our thrust areas of focus are:

- Low carbon and inclusive circular economy solutions for shelter, infrastructure, water management, sanitation, waste management and energy services.
- Climate resilience through land water management and agro-ecological solutions for small and medium farmers
- Enterprise development and support services and systems for entrepreneurship in rural, small town and peri-urban regions targeting youth and community collectives
- Packaging and market validation of eco-technology solutions for local enterprise-based delivery of basic needs goods and services
- Green skill development in water, waste, and construction management sectors.
- Capacity building of local and sub-national stakeholders for the deployment of viable techno-eco-social solutions. The DA Group's technologies, management systems, institutional structures, and business models are designed for wide reach through highly scalable dissemination approaches. Technology and service development and demonstration in partnership with local community groups, small entrepreneurs and farmer collectives enables us to test and contextualize solutions on ground, generate lessons for sustainability and replication, and build evidence of triple bottom-line impact. Tools, methods, quality standards and training systems are developed to enable transference of know-how and mainstreaming of institutional, technology and business solutions.

5. Strategies for Success:

The DA Group believes that strategic partnerships and alliances are a key to scaling out the innovative models for sustainable development. The Group works across a diverse partner network that include:

Community partnerships - with civil society organisations to share knowledge to scale up improved practices and build collective negotiation and bargaining capacities.

Business networks - of industry associations, technology promoters, machine manufacturers, dealers and distributors to build strong commercial links in order to expand the portfolio of livelihood packages, foster rapid growth, leverage financial

resources and brand value, assume leadership in effective technology transfer and explore new and large opportunities with public and private markets in less developed regions.

Policy alliances - to inform and influence governments on several issues of environment and development at the local, national and global levels through strategic engagement and networking with research and advocacy groups and institutions working towards the same cause.

Academic associations – with universities and research group’s technology development, validation of social and economic theories of change and developing tools and methods for assessments and analysis of development interventions.

6. Lessons Learned:

We have learned the below mentioned lessons:

- Practices necessary to create policy level changes.
- Community need to be empowered to make changes.
- Women play critical role in the economy hence educating a women is important.
- For Systemic change to succeed one need a long term association with community

7. Impact Assessment:

In the last four decades, the DA Group has completed over 1500 projects and assignments for strengthening the sustainable development agenda, and climate change initiatives at national, regional and global levels. Our work in the past has attempted to identify “Green and Sustainable Economies” from an Indian and South Asian perspectives. Our work has resulted in building capacities of a large number of civil society organizations, corporate houses and public agencies.

We at the DA Group measure the impact of our work through both the qualitative and quantitate manner. We get the impact numbers from project completion report. Our work also impacted the people and geographies from subjective aspect. We capture data through scientific data collection methods. For primary date we chiefly follow the following methods:

- Interviews
- Observations
- Surveys and Questionnaires and for secondary data we follow authentic publications and reports from government and other renowned organisations.

8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

The Development Alternatives Group has identified a I4 Impact approach that guides the strategic functions the group has defined for itself. These are: Innovate – Incubate – Implement – Influence for Impact.

Innovation is a change that creates a new dimension of performance in products, techniques, finance, service delivery and business models.

Incubation for the market is the process of demonstrating the viability of the delivery model for basic needs products and services.

Implementation involves working with a spectrum of stakeholders who facilitate and reinforce the customer experience on the ground.

Influence is the mechanism that develops insights from on-ground action to facilitate policymaking.

Impact is the result of a reinforcing ecosystem of customers, financing mechanisms, producers and service providers who take the lead in deploying solutions at scale.

The entire process involves a multi-stakeholder approach to the commercialisation of innovative solutions by working with partners and experts at different stages and levels.

9. Future Ready:

Today Development Alternatives has established a reputation worldwide for its capacity to create the means to generate sustainable livelihoods in large numbers, which is the key to addressing development issues. Still, we have a long way to go before we can fulfil our vision of creating a country where everyone has the opportunity of living a fulfilling life. The road ahead for the nation includes eliminating poverty and hunger, bringing back the resource base and the environment to full health and creating an ambience where people of all castes, religions, groups and regions feel it is their country and they have equal rights over it. We hope to contribute what we can do to construct that road.

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5. People's Action for National Integration (PANI)

1. Year of Establishment: 1989

2. Mission Statement:

To empower people so that they have greater control over their life situations and take responsibility to make a world that is mutually rewarding.

3. Key Achievements:

PANI impacted 25,14,759 households so far through implementation of 103 projects in last three decades under the themes-Community healthcare, integrated community development, child development, livelihood development, gender and empowerment, NRM& climate change.

4. Challenges Faced:

Management of community aspirations mainly direct benefits is the biggest challenge we faced and we managed this challenge by community mobilization and clear identification strategy of beneficiaries. Stakeholders' convergence has been second tough challenge during implementation- This challenge is addressed by developing perspective of the stakeholders and by developing leadership at local level. Increasing requirements of legal compliance is another challenge that we faced on regular basis. To manage this challenge we tried to build our capacity as the change is required. It is very difficult to generate funds from funders for legal compliances.

5. Strategies for Success:

- Investing on human resources and providing them space to think and develop newer program ideas and develop project models by keeping donors' perspective and lens in consideration.
- Working in multiple thematic areas that provided our organization to mobilize resources from the various spectrums of donor community. 3. Develop organization's ability to adapt the fast changing external, legal and thematic focuses. It helped us.

6. Lessons Learned:

- Respecting donors' perspectives while entering into partnership.
- Fulfilling legal compliance by establishing robust internal control system and processes.
- Keeping organization always in goal-oriented mode to improve resource mobilization strategy, program development perspective, legal compliance, running continuous organizational development process etc.

7. Impact Assessment:

For each program, a separate Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework is developed and according to these frameworks, data capturing tools are developed. MEL framework depends on the focus and design of program. And at the organization level thematic area-wise M&E Framework is used to measure the impact of work and disseminate with the stakeholders as well as for developing next level of programs.

8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

- Dedicated human resource team at first-line and second-line management level.
- Credibility of organization in sector
- Strong internal control mechanisms
- Well-oiled and dedicated resource mobilization (fundraising) team in organization.

9. Future Ready:

- Strategic plan for next five years
- More focus to mobilize resources from CSR donors and Indian Philanthropic Institutions, Foundations and Trusts
- Investment in management level team of organization for their capacity enhancement and growth.
- Regular OD process with more focus on refinement of policies

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6. Population Foundation of India (PFI)

1. Year of Establishment: 1970

2. Mission Statement:

Advance gender sensitive, rights-based population and family planning policies and actions for a just, and equitable society.

3. Key Achievements:

PFI's work over 52 years has ensured the due prominence and prioritisation of family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights within public health policies and actions. This has resulted in: raising the level of discourse within the policymaking corridors; increasing the accountability for family planning; making the media a more informed and responsive partner; and impacting key policy measures in significant ways, at both national and subnational levels.

PFI has been at the leading edge of creating innovations for social and behaviour change at scale. From entertain-educate TV dramas, IVR-based interactive platforms, India's first AI enabled chatbot on Facebook and WhatsApp to nurse training modules and family planning counselling aids using virtual reality, our programs stay ahead of the technology curve and provide real world impact across millions of users.

The three seasons of Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (MKBKSH) were viewed on Doordarshan by 150 million viewers. Around 2.2 million calls from 400,000 unique numbers across 29 states were received over Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) over three seasons. External evaluations conducted after each of the three seasons showed that MKBKSH has been able to initiate a shift in knowledge and attitudes on key issues around women's rights and family planning.

As an extension to MKBKSH, PFI introduced an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot, Snehai. Available on Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, the chatbot integrates content on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and safe online behaviours. With over 10.2 million messages exchanged with over 1,86,000 users, the chatbot provides a secure, personalised and non-judgemental space for young people to learn about issues related to their health and wellbeing.

4. Challenges Faced:

It has been challenging for us to work on the issues of family planning and population issues. Family planning was not considered as an important issues. We brought it on social political agenda of the country by providing evidence, media interaction and strategic engagement with policy makers, NGOs and many other stakeholders. There have been many myths and misconceptions on population issues. We have been able to give an evidence based narrative to the country that coercive measures do not work. This we did by creating awareness, strategic engagement and intensively working with and responding to media queries. Also strategic engagement or advocacy has elements that are difficult to measure. We have documented the key processes and achievements to meet the measurement requirements.

5. Strategies for Success:

Population Foundation of India (PFI) has a proven track record of delivering sustainable impact at scale through comprehensive, sector-defining strategies in the areas of reproductive and sexual health and women's rights. PFI has identified five pathways to delivering the results – strategic engagement with key actors and stakeholders; social and behavior change communication (SBCC); capacity building and technical support; knowledge generation and amplification; and grant making. Along with its experience of combining research with advocacy skills, PFI works closely with the government, both at the national and state levels, communities, NGOs and research organisations in the areas of community action for health, behaviour change communication to influence regressive social norms and scaling up of programme innovations into large public programmes.

6. Lessons Learned:

PFI has collaborated and worked with governments, civil society organizations, coalitions, media and other stakeholders in its pursuit to achieving its mission and objectives. Collaboration is important. PFI has hosted the secretariat of Advisory Group on Community Action (AGCA) and worked with MoHFW and 25 state governments to provide technical support and guidance on roll out of community action for health processes. We also hosted the secretariat of ARC - 115 member CSO coalitions and were instrumental in expanding the basket of contraceptive choices in the country through strategic engagement and evidence generation. Generating knowledge and evidence informs our programming, advocacy and scaling up decisions and also in institutional learning. Working closely with media, responding to their queries, and providing data

and evidence has helped us to create a positive narrative on population issues in the country.

7. Impact Assessment:

The projects are evaluated based on donor requirements. For instance independent evaluations of MKBKSH have shown that MKBKSH has been able to initiate a shift in knowledge and attitudes on key issues around women's rights and family planning. Similarly, PFI, through its celebrity-endorsed digital campaign Bas Ab Bahut Ho Gaya – Enough is Enough Campaign partnered with MARD (Men Against Rape and

Discrimination) to mobilize the youth to address issues around gender-based violence (GBV), particularly violence against women and girls (VAWG). An external evaluation conducted showed that exposure to the campaign was associated with both increased knowledge on what constituted GBV & VAWG (statistically significant), and supportive beliefs and attitudes related to the forms of GBV addressed in the film.

8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

Credibility, collaboration and evidence based work

9. Future Ready:

Population Foundation of India's work with young people has highlighted the need to create an enabling environment for health and wellbeing education in India, which in turn would facilitate moulding attitudes and behaviours of children for several generations. Population Foundation of India has also developed an online learning portal – Educately.org - a digital and open-access portal to reach out directly to adolescents, educators and communities working with adolescents. PFI aims to reach adolescents and all those who play a critical role in their lives, such as parents, educators, counsellors, etc. with the objective of providing accurate, age-appropriate and verified information on adolescent health and wellbeing. The organization aims to empower women, girls, and young people and works towards improving their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes.

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7. Society For Sustainable Development

1. Year of Establishment: 1994

2. Mission Statement:

To establish a society where justice, equity and peace prevails.

3. Key Achievements:

Conservation & management of natural resources through community action for sustainable livelihood system. Promotion of community based health and nutrition management system. Promotion of local self-Governance, through Capacity building of villagers and elected representatives. Improving quality of elementary and secondary education through community involvement. Promotion of saving & thrift activities and skill enhancement among youth esp. adolescent girls, women for sustainable economic development.

4. Challenges Faced:

- Non supportive local government functionaries.
- Project based funding for 1 to 3 years.
- Regularly changing and time consuming requirements of government.
- Drying Fund for activities

5. Strategies for Success:

- Community Involvement at every step
- Need based activities

6. Lessons Learned:

Very difficult to work for community empowerment, because government's changing their attitude for giving money for free.

7. Impact Assessment:

Community involvement and donors visit

8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

Community Involvement

9. Future Ready:

Work towards challenges of climate change and sustainable development

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8. Srijan Foundation

1. Year of Establishment: 2001

2. Mission Statement:

To empower poor, marginalized and excluded communities to demand their rights and entitlements, creating successful models of grassroots development through direct field interventions for replication and developing capacities of CBOs & Civil Society Organizations to promote collective action and influence institutions that shape peoples' lives, especially women and children.

3. Key Achievements:

- Mobilizing 457 self-help groups (SHGs) with 4980 members across three districts, we have trained 1371 signatories on group dynamics and financial literacy. This has empowered women to take charge of their lives, fostering a supportive ecosystem for grassroots development.
- Empowering 150 female sex workers (FSWs) through the JSS program, we have equipped them with knowledge of their rights and entitlements, promoting dignity and well-being within their profession.
- By establishing 13 Alternative Education Centres, we have provided bridge courses to 83 adolescent girls, opening doors to better opportunities and breaking barriers in education. Interactive sessions, including sports and creative arts, have imparted essential life skills to women and girls.
- Through the efforts of SHGs and AGYW (Adolescent Girls and Young Women), we have identified cases of violence against women, including child marriage and child labor. These interventions have contributed to building safer communities.
- Working directly with 424 adolescent girls and 209 young women, we have transformed mindsets and fostered interest in education. Celebrating special days and organizing sports events have further highlighted the importance of child rights and protection.

- By linking women farmers to Krishi Vigyan Kendra's for organic farming, providing poultry farming opportunities, and offering training in mushroom farming, we have enhanced livelihoods and income generation for 150 women.
- Facilitating linkages with various government schemes, we have ensured that 2500+ individuals have access to health, life, livelihood, and social security benefits.

4. Challenges Faced:

- Challenging traditional mindsets regarding women's roles and rights proved difficult in some areas. To address this, we invested in extensive community engagement, conducting awareness campaigns, and promoting success stories of empowered women to foster acceptance and understanding.
- Empowering female sex workers faced social stigma and resistance. We created safe spaces, offered training, and partnered with relevant authorities to advocate for their rights and dignity.
- Introducing sustainable agricultural practices required overcoming skepticism and building trust among farmers. We organized field demonstrations, farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, and provided input support to build confidence in new methods.
- Promoting girl child participation in sports faced resistance from conservative mindsets. We organized sports tournaments, showcasing the talent and potential of girls to break stereotypes and garner community support.

By adopting a participatory approach, fostering collaborations, and being adaptable, Srijan Foundation has overcome these challenges, creating a more inclusive, empowered, and resilient community. Our commitment to addressing the root causes of inequality and involving stakeholders has been instrumental in transforming lives and shaping a more equitable future for all.

5. Strategies for Success:

Empowering Leadership and Capacity Building: At Srijan Foundation, we believe that empowering women as leaders and building their capacities are crucial strategies for success. By providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence, we

enable them to take charge of their lives and become catalysts for change in their communities.

Promoting Safe Migration and Countering Trafficking: Our organization focuses on promoting safe migration practices and advocating for the right to mobility, particularly for women and vulnerable groups. By raising awareness about the risks of trafficking and offering support to potential migrants, we contribute to the prevention of human exploitation and abuse.

Community Engagement and Mobilization: We emphasize community engagement and mobilization to ensure that development efforts are participatory and reflective of the communities' actual needs and aspirations. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of ownership and cooperation, strengthening the impact of our interventions.

Creation of a Supportive Ecosystem: Srijan Foundation recognizes that sustainable development requires collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders. We actively work towards creating a supportive ecosystem involving government agencies, NGOs, and civil society to ensure our interventions are well-coordinated and have a lasting impact.

Sensitizing Men as Caring Partners and Responsible Fathers: Gender equality cannot be achieved without the involvement of men. We implement programs that sensitize men to become caring partners and responsible fathers, breaking down traditional gender norms and fostering a more supportive and egalitarian environment.

Building Confidence through Sports Promotion: By actively promoting sports activities like football tournaments and other engaging events, we have instilled a sense of self-assurance and empowerment in the participants. Through these platforms, girls have showcased their talents, challenged stereotypes and gained community recognition.

Federation Models of Peer Groups: Building strong and supportive networks is central to our approach. The federation model of peer groups has played a crucial role in creating a sense of solidarity and collective action among women and adolescent girls. By bringing SHGs, AGYW, and other stakeholders together in federations, we have fostered an environment of mutual learning, sharing, and support.

Child Rights and Protection Program: In the realm of child rights and protection, we adopt a comprehensive approach that includes direct livelihood support to families and

linking them with existing government schemes. Additionally, our federation model of peer leaders ensures that children's voices are heard and their rights are protected.

Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood Program: Our sustainable agriculture and livelihood program incorporates a Farmers Field School (FFS) approach, promoting community practices and reducing drudgery through innovative tools and techniques. We focus on increasing production and ensuring household food and nutritional security by providing training and capacity building to women farmers. Moreover, we advocate for alternative sustainable livelihood options to reduce dependency on traditional practices.

7. Lessons Learned:

- Our journey with Srijan Foundation has shown us that when marginalized communities come together and demand their rights as a collective force, their voices become stronger and more influential in shaping their lives positively.
- We have learned that understanding and respecting the local context is crucial for successful grassroots development. Tailoring interventions to suit the specific needs and challenges of each community ensures more sustainable and impactful outcomes.
- Our experience has taught us that when women and children are empowered, the entire community thrives. By focusing on their leadership and capacity building, we have witnessed transformative change in families and society at large.
- We have realized that sustainable development requires a supportive ecosystem involving government agencies, NGOs, and civil society. Collaborative efforts lead to more efficient and effective solutions
- Sensitizing men as caring partners and responsible fathers has proven vital in promoting gender equality and fostering a safer environment for women and children.
- Promoting alternative sustainable livelihood options and skill development has opened up new avenues for marginalized communities, reducing their dependency on traditional practices and enhancing their economic well-being.

8. Impact Assessment:

- Before implementing any project or program, we conduct thorough baseline surveys and need assessments to understand the existing socio-economic conditions, challenges, and aspirations of the communities we serve. This initial data forms the foundation for evaluating progress and impact.
- We establish clear indicators and outcome mapping frameworks at the beginning of each project. These indicators are aligned with our mission and objectives, enabling us to track progress and measure success effectively.
- To capture the human impact of our interventions, we engage in qualitative data collection methods, including focus group discussions, interviews, and case studies. This enables us to understand the nuanced changes in attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions within the communities.
- Throughout the project implementation, we have established robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Regular data collection and analysis allow us to make timely adjustments to strategies, ensuring our interventions remain effective and relevant.
- Community feedback and input are essential components of our impact assessment. We involve beneficiaries and stakeholders in the evaluation process, seeking their perspectives on the effectiveness of our interventions and areas for improvement.
- Impact assessment is an ongoing learning process for our organization. We continuously analyze the data, learn from successes and challenges, and adapt our strategies to better serve the needs of the communities.

9. Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

Communities at the grassroots level: We have cultivated strong relationships with beneficiaries, ensuring that their needs remain at the core of our strategies. By promoting collective action, we have witnessed how ordinary individuals can bring about extraordinary changes. Our ability to innovate and adapt, keeping pace with evolving challenges, has further fortified our position as a trusted partner in sustainable development.

10. Future Ready:

- We aim to expand our successful grassroots models to reach more marginalized communities across regions, making a broader impact on the lives of women and children.
- Recognizing the importance of resilience, mental health support in vulnerable communities, we will design projects and interventions that focus on equipping them with the necessary tools and skills to overcome adversities and build stronger, more sustainable livelihoods. As part of our future goals, we will incorporate mental health support and awareness initiatives to ensure the emotional well-being of beneficiaries and promote a positive outlook on life.
- By working closely with government bodies and policymakers, we seek to influence positive policy changes that support the rights and entitlements of marginalized communities. Also, strengthening collaborations with corporate entities and international organizations will enable us to pool resources and expertise, driving impactful development initiatives.
- We plan to leverage technology to enhance the scalability and efficiency of our interventions, ensuring a wider reach and higher impact. Embracing the digital age, we will prioritize digital literacy programs that empower individuals with essential digital skills.
- Given the challenges of climate change, we aspire to integrate climate-smart practices into our agricultural and livelihood programs, promoting sustainable practices for long-term resilience.
- We envision engaging and empowering the youth as change agents for community development, instilling a sense of responsibility and leadership among the younger generation.

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9. UNNATI

1. Year of Establishment: 1990

2. Mission Statement:

Promote social inclusion and democratic governance so that vulnerable sections of our society, particularly the Dalits, tribals, women and persons with disabilities are empowered to participate in mainstream development and decision making process effectively and decisively.

3. Key Achievements:

- Enable access to public programs reaching the last-mile by capacity development of citizen leaders to demand entitlements and ensure social accountability covering 50,000 households.
- Demonstrated Panchayat Resource Center (PRC) at block level as an instrumentality for effective decentralised governance with people's participation in two States of Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- Collaborated with government of Gujarat in ruling out social audit of MGNREGA covering the entire state.
- Worked closely with National Disaster Management Authority in the preparation of National Disaster management Plan on 2016 and its revised version in 2019.
- Innovated owner driven reconstruction as post disaster participatory housing reconstruction in Gujarat, Bihar and Nepal.

5. Challenges Faced:

Building partnership with stakeholders requires continuous review, reflection and changes in response.

6. Strategies for Success:

UNNATI works on the principle of stakeholder participation and strengthening decentralised governance. Hence, all the programs are designed with participation of CBO and Gram Panchayat's for effective outcome of programs.

7. Lessons Learned:

CBO and Gram Panchayat collaboration is an effective way of improved program delivery and deepening participation in local governance. Partnership builds innovation and provides sustainable solutions as each stakeholder contributes to the cause. People's participation is applicable to all programs including issues of housing and technical areas.

8. Impact Assessment:

At the end of each project, UNNATI conducts reflection exercise with the stakeholders, particularly with the vulnerable community.

9. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:

Partnership, stakeholder participation and mutual trust and respect.

10. Future Ready:

Learn from the community in the ground and design interventions.

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10. Rural Health Research and Development Trust (URMUL)

1. Year of Establishment – 1987

2. Mission Statement

Urmul Trust is a non-profit development organization based in Rajasthan, India. Our vision is to empower marginalized communities by providing access to basic services such as health care and education, and by improving livelihood opportunities. Their core values include community participation, advocacy, and the use of innovative models to address the needs of their target communities. The organization has a wide range of programs in areas such as health, education, and livelihoods, and has a strong focus on sustainable development. They also focus on working with marginalized communities, such as women and children, and have developed a range of programs specifically designed to meet their needs. Their long-term goal is to bring sustainable change to the region and to empower communities to take ownership and control of their own development.

3. Key Achievements

Urmul has the potential to achieve several key achievements and bring about significant positive changes in the lives of people, the constituency, and stakeholders the Thar Desert region:

Sustainable Livelihoods: By promoting the camel milk and wool value chains, the project created new income-generating opportunities for camel herders. This improved their economic condition and reduced their dependence on unpredictable sources of income, such as rain-fed agriculture.

Revival of Traditional Crafts: Strengthening traditional camel wool crafts and enabling enterprise-grade crafts manufacturing led to the revival of traditional artisanal skills. This preserved the cultural heritage of the region and provided a means of livelihood for the next generation of artisans.

Conservation of Ecosystem: Implementing sustainable pasture management practices and promoting responsible grazing of camels helped in conserving the fragile desert ecosystem. This contributed to biodiversity preservation and prevented desertification, benefiting the entire constituency and stakeholders who relied on the ecosystem for their livelihoods.

Empowerment of Women and Youth: The project's focus on promoting camel milk and wool value chains created opportunities for women and youth to actively participate in camel herding and product processing activities. This empowered women and youth, leading to increased gender equality and improved economic prospects for them in the region.

Economic Growth and Diversification: Strengthening the camel milk and wool value chains contributed to economic growth in the region. By tapping into these untapped markets, the project diversified the local economy and reduced dependency on traditional sources of income.

Improved Nutrition and Health: Promoting camel milk consumption had positive impacts on nutrition and health, particularly for pregnant women and pre-school children. Camel milk's nutritional benefits addressed malnutrition issues in the region.

Enhanced Resilience: By providing input support, training, and infrastructure development, the project enhanced the resilience of camel herders to cope with environmental challenges and market fluctuations. This increased resilience benefited the entire constituency by ensuring stable livelihoods even in difficult circumstances.

Empowering Education: The project recognized the importance of education and worked towards improving educational opportunities for children in the region. Smart classrooms were constructed in schools, equipped with modern technology to enhance the learning experience. By integrating digital tools into the educational process, children were provided with a more engaging and interactive learning environment.

Collaborating with Local Bodies: To ensure the sustainability of the project's initiatives, partnerships were formed with local bodies such as the SHG (Self-help Group Mahila Samiti) and PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions). These collaborations fostered community ownership and involvement in the project's activities, ensuring that the benefits reached the grassroots level.

Natural Resource Management: The project recognized the importance of preserving and restoring the natural resources in the region. Renovating talaabs (ponds) and making the area green through tree plantation drives and initiatives were undertaken. This contributed to water conservation, improved ecosystem health, and provided additional sources of income for the community through sustainable resource management.

Community Participation: The project actively engaged with the local community to ensure their active participation and ownership in all initiatives. By involving the community in decision-making processes and project implementation, the project fostered a sense of responsibility and pride among the local population.

Overall, the initiatives has brought about positive changes in camel herders' lives and their ecosystem. It created sustainable livelihoods through camel milk and wool value chains, empowering women and youth. The initiative also focused on environmental conservation, education, and community partnerships. The result was a holistic transformation, preserving cultural heritage and fostering a brighter and more resilient future for the region.

4. Challenges Faced:

Throughout the projects journey, we encountered and addressed various challenges:

- Limited awareness and participation from the local community.
Strategy: Conducted awareness campaigns, engaged local leaders, and organized workshops to foster community involvement.
- Environmental constraints such as water scarcity and limited grazing resources.
Strategy: Implemented sustainable practices, rainwater harvesting, and community-based grazing plans.
- Market access and integration of camel milk and wool value chains.
Strategy: Collaborated with cooperatives, facilitated market linkages, and provided training on product quality and packaging.
- Capacity building for camel herders and artisans.
Strategy: Conducted skill development workshops and mentoring programs with expert trainers.
- Ensuring financial sustainability.
Strategy: Encouraged self-help groups and cooperation with local bodies for ongoing support.
- Overcoming social and cultural barriers.
Strategy: Engaged in community dialogue and awareness programs to promote gender equality and challenge stereotypes.

By adopting strategic approaches tailored to the specific challenges of Western Rajasthan, collaborating with stakeholders, and empowering the community, we successfully navigated these obstacles. This resulted in positive and sustainable outcomes for camel herders and their ecosystem in the unique context of Western Rajasthan.

5. Strategies for Success:

Community-Centric Approach: Our organization firmly believes in a community-centric approach. We actively involve the local community, including camel herders, artisans, and other stakeholders, in the decision-making process. Their insights and knowledge shape the project's design and implementation, ensuring that interventions are relevant and impactful.

Holistic and Integrated Interventions: To address the multifaceted challenges faced by camel herders and their ecosystem, we adopted a holistic and integrated approach. Our interventions span across various domains, including livelihoods, environmental conservation, education, and community empowerment. This comprehensive strategy fosters synergies and maximizes the positive impact on the region.

Collaborative Partnerships: Building strong partnerships with local bodies, NGOs, development agencies, and experts has been instrumental in our success. These collaborations bring diverse expertise, resources, and networks to the project, strengthening its effectiveness and sustainability.

Capacity Building and Training: Empowering local stakeholders through capacity building and training has been a priority. We provide skill development workshops, technical training, and mentoring programs to enhance the capabilities of camel herders, artisans, and community members. This builds confidence and equips them with the tools needed to thrive in the changing landscape.

Innovative Solutions: We constantly seek innovative solutions to overcome challenges. From sustainable pasture management to leveraging digital technology for education, we embrace innovation to adapt to the region's unique conditions and needs.

Sustainability and Ownership: Ensuring the project's sustainability and ownership by the local community is a core principle. We encourage the formation of self-help groups and cooperatives to pool resources and take charge of their livelihoods. Additionally,

we engage with local bodies and PRIs to secure ongoing support and investments from the community itself.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes are in place to track progress and assess the impact of our interventions. This data-driven approach enables us to make informed decisions and course corrections, ensuring the project's effectiveness.

Flexibility and Adaptability: The dynamic nature of the project context demands flexibility and adaptability. We stay open to learning from challenges and successes, and we continuously fine-tune our strategies to meet evolving needs.

Empathy and Respect: We approach our work with empathy and respect for the culture, traditions, and aspirations of the local community. Building trust and mutual respect with the beneficiaries fosters a sense of ownership and encourages active participation in the project.

6. Lessons Learned

Community Engagement is Key: Engaging the local community from the project's inception is crucial. By involving them in decision-making and planning, we ensure that interventions are relevant, accepted, and sustainable.

Adaptability is Vital: Flexibility and adaptability are essential traits in development work. The ability to respond to changing circumstances and incorporate feedback enables us to fine-tune our strategies and achieve better outcomes.

Empowerment Leads to Ownership: Empowering local stakeholders fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. When communities take charge of their development, projects have a more profound and lasting impact.

Collaboration Enhances Impact: Building collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders brings diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources to the table. Together, we can achieve greater impact and sustainability.

Holistic Approaches are Effective: Addressing multiple challenges with holistic interventions brings synergies and maximizes positive outcomes. Focusing on livelihoods, environmental conservation, education, and empowerment together creates a more comprehensive impact.

Cultural Sensitivity Matters: Understanding and respecting the cultural nuances of the region is essential. Cultural sensitivity helps build trust, and projects can be tailored to align with the local way of life.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Monitoring and evaluation play a critical role in project success. Data-driven decision-making allows us to assess progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make informed choices for course corrections.

Innovation Drives Progress: Embracing innovation opens new possibilities. By leveraging technology and seeking creative solutions, we can overcome challenges and improve the effectiveness of our interventions.

Long-Term Vision is Necessary: Sustainable development requires a long-term vision. Building lasting change takes time, and we need to be patient, committed, and persistent in our efforts.

Resilience in the Face of Challenges: Development work can be challenging, and setbacks are inevitable. Maintaining resilience and a positive outlook are crucial in navigating obstacles and staying committed to the mission.

Empowering Women Leads to Transformation: Empowering women has a cascading effect on families and communities. Investing in women's education, skills, and livelihood opportunities can bring about transformative change.

Community-Led Solutions are Effective: Communities often hold the best solutions to their problems. Listening to their voices and involving them in finding solutions results in more relevant and impactful outcomes.

These lessons have guided our organization's growth and enriched our approach to development work. They remind us of the importance of staying connected to the people we serve and continually learning and evolving to create sustainable and positive change in the communities we work with.

7. Impact Assessment

Indicators and Targets: We establish clear and measurable indicators to track progress towards specific project objectives. These indicators are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and are set in consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Our projects incorporate rigorous M&E systems. Regular data collection and analysis help us track progress, identify bottlenecks, and make timely adjustments to optimize outcomes.

Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection: We employ a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This includes surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observations to gather both numerical data and nuanced insights.

Comparative Studies: In some cases, we conduct comparative studies between project areas and control groups to assess the impact more comprehensively. This allows us to attribute changes to our interventions accurately.

Longitudinal Studies: For projects with long-term objectives, we conduct longitudinal studies over extended periods to understand the sustainability and long-term impact of our work.

Beneficiary Feedback: We actively seek feedback from project beneficiaries through periodic reviews and consultations. Their perspectives and suggestions provide valuable insights and help us refine our interventions.

External Evaluation: In some instances, we engage external evaluators or experts to conduct independent assessments of our projects. This brings objectivity and impartiality to the evaluation process.

Mid-Term and Final Evaluations: Regular mid-term evaluations allow us to assess progress and make mid-course corrections. Final evaluations provide a comprehensive assessment of the project's overall impact, achievements, and challenges.

Reporting and Transparency: We maintain transparent reporting practices, sharing the evaluation findings and outcomes with stakeholders, donors, and the community. Transparent communication fosters accountability and trust.

Learning and Adaptation: Impact assessment is not solely for measurement but also a learning opportunity. The insights gained from assessments help us adapt and improve our strategies for future projects.

By employing a rigorous impact assessment framework, we ensure that our organization's work is evidence-based, accountable, and continuously improved. The

assessments guide us in refining our strategies, replicating successful models, and ultimately maximizing the positive impact on the lives of the communities we serve.

8. Ultimate Strong Point of Success

The ultimate strong point of our success lies in our unwavering commitment to the people we serve. At the core of our organization's ethos is the belief that development is about empowering communities, not just implementing projects. This commitment to community-driven development has been the driving force behind our success.

Community Empowerment: We prioritize the needs, aspirations, and voices of the local community in all our initiatives. By actively involving them in the decision-making process, we ensure that our interventions are relevant, sustainable, and embraced by the people themselves.

Holistic Approach: Our holistic approach tackles challenges from multiple angles. Instead of addressing issues in isolation, we recognize that they are interconnected. By integrating livelihoods, education, health, and environmental conservation, we foster comprehensive and sustainable development.

Collaborative Partnerships: Building strong partnerships with various stakeholders, including local bodies, NGOs, experts, and donors, has been pivotal in our success. These collaborations bring diverse expertise, resources, and networks, strengthening the impact of our projects.

Innovation and Adaptability: We embrace innovation and adaptability to respond to the evolving needs of the communities and the changing landscape of development work. This willingness to learn, improve, and adopt new approaches has kept us relevant and effective.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Our commitment to data-driven decision-making ensures that our interventions are evidence-based and outcomes-focused. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation enable us to assess progress and optimize our strategies.

Empowering Women and Youth: Recognizing the crucial roles women and youth play in development, we prioritize their empowerment. By investing in their education, skills, and livelihood opportunities, we unlock transformative potential in the communities.

Sustainability and Ownership: We believe that true success lies in empowering communities to sustain the positive changes beyond the project's tenure. Encouraging self-help groups, fostering local ownership, and building capacity all contribute to long-term sustainability.

Resilience and Patience: Development work is not without challenges and setbacks. Our resilience and patience in overcoming obstacles have kept us focused on the long-term impact and inspired us to persevere.

Transparency and Accountability: We maintain transparency in our operations, financial management, and reporting. Accountability to our donors, partners, and the communities we serve is a core value.

Ethical Practices: Our strong commitment to ethical practices and adherence to high standards of professionalism have earned us the trust of our stakeholders.

By staying true to these principles and consistently putting people at the center of our work, we have been able to make a meaningful and sustainable difference in the lives of the communities we serve. This ultimate strong point has guided us on our journey towards positive social change and will continue to propel us towards greater impact in the future.

9. Future Ready

As an organization committed to sustainable and impactful development, our future goals and aspirations revolve around building on our successes, expanding our reach, and fostering positive change in more communities. Our vision for the future is centered on the following key areas:

Scaling Impact: We aim to scale up our successful interventions to reach more communities and regions in need. By replicating successful models and adapting them to different contexts, we strive to extend our impact to a larger population.

Empowering Women and Youth: Our focus on empowering women and youth will remain a priority. We envision creating more opportunities for education, skill development, and livelihoods, enabling them to become agents of change and leaders in their communities.

Climate Resilience: Given the growing challenges of climate change, we are committed to building climate resilience in the communities we work with. Our initiatives will emphasize sustainable resource management, water conservation, and climate-smart agriculture.

Innovation and Technology: Embracing innovation and technology will be central to our future-ready approach. We will leverage digital solutions to enhance education, health services, and livelihood opportunities, ensuring that our interventions remain relevant and efficient.

Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods: Our goal is to further diversify and strengthen sustainable livelihood opportunities for marginalized communities. This includes expanding Agri-dairy value chains, promoting camel milk and wool value addition, and fostering entrepreneurship.

Environmental Conservation: Environmental conservation will continue to be a core focus. We envision more tree plantation drives, rainwater harvesting initiatives, and efforts to restore and protect local ecosystems.

Education for All: Our aspiration is to ensure access to quality education for all children, especially in remote and underserved areas. We aim to establish more smart classrooms and digital learning centers, bridging the education divide.

Community Resilience: We will work towards building strong and resilient communities, equipped with the knowledge and tools to address challenges and seize opportunities effectively.

Policy Advocacy: Our organization aims to actively engage in policy advocacy at local, regional, and national levels. By advocating for inclusive and sustainable development policies, we seek to create an enabling environment for positive change.

Partnerships and Collaborations: We will continue to foster partnerships and collaborations with like-minded organizations, government agencies, and donors. By combining our efforts and resources, we can amplify our impact and achieve shared goals.

Data-Driven Impact: Data-driven decision-making will remain integral to our approach. We will invest in robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track our progress, learn from outcomes, and continuously improve our interventions.

By striving towards these future goals and aspirations, we envision a future where marginalized communities have increased access to opportunities, improved livelihoods, and the resilience to overcome challenges. Our organization is dedicated to being future-ready, adapting to evolving needs, and working tirelessly towards a more equitable and sustainable world.

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About Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

VANI is a national platform of voluntary organizations of India, which was formed in 1988. Currently, it has a strong network base of over 620 direct and outreach to over 15,000 organizations, spread across 24 states and one Union Territory. VANI is widely known for its evidence-based advocacy for an enabling environment and efforts in collectivizing the voluntary sector for its sustainable development. Through its network, VANI disseminates pertinent information around policies, legislation, taxation, sustainable development, concerning the sector to its members as well as non-members in an effective and timely manner. VANI builds the capacities of Voluntary Organisations on issues of critical importance including improved governance and effective leadership, legal compliances, accountability, transparency, strategic resource mobilization and Financial Management, for internal system strengthening and resilience building. Through stakeholder dialogues, VANI builds both intra and inter-sectorial convergences, thereby bringing government, corporate, civil society, donors on a common platform for cohesive and effective action. Through its created specialized forums a) Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Leaders; b) Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) Chartered Accountants and Legal experts, VANI is able to steer inter and intra peer learning on issues of common interest. VANI encourages partnerships for national-level policy reforms on the basis of the evidence-based narrative. VANI plays a pivotal role in establishing the global footprints of Indian voluntary organizations on the global development discourse. It is a member of various international networks like FORUS, CIVICUS, Affiliation Group of National Associations (AGNA), Asian Development Alliance (ADA), and Asia Democracy Network. It has partnered with Accountable Now, International Civil Society Centre and eight accountability initiatives across the world to draft Global Standard for CSO Accountability and is presently engaged in encouraging voluntary organizations across India and South Asia to adhere to accountability and transparency standards for enhanced credibility. VANI has played an extensive role in drawing the attention of Civil Society and encouraging its enhanced role play on several international development agendas and partnerships including SDGs, BRICS, BBIN, BIMSTECH, Blue Economy and their social implications.

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