

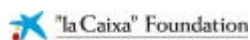
Empowering Women Farmer Entrepreneurs and Building Futures in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh



Empowering Women Farmer Entrepreneurs and Building Futures in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh



Work 4 Progress



Alliance pour la
Solidarité



Empowering Women Farmer Entrepreneurs and Building Futures in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh

Prepared by:

ActionAid Association (India)

With support from:

Work 4 Progress



First Published in September, 2024

Some rights reserved






This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Provided they acknowledge the source, users of this content are allowed to remix, tweak, build upon and share for non-commercial purposes under the same original license terms.


act:onaid

ActionAid Association (India)

 www.actionaidindia.org   @actionaidindia

 @actionaidcomms  @company/actionaidindia  @actionaid_india

ActionAid Association, F-5 (First Floor), Kailash Colony, New Delhi -110048.

 +911-11-40640500

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>v</i>
Introduction	1
Diverse Livelihood Modelss	2
Overview of Prototypes Promoted	3
Systemic Prototypes	4
Understanding Basant Community Food Resource Centres	4
Role of Processing Units	4
Examples of Systemic Prototypes	5
Socio-Economic Impact of Basant Community Food Resource Centres	5
Enterprise Prototypes	8
Enterprise Prototype Model 1: Goat Rearing	9
Case Story: Mamta	9
Enterprise Prototype Model 2: Backyard Poultry	10
Case Story: Rabia	10
Enterprise Prototype Model 3: Seed Production	12
Case Story: Aarthi	12
Case Story: Shyam Saki	13
Enterprise Prototype Model 4: Poshan Vatika (Nutrition Garden)	14
Case Story: Preethi	14
Case Story: Bhadi Dhulaiya	15
Enterprise Prototype Model 5: Multilayer Farming (Machaan Cultivation)	16
Case Story: Hasmukhi	17

Enterprise Prototype Model 6: Horticulture	18
Case Story: Guddi	18
Enterprise Prototype Model 7: Vermicompost	19
Case Story: Pooja	20
Case Story: Jaykumar	21
Empowering Women Farmers through BASANT Farmer Producer Organisation	22
Case Story: Suman	22
Case Story: Saroji	23
Case Story: Lalit Lok Vaani Community Radio	23
Conclusion	27
Details of Collaborating Partners	28

Foreword

For the past three decades, ActionAid Association has been deeply embedded in the semi-arid Bundelkhand region, grappling with acute poverty exacerbated by limited opportunities and employment options. This economic stagnation has driven significant migration from the area, highlighting the profound challenges faced by its 18.3 million residents, 79.1% of whom live in rural settings, with over a third classified below the poverty line.

The region's environmental landscape is equally troubled, marked by severe water scarcity, deforestation, soil degradation from chemical inputs, and heightened vulnerability to climate impacts. These ecological strains have directly affected agricultural yields and livestock.

Compounding these issues is a deeply entrenched social and economic hierarchy, where dominant upper-caste and land-owning families wield disproportionate influence, perpetuating socio-economic disparities. Exploitative practices, such as arbitrary wage reductions for daily labourers, further exacerbate local hardships.

Out of these challenges, Spain's la Caixa Fundacion, in collaboration with ActionAid International Federation member Alianza por la Solidaridad and ActionAid Association, launched an initiative that spans 40 villages across Jhansi, Mahoba, and Lalitpur districts.

Working alongside grassroots organisations like Gramonnati Sansthan and Sai Jyoti Sansthan, ActionAid Association focuses on empowering vulnerable communities, particularly women, through tailored livelihood strategies. By encouraging women's leadership and entrepreneurial skills, the project aims to create sustainable employment opportunities for marginalised farmers.

This report serves as a comprehensive documentation of ActionAid Association's efforts in Bundelkhand, highlighting both the systemic and enterprise prototype models implemented to contribute to sustainable development. The systemic prototypes are designed to address underlying socio-economic challenges at a systemic level, influencing policies and practices that perpetuate poverty and inequality. These prototypes aim to empower marginalised communities, promote gender equality, and advocate for sustainable agricultural practices.

The enterprise prototypes focus on creating viable business models within the local economy. These models aim to generate income and employment opportunities through initiatives like the Basant Community Food Resource Centres (BCFRCs), which integrate organic farming, value addition, and market linkages.

The report not only reviews the progress achieved thus far but also outlines future strategies aimed at promoting economic resilience and social justice in Bundelkhand. It invites feedback and collaboration from stakeholders, emphasising the organisation's commitment to continuing its journey toward a more

equitable and sustainable future for the region. By documenting these efforts, the report showcases ActionAid Association's dedication to transparency, accountability, and impactful community development.

In solidarity,

Sandeep Chachra
Executive Director
ActionAid Association

INTRODUCTION

The Bundelkhand region comprises of seven districts in Uttar Pradesh and six in Madhya Pradesh, predominantly rural with a significant population from lower or other backward castes. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main occupations, yet many districts are drought-prone due to erratic rainfall patterns. Geographically split across two states, Bundelkhand shares a cohesive history, culture, religion, and language, along with similar socio-economic identities. However, differing state laws impact residents differently.

In Uttar Pradesh, districts like Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, and Chitrakut rank among India's most regressive. The semi-arid Bundelkhand region faces extreme climatic challenges, including recurrent droughts and unpredictable rains. Water scarcity, land infertility, soil erosion, and crop failures exacerbate vulnerabilities for small and marginal farmers and those in allied agricultural sectors. Food security becomes precarious, leading to distress migration to cities where many endure exploitative labour conditions.

For decades, Bundelkhand has grappled with crises due to erratic rainfall causing droughts and floods intermittently. Crop damages and failures due to uncertain rain patterns force farmers into debt traps, pushing them towards migration for survival. Unpredictable rainfall timings deplete reservoirs and dry wells, compounded by chemical fertilizer misuse, further impacting livelihoods.

The challenges faced in the region include droughts, floods, migration, malnutrition, excessive chemical use, caste-based discrimination, livestock abandonment (anna pratha), early marriage, and educational gaps. Bundelkhand's residents endure a cycle of hardship, striving against environmental and socio-economic adversities that threaten their livelihoods and well-being.

The development challenges in the region are stark: low education and income levels, poor health indices particularly among women and children, and about one-third of the population belonging to marginalised communities like Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). These communities face severe economic and social marginalisation, exploited and discriminated against in various aspects of life. Women, in particular, endure sexual and mental harassment from upper-caste members, compounded by limited education and employment opportunities, leaving them disenfranchised and unaware of their rights.

Land distribution inequality exacerbates these disparities, with a significant portion of agricultural land controlled by upper castes. Many SC and ST families either possess minimal land or none at all, insufficient for sustaining livelihoods. Consequently, some families leave their land fallow or lease it out for nominal amounts, resorting to manual labour as their sole income source.

ActionAid Association has worked for nearly three decades to this region, recognising its untapped potential, especially in agriculture. A structured program is crucial to uplift livelihoods and harness this potential effectively.

Diverse Livelihood Models

In Jhansi, Mahoba, and Lalitpur districts within Uttar Pradesh's Bundelkhand region, ActionAid Association has initiated a project across 40 villages that is focused on creating collectives of women entrepreneurs. The goal was to develop diverse livelihood models tailored for landless, small, and marginalised farmers, while addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

The project placed a strong emphasis on capacity building among women farmers, enabling them to adopt sustainable agriculture practices and effectively market their produce. Given the region's diverse terrain, opportunities ranging from seed production to vegetable cultivation and horticulture were explored and promoted.

Interventions were implemented at various levels, including the promotion of nutrition gardens to enhance local food security, establishing village-level seed banks, and providing support for integrated pest management and chemical-free farming practices. These efforts aimed not only to improve agricultural productivity but also to ensure environmental sustainability.

Seven distinct prototype models were carefully selected to introduce environmentally sustainable economic opportunities to the region's most marginalised communities. This approach not only aimed at economic empowerment but also sought to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit across the entire community.

The project's methodology was rooted in community engagement, involving active listening and co-creation of livelihood strategies. Prototypes were set up and rigorously tested before scaling them up to accelerate impact across the region.

OVERVIEW OF PROTOTYPES PROMOTED

ActionAid Association has been at the forefront of empowering communities through sustainable development initiatives.

Enterprise prototypes are small-scale, business-oriented initiatives designed to provide immediate economic benefits to individual participants or small groups. These prototypes often focus on specific agricultural or livestock activities that generate income quickly and have a relatively low barrier to entry. For example, in the BASANT programme, enterprise prototypes may include goat rearing, backyard poultry farming, seed production, nutrition gardens, multi-layer farming, horticulture, and vermi-composting. These activities help farmers diversify their income sources, improve food security, and reduce dependency on a single crop or livestock type.

Goat rearing is an example of an enterprise prototype that has shown success in generating supplementary income. It involves breeding and selling goats, which are relatively easy to maintain and provide quick returns on investment. Similarly, backyard poultry farming allows farmers to rear chickens for eggs and meat, contributing to both household nutrition and income. Seed production and multi-layer farming enhance crop yields and ensure year-round productivity, while horticulture and vermi-composting promote sustainable agricultural practices and improve soil health.

In contrast, systemic prototypes focus on creating long-term, transformative changes within communities and agricultural systems. These prototypes aim to address underlying social, economic, and environmental issues by promoting sustainable practices, empowering marginalised groups, and advocating for policy changes. Systemic prototypes involve a holistic approach that integrates community engagement, capacity building, and advocacy to drive structural changes.

For instance, gender equality initiatives within the BASANT programme exemplify systemic prototypes. These initiatives empower women by providing leadership training, promoting their participation in decision-making processes, and advocating for policies that support gender equality. The goal is to create a more equitable and inclusive agricultural system that benefits the entire community.

While enterprise prototypes provide immediate, tangible benefits and focus on individual or small group economic gains, systemic prototypes aim for broader, long-term impacts by addressing root causes and promoting sustainable development. Both types of prototypes are crucial for achieving comprehensive and lasting improvements in livelihoods, community resilience, and social equity.

SYSTEMIC PROTOTYPES

One of its flagship programs, the Basant Community Food Resource Centres (BCFRCs), exemplifies its commitment to contributing to local resilience and economic empowerment. Below, find an overview of BCFRCs and its operational model, impact on job creation, the role of processing units, and the significance of systemic prototypes in promoting sustainable change.

Understanding Basant Community Food Resource Centres

Basant Community Food Resource Centres (BCFRCs) are community-centric hubs established by ActionAid Association across Bundelkhand. These centres aim to integrate sustainable agricultural practices with community development initiatives, thereby contributing to food security, promoting economic stability, and creating environmental sustainability.

The operational model of BCFRCs revolves around several key components:

- » **Promotion of Organic Farming:** BCFRCs advocate for and facilitate the adoption of organic farming practices among smallholder farmers. By reducing reliance on chemical inputs, these practices enhance soil health, preserve biodiversity, and produce healthier crops.
- » **Capacity Building and Training:** ActionAid Association provides training and capacity-building workshops to women farmers on organic farming techniques, sustainable water management, pest control methods, and crop diversification. These efforts empower women farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to improve agricultural productivity sustainably.
- » **Market Linkages:** BCFRCs help farmers access markets by facilitating direct sales of their produce or by establishing partnerships with local markets, cooperatives, and retailers. This ensures fair prices for farmers and promotes local economic development.
- » **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Community participation is integral to the BCFRC model. Local communities are actively involved in decision-making processes, governance of the centres, and the development of sustainable agricultural practices tailored to local conditions.

Role of Processing Units

Central to the BCFRCs is the establishment of processing units where harvested agricultural produce is processed into value-added products. These units serve multiple purposes:

- » **Value Addition:** Processing units add value to raw agricultural produce by transforming them into marketable products such as jams, pickles, sauces, dried fruits, and packaged grains. This enhances the economic viability of farming activities and generates higher incomes for farmers.
- » **Employment Generation:** The operation of processing units creates employment opportunities within the community, particularly for women and youth. Jobs are generated in activities such as sorting, cleaning, processing, packaging, and quality control, thereby contributing to local economic growth and poverty alleviation.
- » **Quality Assurance and Standards:** Processing units ensure that products meet quality standards and regulatory requirements, enabling farmers to access premium markets and command better prices for their produce.

Examples of Systemic Prototypes

Systemic prototypes within BCFRCs represent innovative approaches to addressing underlying systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and inequality. Unlike traditional enterprise models focused solely on profitability, systemic prototypes aim to influence broader social systems and policies. Examples include:

- » **Gender Equality Initiatives:** BCFRCs promote gender equality by empowering women farmers through leadership roles, decision-making opportunities, and access to resources. This includes initiatives to enhance women's participation in agricultural cooperatives and training programs tailored to their needs.
- » **Community Governance and Ownership:** Systemic prototypes emphasise community ownership and governance of BCFRCs, ensuring that decisions reflect the priorities and aspirations of local communities. This participatory approach strengthens social cohesion and resilience against external shocks.
- » **Advocacy for Policy Change:** ActionAid Association engages in advocacy efforts to influence policies that impact smallholder farmers and rural communities. This includes advocating for fair trade practices, access to agricultural subsidies, and support for sustainable farming practices at the local, state, and national levels.

Socio-Economic Impact of Basant Community Food Resource Centres

Livelihood Improvement

BCFRCs have significantly improved livelihoods within rural communities by:

- » **Increasing Incomes:** Through enhanced agricultural productivity and value addition, farmers have experienced increased incomes and reduced income volatility.
- » **Diversification of Income Sources:** Women farmers engaged in BCFRCs have diversified their income sources by participating in processing activities, selling value-added products, and accessing new markets.

Job Creation

BCFRCs contribute to job creation through:

- » **Direct Employment:** Operations of processing units and agricultural activities create direct employment opportunities for local residents, particularly women and youth.
- » **Indirect Employment:** The expansion of market linkages and the growth of local economies associated with BCFRCs stimulate additional employment opportunities in transportation, logistics, retail, and support services.

Social Changes

BCFRCs have facilitated positive social changes by:

- » **Empowering Women:** Women in rural communities have gained increased economic independence, decision-making authority, and social status through their participation in BCFRC activities.
- » **Community Development:** BCFRCs serve as focal points for community development initiatives, fostering social cohesion, collective action, and resilience against environmental and economic shocks.

ActionAid Association's Basant Community Food Resource Centres (BCFRCs) represent a paradigm shift in sustainable rural development, integrating organic farming, community empowerment, and systemic

prototypes to create lasting socio-economic impacts. Through the establishment of processing units, BCFRCs not only add value to agricultural produce but also generate employment opportunities that strengthen local economies. Stories of systemic prototypes highlight the organisation's commitment to addressing systemic issues and promoting inclusive growth.

The processing unit within the BASANT programme exemplifies a systemic prototype designed to create long-term, transformative changes in agricultural communities. Unlike enterprise prototypes, which typically focus on immediate economic benefits for individuals or small groups, the processing unit aims to address broader systemic issues and encourage sustainable development on a larger scale.

Value Addition and Economic Diversification: The processing unit plays a crucial role in adding value to raw agricultural produce by transforming it into marketable products such as jams, pickles, dried fruits, and other processed goods. This value addition not only increases the market value of the products but also diversifies the income sources for farmers. By moving beyond primary agriculture and engaging in processing activities, farmers can tap into new markets and demand, leading to increased economic stability and resilience.

Employment Generation and Skill Development: One of the significant impacts of the processing unit is job creation. The unit requires a workforce for various stages of processing, including sorting, cleaning, packaging, and quality control. This creates employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth, thereby contributing to local economic development. Moreover, the unit serves as a platform for skill development, offering training and capacity-building programs that enhance the technical and managerial skills of the local workforce. This empowerment through skill acquisition not only improves individual livelihoods but also strengthens community capacity.

Market Linkages and Fair Trade Practices: The processing unit facilitates direct market linkages for the processed products. By establishing partnerships with local markets, cooperatives, retailers, and even export channels, the unit ensures that farmers receive fair prices for their produce. This helps in promoting fair trade practices and reducing exploitation by middlemen. The strengthened market access contributes to the economic viability of smallholder farming and enhances the overall market presence of locally produced goods.

Community Ownership and Sustainability: A defining feature of the processing unit as a systemic prototype is its emphasis on community ownership and governance. The unit is often managed by local cooperatives or farmer groups, ensuring that the benefits of value addition are retained within the community. This community-driven approach fosters a sense of ownership, accountability, and sustainability. By involving local stakeholders in decision-making and management, the processing unit aligns its operations with the needs and priorities of the community, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and long-term development.

Environmental and Social Impact: The processing unit also addresses environmental sustainability by promoting eco-friendly processing techniques and reducing post-harvest losses. By utilizing organic produce and implementing sustainable processing methods, the unit minimizes its environmental footprint. Additionally, the social impact of the processing unit is significant, as it empowers marginalized groups, promotes gender equality by providing employment opportunities to women, and enhances social cohesion through collaborative efforts.

The processing unit within the BASANT programme is a systemic prototype that drives comprehensive and sustainable development. By adding value to agricultural produce, generating employment,

establishing fair market linkages, encouraging community ownership, and promoting environmental sustainability, the processing unit addresses the root causes of economic and social challenges in agricultural communities. It exemplifies a holistic approach to development that goes beyond immediate economic gains and seeks to create lasting, transformative changes

ENTERPRISE PROTOTYPES

Enterprise Prototype Model 1: Goat Rearing

In rural India, goats are often referred to as the “poor person’s cow”, playing a vital role in the household economy and nutrition of landless, small, and marginal farmers. This enterprise thrives in areas where agriculture is challenging, relying on shrubs and trees for sustenance in low-fertility environments. Bundelkhand, known for its harsh summers with temperatures soaring between 40–50 degrees Celsius, provides an ideal habitat for goats resilient to such conditions.

Traditionally, goat rearing serves as both an additional income source and insurance against disasters like droughts in pastoral and agricultural communities across India. With a rising demand for goat meat domestically, coupled with accessible improved breeding technologies, the sector presents promising economic opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Despite its potential, goat rearing faces challenges such as the prevalence of diseases like foot and mouth disease. Our project addresses these challenges through regular deworming, vaccination, and collaboration with district veterinary departments to enhance disease prevention and treatment capabilities.

Enterprise Model: Each goat rearing unit costs approximately INR 40,000, covering three goats and one Bundelkhandi buck, along with essential infrastructure, medicines, and insurance. Goats typically become fertile within 10–12 months and often give birth to multiple kids. This model is particularly suitable for landless individuals in drought-prone areas, offering a sustainable income source. An adult goat yields an annual benefit of around INR 7,000, while a buck provides INR 10,000 annually, alongside producing nearly two quintals of manure per year.

Through goat rearing, we are improving economic prospects while also promoting resilience and sustainability in Bundelkhand’s rural communities. This model exemplifies our commitment to empowering livelihoods through practical, environmentally sustainable solutions.

Case Story

Mamta

Mamta is from Saleiya village in Babina block, Jhansi. She has two sons. She lives with her parents-in-law, husband, and brother-in-law, who stays separately. They have no land. Before goat rearing through BASANT programme at ActionAid Association, they used to make beedhis, or unfiltered tobacco wrapped in tendu leaf. Mamta's husband was a tailor, a profession which he continues to practice. After receiving 3 goats, through the practice of goat rearing, she has sold 2 goats for Rs. 12,000. She has 10 goats due to breeding, even after selling two goats over a period of two years.

Some goats died, she had to manage and purchase a few goats. She has 4-5 baby goats, which she will sell for about 3000-4000 rupees. The family doesn't migrate. They make clothes at home, and aspire to open a tailoring shop with her husband providing his services. Mamta will continue goat-rearing as long as there is a profit to be made. Two sons go to a private school, when earlier they went to a government school. Paying fees is hard, the younger son will be appearing for the 10th grade board examination this year.

Mamta shares her modest home with her parents-in-law and a brother-in-law who lives separately. In their pursuit of a sustainable livelihood, Mamta and her family have navigated through various means to make ends meet.

With the introduction of goat rearing under the BASANT programme, Mamta found a new avenue to augment their income.



Mamta feeding one of the goats provided to her by ActionAid Association through the goat rearing prototype

Enterprise Prototype Model 2: **Backyard Poultry**

Poultry farming is rapidly growing within the animal husbandry sector, playing a crucial role in providing proteins, minerals, and vitamins through eggs and meat. India has emerged as the world's third-largest egg producer, with significant contributions from small-scale poultry farmers, including those in the Bundelkhand region. These farmers, often from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, self-help groups (SHGs), and landless households, engage in backyard poultry farming for supplementary income and nutritional support.

Backyard poultry farming not only improves nutritional security but also reduces livelihood vulnerability among rural communities. It promotes gender equity by empowering women as key operators in this small-scale enterprise, manageable within household settings. The Kuroiler breed, distributed as part of our project across Jhansi, Mahoba, and Lalitpur districts, is well-suited to the region's harsh climatic conditions and typically lays one egg per day.

Through partnerships with program participants, we've established 450 units, predominantly owned by Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC). Each unit receives support including 50 Kuroiler chicks and a three-layer cage, with initial vaccinations provided during the chicks' first 30 days.

Business Model: The backyard poultry business model operates in six cycles, each spanning three months. An initial investment of Rs 8,000 covers a three-layer cage, while Rs 3,000 secures 50 one-month-old chicks (20 roosters and 30 hens). Subsequent cycles involve purchasing 50 additional chicks for Rs 4,000, funded from sales of chickens and eggs. By the fourth cycle, an additional cage is required to accommodate growing stock. Over 18 months (six cycles), assuming a 20% mortality rate, the operation can yield approximately 300 chickens (120 roosters and 180 hens). The hardiness of the Kuroiler breed minimizes care requirements, requiring about three hours of daily management. Income is earned through sale of eggs and chickens.

By promoting sustainable and profitable poultry farming, our project empowers rural communities economically while strengthening their resilience in the face of environmental and economic challenges in Bundelkhand.

Case Story

Rabia

Rabia is from Bucha village in Jhakora block, Lalitpur. Rabia's journey into entrepreneurship began amidst challenges but with unwavering resolve. Living with her extended family—her mother and father-in-law, husband, and brother-in-law—she embarked on poultry farming and goat rearing, transforming their livelihood landscape. Her husband, once a construction worker, now assists in their burgeoning enterprise after a debilitating accident shifted their focus.

With no prior work experience and no land to call their own, Rabia carved a niche in culinary excellence. She ventured into selling cooked meals, specializing in delectable chicken biryani and a variety of eggs—fried and boiled—which swiftly became popular in their community. This enterprise has significantly bolstered their monthly income to approximately 50-60,000 rupees, ensuring greater financial stability for her family.

Rabia's eldest daughter, Khushnuma, shines as a beacon of hope for their future. With aspirations to become a doctor and a stellar academic record, including an impressive 97% in 8th grade, Khushnuma not only excels in her studies but also contributes to the family's livelihood endeavours. Despite societal pressures within their Muslim community, Rabia remains steadfast in her commitment to supporting Khushnuma's education until she reaches 18, the age she plans for her daughter's marriage.

As Rabia manages the accounts and oversees operations, her influence within the family has grown. Together, they prepare and sell biryani, symbolizing their unity and shared vision for a better future. While Rabia dreams of affording private schooling for her children and expanding their enterprises further, she acknowledges the challenges ahead.

Educationally unprivileged herself, Rabia harbours profound aspirations for her children's future.



Rabia feeds her chicken, which are used for her small business of cooking and selling chicken biryani to community members

Enterprise Prototype Model 3: Seed Production

The seed production prototype addresses critical challenges in Bundelkhand, such as the scarcity of quality seeds and rising cultivation costs exacerbated by drought conditions. Quality seeds are essential for farmers to achieve profitable yields, featuring high vigour and germination rates crucial for agricultural success. In India, the seed industry is vast, comprising formal and informal sectors; however, informal seed production prevails in Bundelkhand due to limited awareness of certification protocols.

ActionAid Association promotes organic farming to reduce input costs and environmental impact, aligning with consumer preferences for healthy, ethical choices. Local seeds, adapted to regional conditions, require less irrigation and reduce input costs compared to market seeds. Through sustainable seed production, we pave the way for inclusive growth, improved food security, and reduced environmental impact, marking an critical step towards sustainable agriculture in the region.

Case Story

Aarti

Aarti is from Simeriya, Rajgarh village, Jhansi. She has a dream for the educational empowerment for her young children. Aarti, alongside her husband, harnesses their agricultural acumen on their modest one-acre plot. Transitioning from conventional farming to engaging in share cropping, they embrace new opportunities to enhance their livelihoods. Their current endeavour? Seed production—a venture that marks their first foray into a promising project aimed at expanding their agricultural horizons.

Their two young children, a girl and a boy, attend a private school, indicating Aarti's commitment to providing them with the best opportunities for growth. While still in lower kindergarten (LKG), their laughter and curiosity echo through their home, inspiring Aarti and her husband to strive harder.

With their initial steps into seed production showing promise, Aarti dreams of expanding their land holdings. This aspiration indicates their dedication to sustainable farming practices and economic advancement within their community.

Aarti's story is not just about cultivating seeds; it's about nurturing dreams and laying foundations for a brighter future. As she navigates the complexities of rural life with resilience and determination, Aarti embodies the spirit of empowerment and possibility, setting a compelling example for her family and village alike.



Aarti holding a pumpkin cultivated while attending to the agricultural land

Case Story

Shyam Saki

Shyam Saki is from Saleiya, Babina block, Jhansi. A single mother raising her son, she is a symbol of strength in her community. Her son, now 19 years old, works in a factory after completing his education up to the 10th grade. Shyam shoulders the responsibilities of both provider and nurturer.

Despite these challenges, Shyam manages a small but promising agricultural venture. Her holdings include two goats and an acre of land dedicated to wheat seed production. Engaged with the W4P Project for the past four years, she has embraced opportunities for growth and sustainability in agriculture.

As a Board Member of BASANT FPO, Shyam plays an important role in decision-making. However, her dual responsibilities often constrain her active involvement in the board. Managing the land and attending to her familial duties leaves little room for extensive board engagement, a fact that occasionally weighs on her aspirations.

The support she has received has undoubtedly made a difference, and Shyam remains driven by a relentless pursuit of improvement. Her dream? To expand her goat herd, envisioning a future with more and larger goats that will secure her family's financial stability



Shyam Saki enjoys a moment at a village meeting with other community women

Enterprise Prototype Model 4: Poshan Vatika (Nutrition Garden)

Poshan Vatika (nutritional garden) aims to address malnutrition in drought-prone rural areas of Bundelkhand by promoting organic cultivation of vegetables and fruits, ensuring soil health sustainability. This initiative enhances dietary diversity by supplying essential micronutrients through home-grown produce, crucial for the health of women and children in marginalised communities.

The scarcity of nutrient-rich foods contributes to various health challenges among rural populations. Poshan Vatika encourages families, particularly women and children, to cultivate a variety of vegetables and fruits. This nutrition garden model, an advanced form of kitchen gardening, not only fulfils dietary needs but also provides an additional income source for small and marginal farmers.

Participants in the Poshan Vatika program receive training on optimal sowing periods for different vegetable crops and learn to prepare organic manure, pesticides, and fertilizers using locally available materials. Organic fertilizers improve soil structure, water retention capacity, and support biodiversity, promoting eco-friendly farming practices.

To date, 450 units have been established, primarily owned by members of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities. Participants are equipped with essential resources including five 35-liter drums, a spray machine, and seeds for 11 vegetables including bottle gourd, cucumber, tomato, brinjal, chili, spinach, fenugreek, onion, and beetroot.

Poshan Vatika improves nutritional security and also empowers communities to sustainably manage their dietary needs and economic well-being. By promoting organic farming and dietary diversity, this prototype contributes significantly to improving health outcomes and building resilience in the face of environmental challenges in Bundelkhand

Case Story

Preethi

Preethi is from the village of Durgapur in Babina block, Jhansi district. She lives with her husband, three children, and supportive parents-in-law. Her eldest daughter, Mali, is in the 9th grade at Maharani Laxmibhai School—a private institution that symbolises a newfound opportunity for their family. Previously, gender-based discrimination had limited girls to government schools, while boys received priority for private education.

Before this transformation, Preethi and her husband earned a modest income through his shuttering work, bringing in about 15,000 rupees monthly. Now, with Mali actively involved in cultivating vegetables alongside community women—a co-creation that enriches both their fields and livelihoods—additional income streams have begun to flow into their home.

Mali dreams of becoming a police officer, a bold aspiration in a community where early marriages often prevail. Despite these norms, Preethi is steadfast in her support for her daughter's education-first approach. This marks a significant departure from Preethi's own restricted past, where societal constraints kept her indoors. Today, she attends meetings, engages in market interactions, and manages her household with newfound confidence and purpose.

Their agricultural efforts extend to a nutritional garden prototype, demonstrating their commitment to holistic well-being despite owning only one acre of land as small marginal farmers. The impact is palpable—Mali confidently walks to and from school, unafraid of eve-teasing, reflecting a community that values safety and empowerment



Preethi with her son, cultivating vegetables in her nutrition garden and attending to the fields

Case Story

Bhadi Dhulaiya

Bhadi Dhulaiya is from Silgan village, Jhakora block, Lalitpur district. Her story is rooted deeply in the fertile soil of her six-acre farm. With three children—two daughters and a son—Bhadi and her husband cultivate vegetables, with a dedication akin to a labour of love that sustains their household. Their journey took a pivotal turn when Bhadi embraced a new project aimed at enhancing agricultural practices. She became instrumental in organising community meetings and initiated seed production through a nutritional garden, marking a shift from expensive market-based compost purchases.

Over the past two years, Bhadi's efforts have borne fruit in more ways than one. Her income has soared, showing a remarkable 50% increase in profits. This financial stability has empowered Bhadi to provide her children with access to private schooling, ensuring they receive quality education. As she looks to the future, Bhadi meticulously saves for their marriages and unforeseen emergencies, securing their family's legacy.

Central to their success is the development of a holistic farming ecosystem. Bhadi and her family have mastered the art of preparing biofertilizers, vermicompost, and selling quality seeds—a symbol of their dedication and knowledge. Supported wholeheartedly by her husband and children, particularly her knowledgeable son, Bhadi has not only grown crops but also cultivated her confidence and elevated her social standing within the community.

Their bond with the land runs deep. Despite economic pressures, they have never considered migrating, cherishing the heritage tied to their ancestral acres. Through dedication, innovation, and a commitment to sustainable farming, she has not only transformed her farm's productivity but also enriched her family's prospects for generations to come.



Bhadi Dulaiya collecting pumpkins grown at her nutrition garden

Enterprise Prototype Model 5: **Multilayer Farming (Machaan Cultivation)**

Machaan cultivation, or multi-layer farming, revolutionises agriculture by maximising vertical growing spaces, allowing simultaneous cultivation of multiple crops on the same land. This innovative model is meticulously planned to optimise cropping intensity, land use, and time, providing diverse vegetables year-round and mitigating risks from fluctuating market prices and adverse climates in Bundelkhand.

The integration of different crop types within a single field enhances farmers' income and labour efficiency significantly. In our initiative, we've established 205 units, predominantly owned by members of Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities. Each participant is equipped with essential resources including 128 wooden poles, various gauges of wire, 35-liter drums, a spray machine, and seeds for 11 vegetables, including bottle gourd, ridged gourd, cucumber, tomato, brinjal, chili, spinach, fenugreek, onion, and beetroot.

The setup involves embedding thick wooden poles every two metres, reinforced at the corners with scaffolding and wire rows at multiple heights, forming a sturdy machaan structure. This framework supports crops arranged in three layers: underground or low-level crops like beetroot and spinach,

bushes like chili and brinjal in the middle layer, and climbing crops such as bottle gourd and cucumber utilizing poles and wires for vertical growth.

Machaan cultivation not only enhances crop productivity and income stability but also optimises land usage and labour efficiency. By promoting multi-layer farming, we empower farmers in Bundelkhand to harness their agricultural potential sustainably, ensuring food security and economic resilience in the face of agricultural challenges.

Case Story

Hasmukhi

Hasmukhi, from a small village in Jhansi district, has three married children, three daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren eagerly exploring their world. Hasmukhi anchors her household with unwavering determination. None of the grandchildren attend school yet, but amidst their laughter and play, seeds of ambition are sown.

With, her husband, once focused on animal husbandry with two cows, Hasmukhi now pioneers multi-layer farming complemented by a flourishing nutritional garden. This transformation has been fruitful, yielding earnings of one lakh rupees last year alone—a remarkable shift from their earlier struggles.

The shift is as remarkable as it is transformative. From her past as an MGNREGA and agricultural worker, Hasmukhi now employs others, harnessing their collective efforts to bolster her ventures. Directly selling vegetables at the market, she anticipates doubling her earnings to another lakh in the next four months.

Embracing newfound knowledge and training, Hasmukhi has revitalized once-barren lands into productive havens. The growing expertise of her daughters-in-law now enriches their agricultural pursuits—a dream realized beyond imagination.



Hasmukhi in front of her home with the vegetables grown as part of the machaan cultivation

Looking forward, Hasmukhi's ambitions soar. She envisions expanding into poultry farming and vermicompost, forging a diverse ecosystem that sustains her family and community. Her dream extends to leasing additional land, embarking on a journey where support and collaboration amplify their collective potential.

Hasmukhi's story is more than one of agricultural prowess; it's a narrative of hope, resilience, and the boundless possibilities that arise when dreams are nurtured with determination and shared prosperity.

Enterprise Prototype Model 6: Horticulture

Horticulture crops play a pivotal role in India's food security, nutritional well-being, and economic stability. This sector encompasses the cultivation of fruits, flowers, vegetables, spices, tuber crops, mushrooms, bamboo, medicinal, and aromatic plants. Contributing approximately 33% to the gross value added (GVA) of agriculture, horticulture not only ensures the nation's nutritional security but also provides diverse rural employment opportunities, enhances farmer income, and adds dynamism to agricultural activities.

India currently produces a staggering 320.48 million tons of horticultural produce, surpassing food grains in quantity despite cultivating on a smaller area (25.66 million hectares for horticulture compared to 127.6 million hectares for food grains). The productivity of horticulture crops stands significantly higher at 12.49 tonnes per hectare compared to 2.23 tonnes per hectare for food grains. Notably, India leads globally in the production of fruits such as mango, banana, guava, papaya, sapota, pomegranate, and lime, while ranking as the second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables overall. The nation also maintains its supremacy in spices, coconut, and cashew nut production.

Emerging crops like kiwi, gherkins, kinnow (a tangerine-like fruit), date palm, and oil palm have been successfully introduced for commercial cultivation, further diversifying India's agricultural landscape. Under our project, we've established 92 horticulture units, predominantly owned by individuals from Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities, with significant participation from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and general communities. Each participant received support including 150 saplings of various plants such as guava, lemon, jackfruit, karounda (Bengal currant), mango, and pomegranate, along with essential materials like steel wire for fencing, angle iron, and spray machines.

Each fruit orchard spans approximately one acre, hosting around 180 fruit plants, with a cultivation timeline typically spanning three to four years to yield high-quality fruit crops. Through comprehensive training and support, our initiative empowers farmers to harness the potential of horticulture, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and fostering economic prosperity across rural India.

Case Story

Guddi

Guddi, is a resident of Maheshpuri village, located just one kilometre from Lalitpur city. With her husband, Guddi was facing considerable challenges. To make ends meet they relied on farming, which was irregular and full of risk and labour whenever it was able. They often had to struggle to provide for their family. Guddi's life took a transformative turn when she learned about the W4P programme from a neighbour. W4P offered various prototypes aimed at improving agricultural practices and economic stability for women. Intrigued by the potential, Guddi chose to focus on horticulture—a field that not only complemented her existing interest in gardening but also promised a significant increase in income.

In the first year of her participation in the W4P programme, Guddi received a range of resources including bundles of guava, jackfruit, pomegranate, and mango plants, along with wire for fencing. With diligent care and dedication, her horticultural endeavours soon began to bear fruit. The sale of her produce generated an initial income of Rs. 20,000. Guddi's commitment and hard work paid off significantly. By the end of the year, her annual earnings had surged to rupees one lakh. This newfound success allowed her to

expand her family's economic ventures. She utilised part of her earnings to establish a grocery shop for her son, which now operates smoothly under the supervision of her husband.

From struggling with odd jobs to becoming a successful horticultural entrepreneur, Guddi has not only improved her own life but has also contributed to her family's financial stability.



Guddi at her horticulture garden where she grows guava, jackfruit, pomegranates and mangos

Enterprise Prototype Model 7: Vermicompost

India, renowned for its organic farming practices, faces a pressing ecological challenge due to the excessive use of chemical fertilizers. These chemicals not only compromise the quality of food but also threaten the entire ecosystem. Urgent measures are required to curtail their use and promote the adoption of organic fertilizers.

Vermicomposting emerges as a sustainable solution in farming. It involves utilizing earthworms to transform organic waste into nutrient-rich manure known as vermicompost. This process not only eliminates the need for costly chemical fertilizers but also enhances soil fertility while improving its physical, chemical, and biological properties.

Under our initiative, we've partnered with program participants to establish 150 vermicompost units. These units are owned predominantly by individuals from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and general communities. Each unit is equipped with two vermi-compost beds and a shade net, enabling them to produce approximately 4,500 kg of vermicompost annually at an estimated cost of 6,500 rupees per unit.

By promoting vermicomposting, we empower farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices, reduce dependency on chemical inputs, and enhance soil health. This initiative not only fosters economic self-

reliance among rural communities but also contributes to preserving the ecological balance for future generations. Together, we pave the way towards a healthier, more sustainable agricultural future in India

Case Story

Pooja

Pooja is from Simeriya, in Rajgarh village, Jhansi. Her journey unfolds with a spirit of innovation and determination, reshaping the landscape of her family's agricultural pursuits. Pooja, alongside her husband, embraces the transformative potential of vermicompost for the first time. With one acre of land under their stewardship, they navigate their roles as agricultural labourers engaged in share cropping and goat rearing. Their aspirations extend beyond traditional farming; they envision a harmonious ecosystem where poultry, expanded goat rearing, and seed production thrive in unison.

Their commitment to their children's education shines brightly. Their daughter, bubbling with curiosity, attends lower kindergarten (LKG), while their son eagerly learns in the 2nd grade at a private school. This choice reflects Pooja's steadfast dedication to providing her children with quality education and broader opportunities for their future.

As Pooja delves into vermicompost, she envisions not just enriching the soil but also cultivating a sustainable future for her family. Her journey symbolises resilience, adaptation, and the pursuit of holistic agricultural practices that promise to yield lasting benefits for generations to come.

Pooja's story epitomises the spirit of rural entrepreneurship and empowerment. With each turn of the season, she and her family sow seeds of hope and prosperity, forging ahead with determination and a vision for a thriving agricultural ecosystem in her village.



Pooja engaged in vermi-composting

Case Story

Jaykumar

Jaykumar is from Silgan village, Lalitpur. As one of the initial beneficiaries, Jaykumar took bold steps to establish a vermicompost mother unit—a groundbreaking initiative that marked her as a trailblazer in sustainable agriculture within her village. Her determination didn't stop there. She became the first woman in Silgan to manage a solar-equipped processing unit and machinery, revolutionizing local grain grinding and processing services.

From grinding wheat to fulfilling village orders, Jaykumar's entrepreneurial spirit has yielded a prosperous income stream. Her success is evident in her latest venture—constructing a new home, with a portion of her earnings reinvested into expanding her processing capabilities. Investing in oil expellers, new spice machines, and a peanut grinder, she continues to expand her business horizons, fuelling economic growth in her community.

Jaykumar's journey is not just about financial success; it's about empowerment. Her newfound confidence radiates, inspiring other women to follow in her footsteps. Despite challenges, including her husband's role as labourer and doing diverse jobs, Jaykumar and her family remain rooted in Silgan, their commitment to their community unwavering.

With two children enrolled in government schools, Jaykumar prioritizes education, ensuring her family's future is built on a solid foundation of knowledge and opportunity. Her pioneering use of solar panels last year underscores her commitment to sustainable practices, further enhancing her status as a leader in both business and environmental stewardship.



Jaykumar watering the vermicompost

Empowering Women Farmers through BASANT Farmer Producer Organisation

In Bundelkhand, women participating in agriculture face numerous challenges in accessing markets, including limited market information, low sales volumes, and scattered service points for input supplies. Mobility constraints further hinder their ability to establish active market contacts. To address these issues, the BASANT Women Farmers Producer Organisation (FPO) was established as a federation of women entrepreneurs across three districts.

BASANT FPO aims to empower marginalised women entrepreneurs by providing them with capacity-building support to transform their micro-enterprises into sustainable ventures. The organization facilitates a supportive ecosystem where members can directly engage with stakeholders and leverage government initiatives such as MSME/Udyam and the National Agriculture Market (eNAM) for marketing their products.

Key Objectives:

1. Enhance farmers' incomes by supporting micro-enterprises.
2. Provide technical assistance for good agricultural practices to improve productivity.
3. Build sustainable capacity within FPOs to strengthen rural self-governance and bargaining power.
4. Ensure access to quality inputs, services, and markets for intensive agriculture and value-added processing.

BASANT FPO supports women farmers in producing quality seeds, which are stored in warehouses to meet future demand. This initiative reduces farmers' reliance on external markets and ensures profitability. Additionally, the FPO provides seeds on credit, reducing dependency on moneylenders.

An Agri Junction will be established in each district to centralise the procurement of seeds, organic fertilizers, pesticides, and agricultural tools. This initiative aims to simplify access to essential agricultural supplies for marginal farmers.

Impact and Outcome: FPOs like BASANT facilitate the aggregation of farmers, enabling collective action in areas such as credit, technology adoption, and post-harvest management. By empowering women through ownership and management roles, BASANT FPO promotes gender equity and economic independence.

With an all-women Board of Directors and 445 women shareholders, BASANT FPO not only aims for national recognition but also seeks to expand its network to advocate for policy changes and enhance market opportunities for its members.

Case Story

Suman

From Bhadora Village in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, Suman works diligently in the processing unit of BASANT. She balances her responsibilities with raising two sons and a daughter and living with her extended family. Her husband, a labourer who occasionally migrates within the district, supports the household. Suman, belonging to the Rajput caste, has seen a notable transformation since joining the BASANT program with ActionAid Association.

Previously, her children attended government schools, but now they benefit from private education. This change has brought a visible improvement in their attire, punctuality, and nutrition. With increased earnings from BASANT, Suman can save money and provide healthier meals for her family. The stability and dignity of her employment have also positively impacted her household dynamics.



Suman and Saroji, processing spices together at the BASANT Processing Unit in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

Case Story

Saroji

Also from Bhadora Village in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, Saroji is engaged in the processing of haldi (turmeric), dal (lentils), and mirch (chili powder) packets at BASANT. She resides with her parents-in-law and three children—two boys and a girl—who now attend private schools after initially attending government schools. Previously facing job insecurity and frequent migration, Saroji's participation in the BASANT program has been transformative over the past three years.

Now receiving regular salaries and honorariums, Saroji has achieved a level of financial stability previously unimaginable. She manages an acre of land and has expanded her livelihood by raising goats, contributing to her family's income despite challenges posed by climate change affecting agricultural yields. Saroji's involvement with BASANT has provided her with a sense of community and security, shielding her from the gender-based violence she encountered during migrations.

Her standing in the community has improved significantly, evident from her participation in state-level meetings and recognition in newsletters. Saroji has become a role model in her community, inspiring other women to pursue similar paths of empowerment. Her aspirations include scaling up operations, acquiring advanced machinery, and enhancing her leadership skills to achieve further professional growth and increased income.



Suman and Saroji reviewing sale of products at the BASANT Community Agriculture Resource Center

The BASANT Community Agriculture Resource Centre stands was founded under the auspices of the BASANT Women Farmers Producer Organisation (FPO). This centre serves as a hub for knowledge dissemination, skill enhancement, and economic empowerment among local communities, particularly women.

The centre's mission is rooted in enhancing the income and livelihoods of small and marginal women farmers through sustainable agriculture practices. It aims to achieve this by providing access to crucial information on modern farming techniques, organic practices, and sustainable agriculture; conducting training programmes and workshops to build capacity among farmers, especially women, in areas such as seed production, vermicomposting, multi-layer farming, and more; facilitating direct market linkages through platforms like the National Agriculture Market (eNAM) and BASANT Bazar, thereby ensuring fair prices for produce; and cultivating a sense of community and collaboration among farmers through regular meetings, decision-making roles, and collective initiatives.

The BASANT Community Agriculture Resource Centre operates BASANT Bazar, a marketplace that showcases a diverse array of farm and non-farm products cultivated and produced by local women entrepreneurs. Key products sold include organic produce such as tomatoes, cucumbers, spinach, brinjal, mangoes, guavas, and more, grown using sustainable farming practices; spices such as turmeric, coriander, cumin, and herbs like mint and basil, cultivated locally without synthetic pesticides;

handwoven textiles, pottery, and handicrafts crafted by local artisans; dairy products such as pure cow ghee, honey, and free-range eggs, sourced from women-managed livestock units promoted by the FPO; and vermicompost, organic fertilizers, and bio-pesticides produced locally, supporting sustainable farming practices.

The BASANT Community Agriculture Resource Centre has significantly contributed to transforming the lives of rural women and farmers in Bundelkhand. By providing them with access to resources, market opportunities, and empowering them with knowledge and skills, the centre has enabled these women to break the cycle of poverty and dependency.

Through initiatives like BASANT Bazar, these women entrepreneurs not only earn sustainable incomes but also contribute to the local economy and promote environmental sustainability through organic farming practices

Case Story

Lalit Lok Vaani Community Radio

In the heart of Bundelkhand, Lalit Lok Vaani Community Radio stands as a symbol of connectivity and empowerment, bringing together voices from 130 villages across two blocks, spanning approximately 25 kilometres and reaching a population of three lakh.

From 8 AM to 8 PM, Lok Vaani resonates with the diverse rhythms of rural life, broadcasting programs that range from direct and live interactions to specialized narrowcasting sessions tailored for Self-Help Group (SHG) members and mixed listeners. This initiative, spearheaded by Sai Jyoti's wing, serves not only as an entertainment hub but also as a vital information lifeline for its listeners.

Pankaj Ji, a pivotal figure in Lok Vaani's journey, recalls its inception in 2007 and the three-year journey to establish the radio station. By 2010, Lok Vaani had become a platform where local voices could share their stories and songs, long before YouTube and wide-



One of the members implementing the Lalit Lok Vaani Community Radio shows

spread internet access became commonplace. This platform sparked a cultural revival, showcasing over 200 artists who craft songs on themes ranging from migrant women to livelihoods, preserving and celebrating local heritage.

Beyond cultural preservation, Lok Vaani plays a crucial role during pivotal moments like elections and emergencies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the radio became a lifeline, broadcasting recorded sessions from healthcare professionals and community voices, providing vital information and solace to listeners. Messages recorded via phones were played, ensuring that even in remote areas without internet access, essential updates reached the community swiftly.

Lok Vaani isn't just a radio station; it's a community information centre and a platform for dialogue and empowerment. It remains a steadfast companion to villages where cellphones have yet to reach, bridging gaps in communication and knowledge dissemination. As it continues to evolve, Lok Vaani exemplifies the power of community-driven media in preserving traditions, promoting resilience, and connecting rural India to the world beyond.

CONCLUSION

The project operated with a primary focus on vulnerable communities. To identify suitable participants and prototypes, we developed indicators to assess vulnerabilities and potentials within community members. Across our intervention areas, we engaged with 15 villages in Lalitpur district, establishing 715 units across all seven prototypes. Of these, 172 units were owned by individuals from the SC community, 236 from the ST community, 298 from the OBC community, and nine from the general community.

In Jhansi district, we covered 10 villages and established 500 units across all prototypes, with ownership distributed among 248 units from the SC community, 251 from the OBC community, and one from the general community. Similarly, in Mahoba district, we engaged with 15 villages and developed 735 units across all seven prototypes. Here, 280 units were owned by individuals from the SC community, 441 from the OBC community, and 14 from the general community.

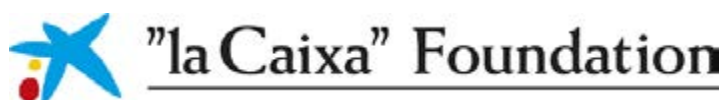
Over these years, we empowered 2,875 entrepreneurs across all seven prototypes in the three districts under the BASANT Women FPO, establishing a total of 1,950 women-led enterprises (see Table). Our project represents a sustainable livelihood approach tailored to rural Bundelkhand, integrating both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors crucial for poverty alleviation.

Our approach began by listening to community concerns, addressing issues such as migration and drought through participatory rural appraisal tools. We selected project participants from marginalised households, involving them in co-creation and prototyping processes. Seven livelihood prototypes were adopted based on community feedback, increasing livelihood options suited to the region's climatic conditions. Women from marginalised communities actively participated in meetings, assumed decision-making roles, and collaborated for collective growth and income generation.

In BASANT Women FPO, we now have 450 stakeholders with a share capital of Rs 2,30,000. Moving into the acceleration phase, the project aims to establish mother units for poultry and seed production, set up Agri Junctions/BASANT Bazar in all three districts to centralise support services for farmers, and provide access to online markets for selling diverse farm and non-farm products.

The first few of the project exemplify the great potential when women farmers unite to forge new futures for themselves, their families, and their communities at large.

Details of Collaborating Partners



The **"la Caixa" Foundation** of Spain, the third largest foundation in the world, promotes diverse social, economic, cultural and ecological initiatives to foster sustainable development across the globe. "la Caixa" has worked for more than 110 years in contributing to the advancement of society and the progress of individuals, with a special emphasis on those who need it most. Its main strategic objective is to provide opportunities and fight inequalities in Africa, Asia and Latin America through programs that contribute to the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Alianza por la
Solidaridad

act:onaid

Alianza por la Solidaridad is a nongovernmental Spanish organization that currently channels the effort and support of more than 50,000 people, amongst them members, volunteers, supporters and workers in order to fight against inequalities and contribute to protecting Human Rights in more than 19 countries in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. It is member of ActionAid.



ActionAid Association(India) is an organization working for social and ecological justice. ActionAid has been engaged with the most marginalized communities in India since 1972. In 2006, ActionAid Association was registered as an Indian organization, governed by an independent General Assembly and a Governing Board. Together with supporters, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all. ActionAid Association works in 24 states and two union territories, with several partners and allied organizations. ActionAid Association is part of a global federation and a full affiliate of ActionAid International, that has presence in over 40 countries worldwide.


act:onaid

ActionAid Association (India)

 www.actionaidindia.org   [@actionaidindia](https://twitter.com/actionaidindia)  [actionaid_india](https://www.instagram.com/actionaid_india)

 [actionaidcomms](https://www.youtube.com/actionaidcomms)  [@company/actionaidindia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/actionaidindia)

Actionaid Association, F-5 (First Floor), Kailash Colony, New Delhi -110048.

 +9111-11-40640500

ActionAid Association is an Indian organisation working for social and ecological justice in 25 states and three Union Territories. Together with supporters, allied organisations, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all.