

THE FIFTH ESTATE

VOL II





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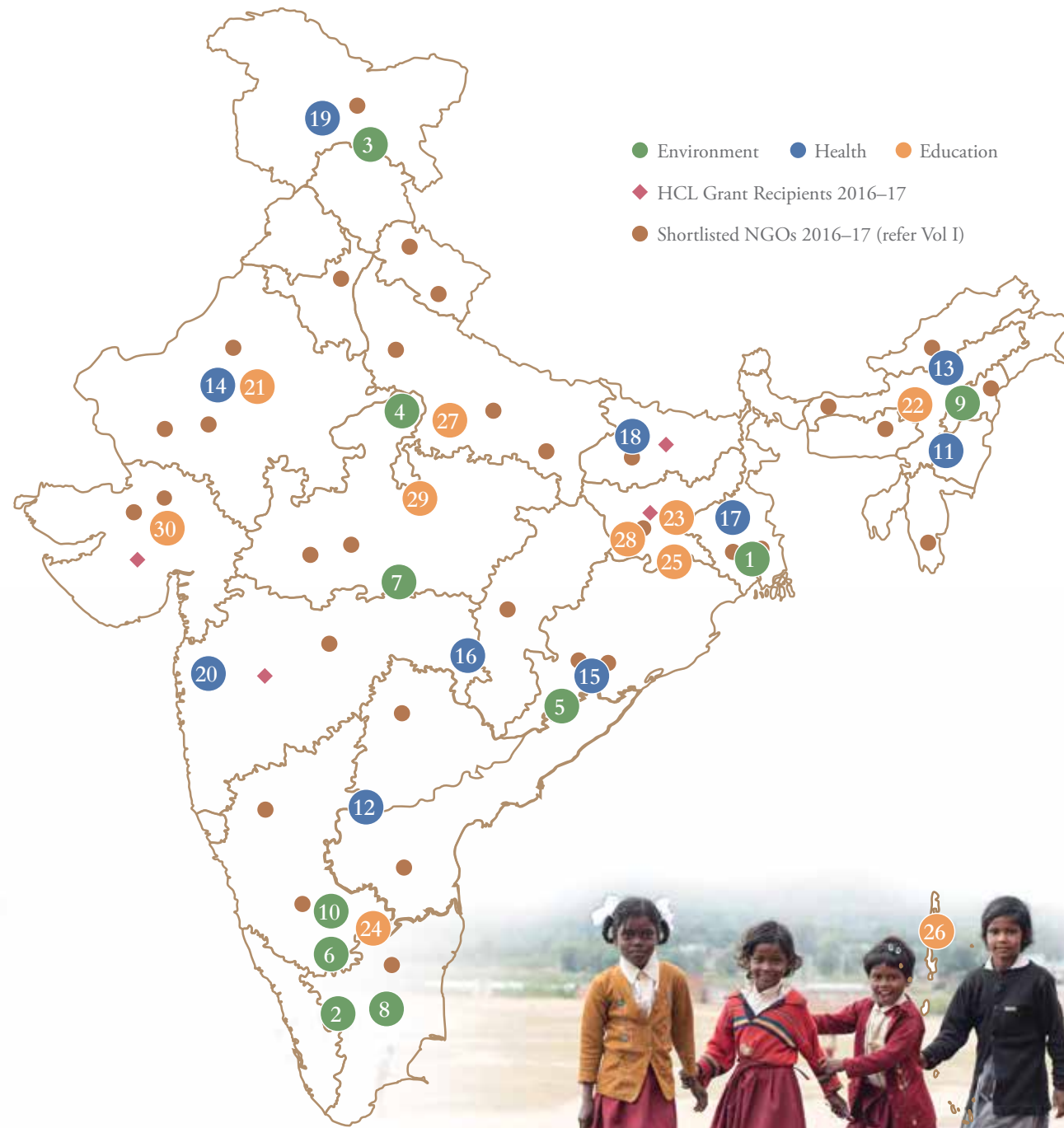
NGOs Transforming Rural India
in Environment, Health and Education



HCL

SHOWCASE
Roli Books

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THE GAMECHANGERS



'I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.'

– Mother Teresa

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY can take on many forms. However, for its impact to manifest at a large scale and for the long-term, it needs to go beyond mere grant-making. It needs to catalyze innovative solutions to our real problems – from gaps in education to defective healthcare delivery models to food insecurity and degradation of natural resources – and impress them upon policymakers. In turn, no measure of innovation can bring change unless it is backed by strong governance and structured programming, which are the hallmarks of sustainable, long-lasting development.

The HCL Grant, a flagship CSR programme of HCL, is a potent instrument of change premised on this very idea. A strong, multilayered, due diligence process created to select the recipients of the HCL Grant in the areas of Environment, Health and Education creates immense value for high, international level benchmarks of governance, and strengthening the mechanisms of Non-Governmental Organizations (or NGOs) who are working to metamorphose the rural landscape. In the words of the Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley in his keynote address at the 2017 HCL Grant ceremony, 'HCL has taken the initiative to institutionalize the mechanism of Corporate Social Responsibility. This is yet another first. I must compliment HCL for going into the larger society, creating an independent jury, looking at areas which each year need support and asking the

Jury to select the very best, so that they can act as role models for others.'

Some of the greatest challenges our country and our most vulnerable populations face are being combatted through campaigns by these committed entities – whom Shiv Nadar, Founder and Chairman of HCL, and the Shiv Nadar Foundation calls **The Fifth Estate**. Shiv Nadar says, 'The HCL Grant is a recognition of the rise of community-led ecosystems, Non-Governmental Organizations – The Fifth Estate. The other four estates that democracy rests on are – the legislative, judiciary, executive and the free press. These estates not only define the fabric of our society but also act as potent drivers propelling India to the next level of growth and prosperity. It is imperative that the growth process that we as a nation subscribe to is inclusive, and carries forward all sections of the society across geographies. This is where the community-led ecosystems are destined to play a decisive role in building a stronger, future-ready India.'

The Fifth Estate, 'the community-led ecosystems', are the gamechangers who will herald a revolution for the forgotten people of India, who will aid the government to fulfil its duties by engendering a paradigm of sustainable development which will illumine their lives through social and economic progress.

The HCL Grant celebrates the passion and zeal of these gamechangers – those NGOs that penetrate communities, empowering and building knowledge and capacity therein. Those that go beyond a good 'idea' to actual implementation of cutting-edge solutions which are also scalable and

replicable across regions, and which work towards synergizing their goals with existing government initiatives, strengthening them from within. Those that enable the community to independently sustain learnings and systems from NGO-led projects for posterity. Inclusivity, reach and gender transformative approaches must be as inherent in the DNA of the organization as they are in the HCL Foundation (the CSR wing of HCL). Under the HCL Grant, one not-for-profit body in each of the thematic categories will receive a grant of 5 crores over three to five years.

The CSR law, as enshrined in Section 135 of the Companies Act, India, has spawned a flurry of activity; however, the geographical, issue based diversity of the funding given, and indeed, the depth of its impact has not been consistent. The HCL Grant is designed differently. In the last two years, over 40 NGOs from every corner of the country, working on a wide spectrum of issues have been shortlisted. Four have received the HCL Grant, and the rest have been featured in this compendium, **The Fifth Estate**, to give them significant exposure.

The journey does not end with the grant money. The HCL Grant's process bolsters NGOs and consequently, the development sector itself, through deep institutional involvement and commitment. The HCL Foundation's core intent is to create a 'source code for socio-economic development' and bring lasting change by breaking the cycle of poverty through empowering people and communities. Its programmes, including HCL Samuday and the HCL Grant, trigger holistic, sustainable development on the back of this powerful thrust.

Driven by the idea of convergence, all four HCL Grant recipients complement and strengthen existing government initiatives, generating innovation and support *within* the framework of existing programmes. Last year's Grant Recipient in the Education category, MelJol's remarkable *Aflatoun* programme has been adopted by the Chhatisgarh government. The HCL Foundation has been working with CINI (Child in Need Institute), the 2016–17 recipient in the Health category to train government health workers in remote

areas of West Bengal, and with FES (Foundation for Ecological Security), the Grant Recipient in the Environment category to integrate with the MNREGA for system strengthening, to effect deep-rooted impact. The recipient of the first HCL Grant (for education) in 2015 was the NGO 'Going to School', which has evolved an unconventional, story-based teaching methodology now being implemented in government schools in Bihar and other states.

In 2017–18, to reach out to more organizations in more parts of the nation, the HCL Foundation engineered pan-India symposiums to clarify and elucidate the CSR law and the HCL Grant process to NGOs. The symposiums engaged with non-profit organizations in 12 locations across India. The result was a meaningful interaction with nearly 900 NGOs and over 1200 participants, to present an overview of the CSR law and the process of applying for the HCL Grant, from proposal creation to the methodology of selection. The whole exercise also helped to promote innovative development models and add equitable value to the process itself. And yet again, boost the inner workings of these bodies.

Eventually, over 3400 NGOs sent in proposals. The final shortlisted 30 entities represent the most outstanding non-profit bodies working to bring critical change to Indian villages. The sub-Jury's selection was difficult, as each NGO's daily efforts, however small, accumulate and contribute towards making a very tangible difference. From veteran warriors to comparatively new troopers, the HCL Grant has garnered an army of people and entities who are not only freeing access to resources for, and altering the lives of the underserved populations of India, but are, as gamechangers, transforming the very rules of engagement in the development sector.

HCL GRANT METHODOLOGY



HCL GRANT RECIPIENT NGOs are selected through a year-long process that measures in detail and depth the impact of the NGO, its governance and its people. Three years into this journey, the task remains steadfast: to find the three NGOs most aligned with the overall vision of the HCL Grant: generating high impact rural development in the areas of Environment, Education and Health.

The screening model deployed is simple yet robust, scientifically formulated, with multiple levels of assessments. Parameters include the originality, relevance and impact of the idea, the project's scalability, and how replicable and feasible it is. The history, social audit, and stakeholder engagement of the entity is vigorously investigated. Quantitative parameters include comparisons of coverage versus depth, financial allocations and more. The people behind the process are highly skilled and

diverse, from Governance Partners Grant Thornton, qualified Independent Consultants for field visits, and the HCL Foundation team. The result is a selection paradigm that is transparent, democratic, and heavily audited every step of the way.

In 2015–16, Going to School, an NGO working in Education, qualified as the recipient of the first HCL Grant. In 2016–17, the recipients were MelJol for Education, Child in Need Institute (CINI) for Health and Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) in the Environment category. HCL Foundation now has three to five-year-long partnership with each of the four past winners, a technical and financial intersection as part of the HCL Grant Programme, which continues to enrich the winning projects.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- The organization must be a registered not for profit entity in India (Society, Trust or as a Section 8 [previously Section 25] company).
- The organization should have completed the functional existence outlined below (as per registration certificate) in India, on or before 31st March 2017:
 - Applicant under Education and Health Category – 10 years,
 - Applicant under Environment Category – 5 years,
- The organization should have completed working experience in rural areas outlined below in India, on or before 31st March 2017:
 - Applicant under Education and Health Category – 5 years
 - Applicant under Environment Category – 2 years
- The organization should have the average expenditure outlined below for the last 3 financial years i.e. 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16.
 - Applicant under Education and Health Category – Rs. 1.5 Crores or above
 - Applicant under Environment Category – Rs 0.50 Crores or above
- The organization must not be blacklisted by any government agency, donor or international agency.
- The organization must not have any negative media coverage or any other controversy associated with it.
- The organization should not have any political or religious affiliations.
- The organization should have registration documents, audited financial reports, tax certificates and FCRA and/or similar documents depending on the nature of the funding/donations that it receives.

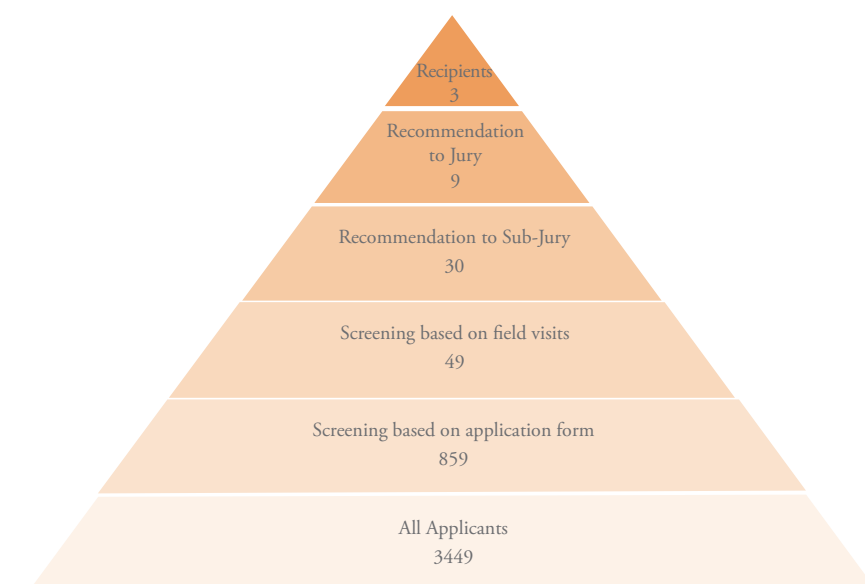
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- The proposed project must be in line with the provisions of Section 135 and Schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013.
- The proposed project must be in rural areas.
- The grant can be used to scale-up an existing project where co-funding is involved. However, HCL should be informed of all co-funders in advance and the organization must be able to clearly report how the HCL Grant will be utilized and what impact it will create.
- Proposed project must be designed for direct implementation by the applicant organization, sub granting of HCL funds will not be allowed.
- Networks and Consortium organizations are eligible to apply for the grant, however, if selected the organization must directly implement the project, sub granting of HCL funds will not be allowed.
- The organization must have good relationships with local administration in their geographic location.
- Grant amount will be upto Rs 5 Cr for a period of five years.
- The organization should not have any pending litigations.
- Grant money cannot be used for infrastructure development such as construction, renovation, purchase of fixed assets like land, buildings, and vehicles, among others.

‘It must be mentioned here that throughout the process of selection, the assessment team may it be consultants who looked at programmes, or the experts from finance and social audit filed who assess the practices and policies, or the creative team who did the photoshoots of programme with very high level of sensitivity, all assessment was with the lenses of appreciative enquiry and with the intention to genuinely represent the organisation with all its potentials in the jury rounds. It was very interesting to see that the HCL Foundation was involved in the process and have shown keen interest in the programme and organization.’

— *Surat Nayak, MelJol, Winner in the Education category, 2016–17*

HCL GRANT SCREENING PROCESS



**5 APR
2017**
HCL Grant
Portal Live

**5 JUN
2017**
Last date
for NGOs
to apply

**11 JUL
2017**
Field Visit Kick
Off Workshop

**15 JUL-
30 AUG
2017**
Level 1 field
evaluation

**5 OCT
2017**
Sub Jury
Meetings

**DEC
2017**
Jury Preparations
and HCL
Grant Book



**24 APR-
25 MAY
2017**
Pan India
Symposiums

**6 JUL
2017**
First Shortlist
(49)

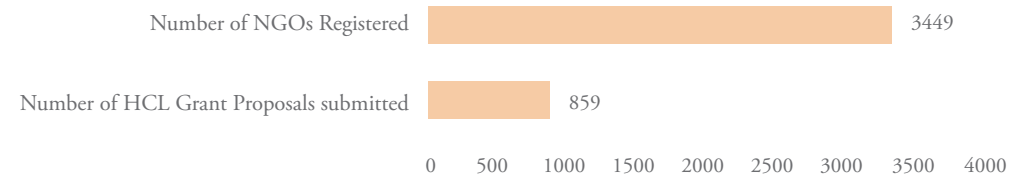
**5 SEP
2017**
Field visit closure
and second
shortlist (30)

**10 NOV
2017**
Due diligence
on Finalist
NGOs

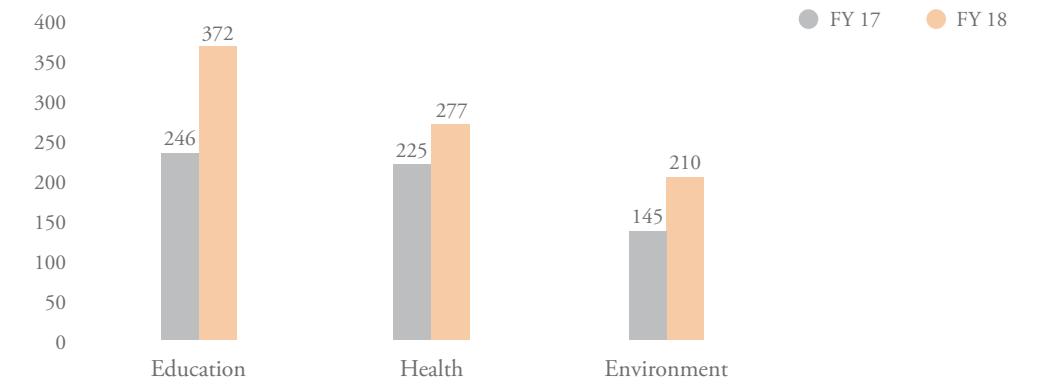
**MAR
2018**
HCL Grant Jury
and Event

PAN INDIA OUTREACH THROUGH MASS MEDIA
ENGAGEMENT WITH 4 HCL GRANT RECIPIENT NGOs

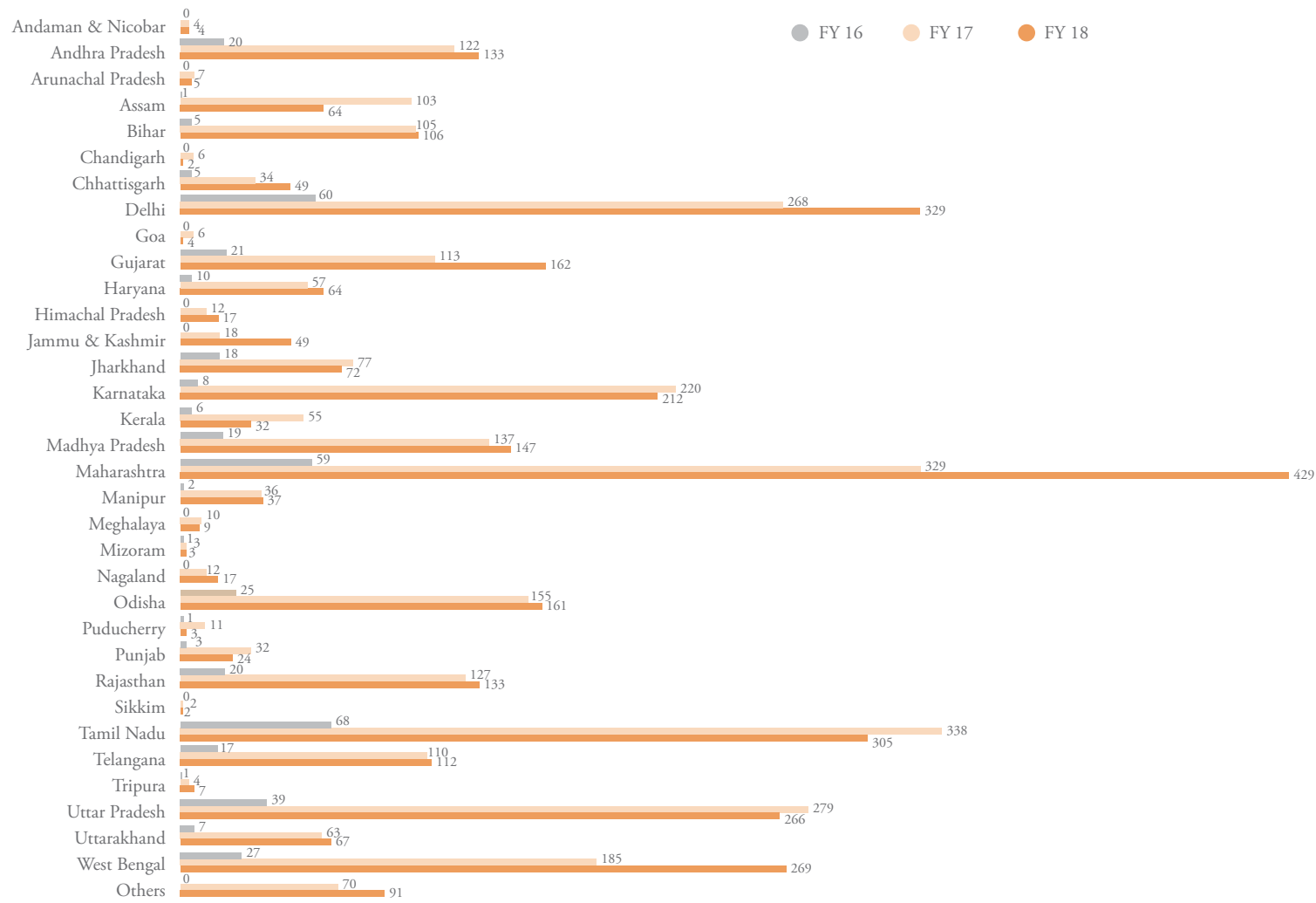
HCL GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION STATUS 2017-2018



CATEGORY-WISE HCL GRANT PROPOSALS RECEIVED

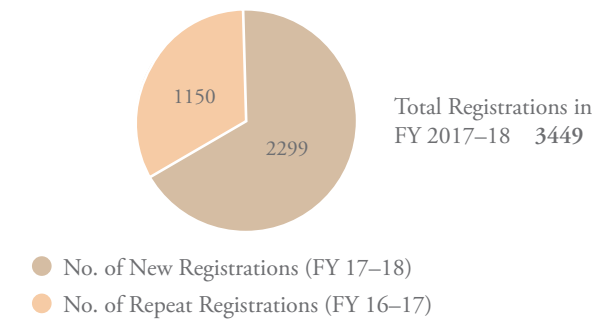


COMPARISON OF NGO REGISTRATIONS FY 17 VS FY 18

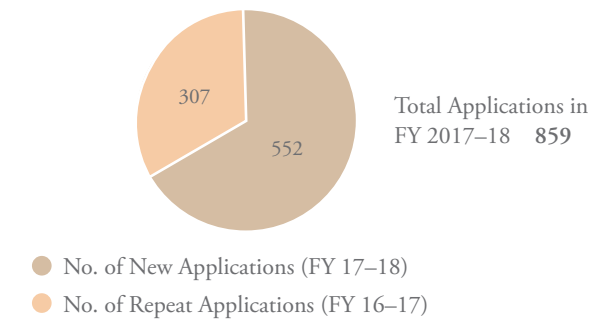


Total number of applications for 2016 – 443, 2017 – 3131 and 2018 – 3449

TOTAL NUMBER OF REPEAT REGISTRATIONS FY 2017-18



TOTAL NUMBER OF REPEAT APPLICATIONS FY 2016-17



JURY



ROBIN ABRAMS

Chairperson of the Jury

Former President of Palm Computing, and the longest serving Board member of HCL Technologies, she was most recently interim CEO at ZiLOG. She had been the President of Palm Computing and Senior Vice President at 3Com Corporation. She was formerly the President and CEO at VeriFone. Before joining VeriFone in 1997, Abrams held a variety of senior management positions with Apple Computers. As Vice President and General Manager of Apple Americas, she oversaw sales and channel management for U.S., Canada and Latin America. Prior to that, she was the Vice President and Managing Director of Apple Asia, where she was responsible for sales and marketing in the region. Abrams spent eight years with Unisys in several senior-level positions. She has served several U.S. public company boards including ZiLOG and BEA Systems (until it was acquired by Oracle) and currently serving Sierra Wireless and Openwave Systems. She also serves on the Anita Borg Institute Board and several academic advisory committees.



ISHER JUDGE AHLUWALIA

An eminent Indian economist, she is Chairperson of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), a leading think-tank based in New Delhi engaged in policy oriented research. Dr. Ahluwalia's research has focused on policy oriented challenges facing the Indian economy in the areas of urbanization, sustainable public service delivery, macroeconomic issues, and industrial growth and productivity. She was Chairperson of the High Powered Expert Committee on Urban Infrastructure and Services, the Government of India, from 2008 to 2011. Dr. Ahluwalia is on the Board of Trustees of a number of national and international research institutions. She was a Board member of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) from 2010 to 2016. She was Chairperson, Board of Trustees of International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D.C., from 2003 to 2006. She was awarded Padma Bhushan by the President of India in the year 2009 for her services in the field of education and literature.



B.S. BASWAN

Baswan was heading the Government Committee to review recruitment procedures for the higher civil services till August 2016. He regularly speaks on public policy issues at a number of institutions. He has held some of the key positions in the Government including Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie; Secretary, National Commission for Minorities, Govt of India; Chairman, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (Ministry of Chemicals and Petrochemicals); Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India; Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India; and finally retired as Education Secretary, Government of India. Post retirement, he spent time in the Planning Commission as a Senior Consultant and later served as the Director of the Indian Institute of Public Administration.



RICHARD LARIVIERE

President and CEO of the Field Museum since 2012, Dr. Lariviere's career in academia and business is grounded in expertise on India. His work with the Information Technology industry (beginning in 1992) comprised devising country entry strategies for American companies wishing to have a large presence in India. Among the companies he has worked with are Deluxe Corporation, General Instrument Corporation (now part of Motorola), Cisco Systems, Sabre Holdings, HCL Corporation, Perot Systems, MetLife, and others. His academic writing has garnered international prizes. He was a professor and Dean of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin, Provost and Executive Vice-Chancellor at the University of Kansas, and President of the University of Oregon. He has served on the Board of many prestigious organizations across the world. In Chicago, he is a member of the Advisory Board of After School Matters, member of the Board of the Chicago Cultural Mile, President of the Board of Art in the Center, Member of the Economic Club, the Chicago Club, and the Arts Club.



SHIV NADAR

Shiv Nadar established HCL in 1976 as an original garage startup, revolutionizing Indian technology and product innovation. Today, HCL is a US \$8bn global technology conglomerate employing over 120,000 people in 39 countries. In 1994, Nadar established the Shiv Nadar Foundation, which is today the largest philanthropic organization in India having established six institutions covering the entire spectrum of education and benefiting over 24,000 students directly.

So far the Foundation has invested close to US \$800mn in various initiatives. Nadar has received several honours and accolades in the past, notable being the third highest civilian award – Padma Bhushan, bestowed upon him by the President of India in 2008. He was named outstanding philanthropist of the year in 2015 by Forbes.



PALLAVI SHROFF

Ms. Pallavi S. Shroff is the Managing Partner of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas about 36 years of extensive experience. Her broad and varied representation of public and private corporations and other entities before various national courts, tribunals and legal institutions has earned her national and international acclaim. Ms. Shroff is also the Head of the Litigation practice at the firm, with an extensive knowledge in matter of dispute resolution and arbitration. She also mentors the Competition Law practice at the Firm. Ms. Shroff has been awarded 'India Managing Partner of the Year' by Asian Legal Business Asia Law Awards 2017. She has also been recognized as one of the Most Powerful Women in Indian Business by *Business Today*, five years in succession (2013-17). She has also been awarded the 'Disputes Star of the Year', India by Asialaw Asia-Pacific Dispute Resolution Awards, 2017.

SUB JURY

Environment

SHASHI BANERJEE Principal, Shiv Nadar School, Noida
RUPAMANJARI GHOSH Vice Chancellor, Shiv Nadar University
PRAHLAD RAI BANSAL Deputy Chief Financial Officer, HCL Technologies
RITA GUPTA Senior Vice President, HCL Corporation

Health

SHIKHAR MALHOTRA Vice Chairman, HCL Healthcare, Director and Board Member, HCL Corporation, Trustee, Shiv Nadar Foundation
SRIMATHI SHIVASHANKAR Executive Vice President, HCL Technologies
PAMELA SRIVASTAVA Head, Sustainability, Shiv Nadar Foundation
NEELESH AGARWAL Senior Vice President, HCL Corporation

Education

KALA VIJAYAKUMAR President, SSN Institutions
RAJIV SWARUP President, Shiv Nadar University
GOPAL KARUNAKARAN CEO, Shiv Nadar School



The recipients of HCL Grant 2017 being felicitated by the Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Arun Jaitley. The recipient NGOs were 'Foundation for Ecological Security' – Environment, 'Child In Need Institute (CINI)' – Health, and 'MelJol' – Education



Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, delivering the keynote address



Pan India symposiums for building capacities of NGOs on CSR Grants



L-R: S. Madhavan, Director, HCL Technologies; Kiran Nadar, Founder Kiran Nadar Museum of Art; Shiv Nadar, Founder and Chairman, HCL, Shiv Nadar Foundation; Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs; John Kelly, Sr VP, Cognitive Solutions and Research, IBM and C. Vijayakumar, President and CEO, HCL Technologies



Malcolm Gladwell, eminent author and speaker delivering the special address



Unveiling **The Fifth Estate Vol. I**, the first ever compendium of path-breaking NGOs in India. L-R: John Kelly, Senior Vice President, Cognitive Solutions and Research at IBM; Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs; Shiv Nadar, Founder and Chairman, HCL, Shiv Nadar Foundation; Robin Abrams, Chairperson of the Jury; Malcolm Gladwell, eminent author and speaker; and Richard Lariviere, President and CEO, Field Museum.



Nidhi Pundhir, Director, HCL Foundation presenting an overview on HCL Grant



L-R: Robin Abrams, Chairperson of the Jury; Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Board Member, HCL Technologies, Chairperson, HCL CSR committee with Richard Lariviere, President & CEO, Field Museum



Shri Arun Jaitley felicitates the HCL Grant recipient 2017, Health – 'Child In Need Institute' (CINI)



Shri Arun Jaitley felicitates the HCL Grant recipient 2017, Environment – 'Foundation for Ecological Security' (FES)



Shri Arun Jaitley felicitates the HCL Grant recipient 2017, Education – 'MelJol'



Shiv Nadar addressing the gathering



Robin Abrams announcing the recipients of the HCL Grant 2017



Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Former Hon'ble President of India felicitates the HCL Grant recipient 2016, 'Going to School', in the Education category

HCL GRANT RECIPIENTS 2017 & 2016



2017

HEALTH Child in Need Institute (CINI) 20
Pioneering community health and nutrition

ENVIRONMENT Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) 24
Preserving 'commons' and empowering the community to manage them

EDUCATION MelJol 28
Social and financial literacy for children

2016

EDUCATION Going to School 32
Learning through the magic of stories



Focusing on the health and well being of children and their mothers

Child in Need Institute (CINI)



Founded by Dr. Samir Chaudhuri in 1974

CINI, has been working with women and children's health in West Bengal and Jharkhand for over four decades and has reached over 50,00,000 people. Winner of the HCL Grant 2016-17 in the health category, its overarching aim is to enable poor people, women, and children to take control of their lives and have a share in sustainable development.

HCL GRANT PROJECT TITLE 'Creating a Community-Based Safety-Net for Better Health and Nutrition Outcomes for Children, Adolescents and Women of West Bengal' through a life-cycle and community-based approach

BENEFICIARIES 82,108 Children (0-6 years), 130,000 Boys and Girls (10-19 years) and 10,948 (Pregnant and lactating mothers)

LOCATIONS Three tribal, Muslim and scheduled caste dominated blocks: Nagrakata, Suti 1 and Falta, respectively in three resource poor districts from north, central and southern West Bengal, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad and south Twenty-Four Parganas

CINI HAS EVOLVED A UNIQUE, integrated concept called Child Friendly Communities (CFC) and focuses on the spheres of health, nutrition, education. It seeks to break the vicious cycle of poverty, malnutrition, ill-health, illiteracy, abuse and violence, affecting in particular, children and women. They are empowered to interact with government setups, local bodies, and with their peers to form their own groups for collective action to change their lives.

CINI is known for its community-based nutrition interventions to ensure that the community is able to resolve its problems through locally available resources and solutions. Its Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre model has been taken up by the Central Government. CINI's work in the health sector chiefly consists of closing the gap between health services and those they are meant to benefit. CINI operates through rigorous involvement at multiple levels, from family, to community, to institutions.

We spoke to CINI about what the HCL Grant has meant to them.

On winning the grant

'Winning the HCL Grant in the domain of health is an achievement which gave the organization the support, encouragement, and necessary resources to realize its dream of developing Child Friendly Communities (CFC) on a much broader scale through a rights-based approach.'



On the grant selection process

‘The sturdy process of screenings, constant queries, in-depth interviews, and extensive meetings helped the organization re-invent itself in a new way. Through these screenings, CINI got an opportunity to identify its own areas of strength and weakness and accordingly adopted measures for overcoming its shortcomings. This extensively diligent process thus not only awarded us with the prestigious HCL Grant, but also encouraged and strengthened our belief in and commitment to community-driven processes for furthering social change.’

Progress on HCL Grant project thus far

- 2500 households covered for a comprehensive baseline study
- 17 convergence meetings held with health and ICDS officials across all Gram Panchayats, blocks and districts
- 150 adolescent groups formed and 93 adolescent peer leaders trained on reproductive health
- 380 community sensitization meetings on RMNCHA issues
- 298 high risk pregnancies and post-natal complications identified and jointly addressed with FLWs
- Identification of 1135 underweight, 1746 stunted and 511 wasted children through malnutrition screening camps across 72 ICDS centers.

Teaching children the first steps towards health



The conservation of natural resources is in the community's hands

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)



Founded by Dr. Amrita Patel in 2001

The Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) is committed to the strengthening, reviving and conserving of land, forest, and water resources in the country, using technology and working with government schemes. FES works with forests and the idea of the 'Commons'. Winner of the 2017 HCL Grant in the Environment category, FES works in 31 districts across eight states and touches over 7,700,000 people in 13,678 villages to improve management and governance of 6,770,000 million acres of forests, common lands and farmlands.

HCL GRANT PROJECT TITLE 'Informed Collaborative Action for Resilience of Ecosystems (iCARE) building on the extensive experience of FES of working with commons

BENEFICIARIES 600 rural institutions; 45,000 households; 20,000 hectares of land; 15,000 people trained in analytical tools; over 1,000 government staff and NGO members

LOCATION Udaipur in Rajasthan, Mahisagar in Gujarat, Chikkaballapur in Karnataka, Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh, Dhenkanal and Koraput in Odisha

THE 'COMMONS', i.e., shared natural resources – like land, water, forests, and the misnamed 'wastelands' – are crucial for bio-diversity conservation and carbon sequestration. FES looks at forests and Commons not in isolation, but in the context of the social, economic, and ecological dynamics of the area. It respects the wisdom of the local peoples and tribes who have lived off the forests for generations, but have never had rights over the land. It looks at development through the lens of the interrelationships between life forms and natural systems.

FES's strategy is three-pronged: revive entire ecosystems; develop the commons, and empower the local community to govern their use as a collective and through technology; and improve the economic conditions of people in the area, helping them understand the dynamics of conservation. FES strongly believes that livelihoods and conservation can co-exist peacefully, and rural communities are best placed to bring this collaboration to life. It believes in a future where local communities will manage their natural resources and growth based on the principles of sustainability and social justice.

We spoke to FES about what winning the HCL Grant has meant.



On winning the grant

'We see the grant award as recognition of Commons in maintaining ecological stability and improving economic opportunities, recognition of capacities of village level institutions, and recognition of a social-ecological systems approach to address complex environmental problems.'

On the grant selection process

'It was a robust and multi-level evaluation process. In fact it was a learning experience for us as the process provided space to retrospect, identify gaps and ways to address them. The process enabled FES and HCL to explore common grounds and set out a shared vision for an effective partnership.'

Progress on HCL Grant project thus far

- 600 decentralized institutions
- 5,000 rural men, women and youth trained
- 1200 government functionaries and civil society representatives oriented
- 600 communities and other public and civic institutions equipped with tools and applications to enrich conservation action planning
- 20,000 hectares of forest and common lands brought under community conservation
- 12.28 crore in public investments leveraged for ecological restoration
- 36 campaigns and block level workshops organized
- 6 collaborative platforms at landscape level constituted and plans under implementation.

The Commons lie at the crux of biodiversity



Learning about social and financial rights in fun ways

MelJol



Founded by Jeroo Billimoria in 1991

MelJol's programmes, in particular its social and financial literacy modules, primarily develop children's citizenship skills by focusing on children's rights and responsibilities. The winner of HCL Grant 2016-17 in the Education category, MelJol's popular *Aflatoun* programme has been implemented in 11 Indian states reaching out to approximately 4,00,000 children. The goal is for children to become the agents of a powerful shift in their own destinies and that of the social order of the community.

HCL GRANT PROJECT TITLE Scaling up of the '*Aflatoun* Social and Financial Education Programme' with stakeholders including teachers, students, community and local authorities and government

BENEFICIARIES 72,000 children of 6-14 age group and 720 teachers, community members as resource persons; 72000 parents / family members of children getting covered under the programme

LOCATION Yavatmal in Maharashtra, Barabanki and Gonda in Uttar Pradesh, Chatra and Hazaribagh in Jharkhand

MELJOL'S INNOVATIVE flagship programme – *Aflatoun* – offers a unique opportunity to children from the poorest homes, in school or out, or who are in the juvenile justice system through its innovative Social and Financial Education (SFE) programme. Social education works towards building self-confidence, communication skills, and understanding one's rights and responsibilities as members of the community and the nation. Financial education prepares children for the real world by imparting skills like saving, budgeting, and engaging in age-appropriate social and financial enterprises.

The programme is implemented using an active and experiential learning methodology, which enables a child to engage fully with the training and develop his/her full potential. It empowers children to explore and improve their entrepreneurial abilities, think outside the proverbial box, and look at their future through a positive lens. Training of teachers in the use of the methodology makes the process more holistic. MelJol's eventual aim is to make these programmes mainstream and integrate them into government school curricula where the poorest children can have access to them.

We spoke to MelJol about what winning the HCL Grant has meant.

On winning the grant

'The HCL Grant threw up an unprecedented opportunity for MelJol to engage with children for a sustained period of three to five years, which is considered ideal for change to happen. The announcement of MelJol as a grant-winner made us ecstatic, but at the same time we were humbled to



understand the responsibility that HCL Foundation has entrusted to us.'

On the grant selection process

'The process of the HCL Grant started with filling up a long application online and ended with receiving the award from the Hon. Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley. It was a unique internal experience of sharing, analyzing, debating, demonstrating, and learning.

As an assessment, it was a 360-degree process. The evaluation team interacted with our partners, donors, the stakeholders from government authorities and most importantly, with the community of children. The process was elaborate and demanding but very enriching in terms of ensuring that the organization is rooted firmly in its policies and practices towards its larger goals.'

Progress on HCL Grant project thus far

- Written permission from 70% of village panchayat leaders to implement the programme in the schools in Yawatmal, Barabanki, Gonda, Chatra, Hazaribag & Hardoi
- Permission obtained from state education department for Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand and from district education office for Yawatmal, Maharashtra
- A pool of 30 master trainers readied to roll out the programme
- 68059/72000 children have been reached directly so far from 696/720 schools
- 540/360 teachers trained in 16 teacher-training workshops
- Pretest conducted with 9966/72000 children from 363/360 schools
- All schools visited at least 15 times on average and 9/15 chapters from *Aflatoun* module completed
- 499/360 *Aflatoun* clubs formed in 356/360 schools
- 88/360 school-based *Aflatoun* Banks formed
- 83/300 school events organized with local leaders participating
- 1530/3000 children taken for bank visits from 129/360 schools to understand banking operations.

Imbibing citizenship skills early



Well-told stories make education engaging and meaningful

Going to School



Founded by Lisa Heydlauff in 2003

Winner of the first ever HCL Grant, in the field of Education, Going to School's story-based teaching methodology stories are now part of the curricula of 3,000 government secondary, primary and KGBV schools across Bihar and Jharkhand reaching 500,000 kids. Its movies, 'Girl Stars, Going to School in India' have been seen by over 65 million children. Original content designed by GTS is now part of the NCERT curriculum and read by 10 million children every year.

HCL GRANT PROJECT TITLE 'Be! Schools Programme', teaching children skills at school through stories, games and weekly action projects

BENEFICIARIES 1,01,300 children and 2026 teachers of government secondary, primary and KGBV schools in Bihar; Total number of schools: 1013

LOCATION Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Samastipur districts in Bihar

GOING TO SCHOOL WAS STARTED because the founder was concerned about how many children drop out of school at the secondary level. She and her team developed an unconventional teaching methodology to enhance the skills of poor children in government schools. Using graphic novels, apps, films, and games, GTS tells stories of children (from similar backgrounds as the children they are engaging with) who are brave and clever, and find ingenious solutions for problems that face their communities, like starting sustainable and socially relevant businesses. Reading the story and completing the skills action project in their community gives kids the experience of being change-makers, leaders, problem-solvers, and entrepreneurs. Children learn so much from such examples: entrepreneurial, cognitive and socio-emotional skills, besides literacy, critical thinking, empathy, integrity, and risk-taking. They also imbibe actual workplace skills like communication, teamwork, financial management, making business plans, and more. Training teachers and district level education officers so that they can support the endeavour is also part of the mandate of GTS.

The project that won the HCL Grant for Education in 2015–2016 was the Be! Schools Programme which is now in place in 3000+ government schools in Bihar, teaching children skills at school through stories, games and weekly action projects.



We spoke to Going to School about what the HCL Grant has meant to them.

On winning the grant

'We were absolutely surprised and delighted that we won the HCL Grant! The selection process was in-depth and detailed, with visits to the field and so many established organizations with exceptional, profound work across India in the final round.'

On the grant winner selection process

'The questions were profound. They made us think deeply about our impact and reach. Because of the in-depth questioning we felt less than we were completing an application and more a personal in-depth assessment of: how far have we come? How much further do we want to go?'

Progress on HCL Grant project thus far

- 18 rounds of the training across the four districts, where 684 teachers and 390 school principals attended the training
- Programme running across four districts, working with 276 schools with the help of GTS field coordinators, reaching out to 20,365 children finishing 11 skills stories, games and skills projects
- 42,800 books distributed
- 93,000 skills challenge projects by children graded
- 29800 children enrolled from 298 schools
- 1,30,500 skill books, 23,840 games and 1,490 posters distributed in schools
- 3,72,500 books printed and distributed
- 56,620 games printed, packed and dispatched
- 14,000 entries from across Bihar received for Pitch It; 25 children from three HCL supported districts have made it to the Top 101 shortlist
- 61 teachers being certified as 'Skill Educators' by Government of Bihar and Going to School
- 1032 principals and teachers from 454 schools trained on the skills stories.

Children can script their own destinies if given the right tools

ENVIRONMENT



Finalists 2018

Development Research Communication
and Services Centre (DRCSC) **42**
Environment protection, and food and livelihood security in disaster-prone regions

Keystone Foundation **50**
Sustaining livelihoods and practices of tribal people in the Nilgiris

Students' Educational and Cultural Movement
of Ladakh (SECMOL) **58**
Alternative education and environmental innovation in the Himalayas

Shortlisted 2018

ActionAid India **66**
Providing knowledge and support to grassroots organizations and communities

Care India Solutions for Sustainable Development **70**
Empowering women and girls from Dalit and tribal communities

Centre for Wildlife Studies **74**
Ecological conservation using science, education and capacity building


National Institute of Women Child and
Youth Development (NIWCYD) **78**
Building capacity of women's and farmers' collectives for sustainable development

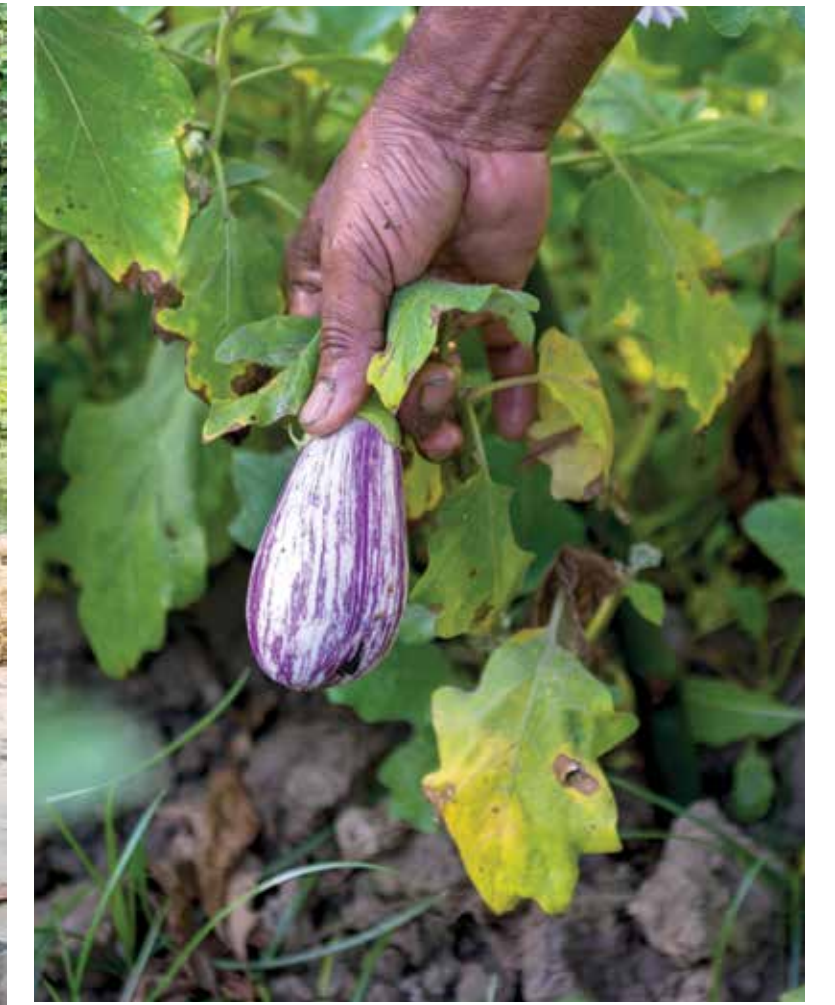
Siruthuli **82**
Water conservation and replenishing of green cover and water sources

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) **86**
Policy and technology for a sustainable future

The Timbaktu Collective **90**
Rejuvenating depleted farmlands and sustainable agriculture practices

This category includes projects providing access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; combating climate change and its impact; supporting sustainable conservation of flora and fauna; facilitating wildlife protection and conservation; protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands; conserving and rejuvenating natural water bodies; battling desertification, deforestation, land degradation and biodiversity loss; targeting pollution and promoting sustainable use of non-renewable resources; and making the community aware and involved in these processes. To qualify for the HCL Grant, the project must focus on direct action that leads to long-term impact, achieved through lasting behavioural change.





From Ladakh to the Sunderbans, from the hot, dusty interiors of Telengana to the lush Nilgiris, the NGOs shortlisted in the ENVIRONMENT category are making a measurable impact on fortifying sustainable practices across India. Innovative strategies combine with research and technical skills, and humans, natural resources, wildlife – and ultimately planet earth – are the beneficiaries of their committed actions.





Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC)



Founded by a group of communications, media, and rural development professionals in 1982

DRCSC is a veteran in enabling food and livelihood security for the marginalized by efficient management of natural resources. It works in disaster prone regions most vulnerable to global climate change like the Sunderbans. Its aim is to demonstrate that initiatives, including reforestation, through community effort can slow down the impact of climate change, while creating sustainable livelihoods for local villagers, especially women. From home gardens to integrated farming systems; from improving nutritional levels, to training over 500 community groups to implement its models, DRCSC has wrought a veritable wave of successful outcomes. Over the last decade, it has enabled over 9,000 households to increase their food-secure months.

Facing page *Crops that can stand the test of climate change*
Following pages (44–45) *Reverting to traditional ways of living
and working sustains the earth*

AFTER CYCLONE AILA hit the ecologically fragile Sundarbans delta a few years ago, livelihoods of its denizens were in ruins. One of the agencies actively involved in rehabilitation of the area was the Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC). Its expertise in food and livelihood security through natural resource management and applying the principles of scientific, sustainable, climate resilient agriculture put it in a unique position to help, organize and train the local community in finding long-term solutions to the crisis.

Started by a group of committed young professionals from a variety of fields in West Bengal, DRCSC began as a training and resource point for the collection and dissemination of community-based media and awareness about local issues and struggles surrounding social justice. The focus was on 'building a democratic and participatory culture.'

This focus would hold it in good stead as it slowly segued into working with problems of environmental degradation and rural livelihoods. The organization is now geared towards resource-poor households, marginalized peoples, and food insecure communities in disaster prone areas. As experience has shown, participatory methodologies work best in such scenarios. 'We feel if the projects and programmes supposed to benefit such communities are discussed with them, and are based on the local needs and priorities, poor people can get organized, take part in





Seeding the future



Introducing sustainable agriculture so no-one goes hungry
Following pages (48–49) *Five hours on a ferry and I'm almost home; my village beckons with a promise of progress*

innovative solutions and contribute both in cash and kind,' says founder secretary A.S. Chatterjee.

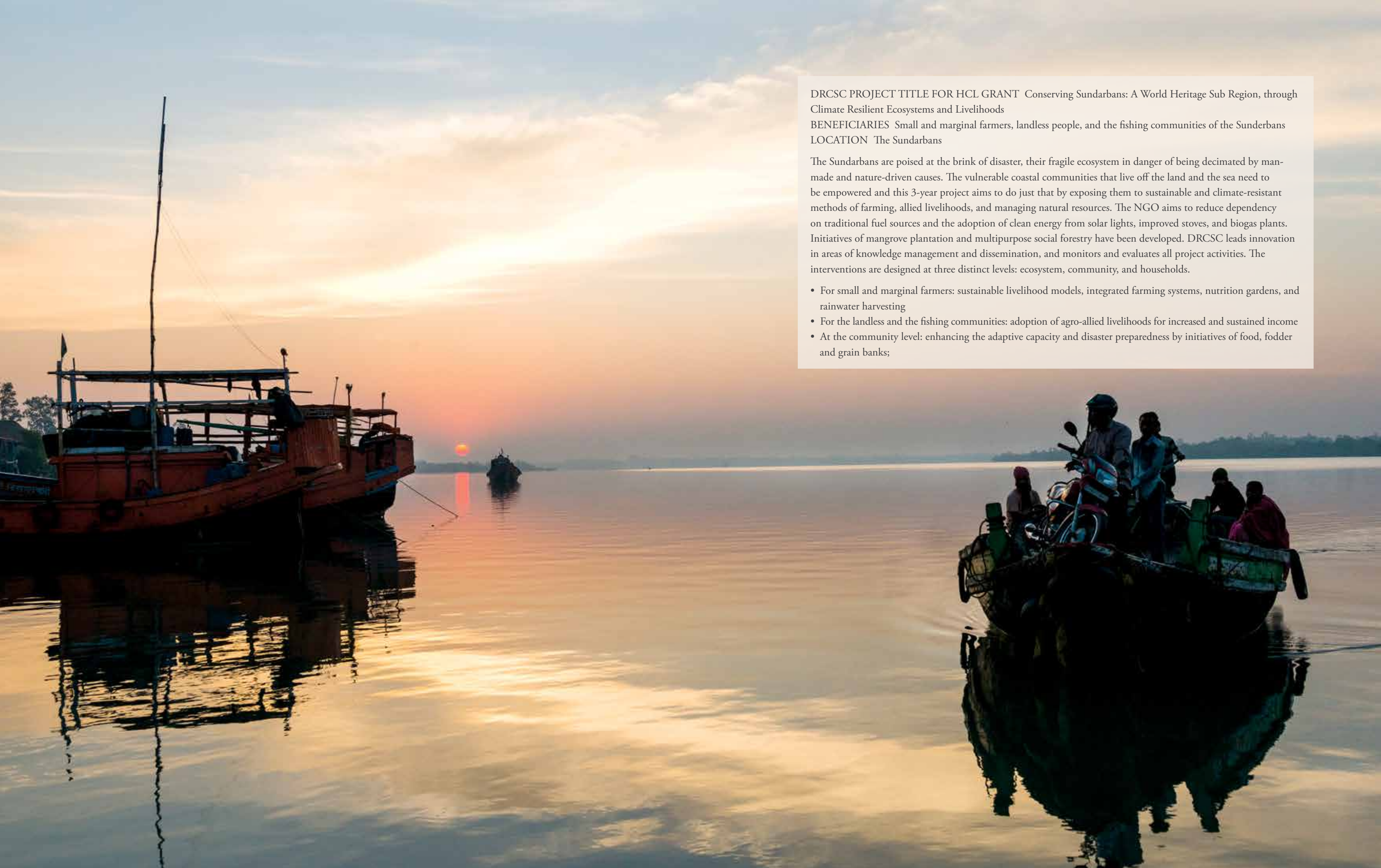
Through capacity building of these small groups, DRCSC introduces practices for the proper use of local bio-diversity and indigenous knowledge – this is important when it comes to regulating the use of land, water, forests, and even whole ecosystems in an optimal way.

'DRCSC brings together marginalized families and trains them to undertake region-specific solutions with the help of local partners. Its models include: integrated farming models, nutrition gardens, social forestry, common property resource management, mixed cropping in permanent fallows, and more. DRCSC's sustainable agriculture models help increase food supply in periods of scarcity and lead to lower malnutrition, increased income from the sale of surplus food, lower seasonal migration, and ecological conservation,' explains Chatterjee. The beneficiaries have been enthused and their participation and contributions have ensured ownership of programmes.

DRCSC shares all its data with the government and other NGOs. It attempts to influence policy and decision-making at different levels, also offering consultancy services to the government and other non-profit organizations. It has received endorsements from all quarters for its initiatives as well as its communication modules. Other areas it works in include environmental education and child rights, eco-preneur development among unemployed youth and much more.

Says Chatterjee: 'We still face the mental barriers among many policymakers and local administrators that environment and livelihoods cannot be protected simultaneously, and that local people, especially women and children (even though they are resource poor and illiterate) can work together for a better physical and cultural environment.'

If anyone can change that mindset, it is DRCSC.



DRCSC PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Conserving Sundarbans: A World Heritage Sub Region, through Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods

BENEFICIARIES Small and marginal farmers, landless people, and the fishing communities of the Sunderbans

LOCATION The Sundarbans

The Sundarbans are poised at the brink of disaster, their fragile ecosystem in danger of being decimated by man-made and nature-driven causes. The vulnerable coastal communities that live off the land and the sea need to be empowered and this 3-year project aims to do just that by exposing them to sustainable and climate-resistant methods of farming, allied livelihoods, and managing natural resources. The NGO aims to reduce dependency on traditional fuel sources and the adoption of clean energy from solar lights, improved stoves, and biogas plants. Initiatives of mangrove plantation and multipurpose social forestry have been developed. DRCSC leads innovation in areas of knowledge management and dissemination, and monitors and evaluates all project activities. The interventions are designed at three distinct levels: ecosystem, community, and households.

- For small and marginal farmers: sustainable livelihood models, integrated farming systems, nutrition gardens, and rainwater harvesting
- For the landless and the fishing communities: adoption of agro-allied livelihoods for increased and sustained income
- At the community level: enhancing the adaptive capacity and disaster preparedness by initiatives of food, fodder and grain banks;



Keystone Foundation



Founded by Snehlata Nath, Mathew John, and Pratim Roy in 1993

Keystone is a learning centre empowering people to engage with nature and livelihoods in innovative and harmonious ways. Its programmes have directly touched the lives of 15,000 tribal people in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Initially, its focus was poverty alleviation of the honey hunters. Later, Keystone diversified its programme base including helping create sustainable livelihood options for the people, organizing village institutions, sustaining traditional and cultural practices, putting into play knowledge derived from research and action projects, linking the indigenous peoples with decision makers and helping to influence policy relating to environmental governance. Keystone has helped set up an enterprise for non-timber forest produce and organic produce which is owned by 1,600 tribal people.

Facing page *Local knowledge and field research combine for a healthy ecosystem*
Following pages (52–53) *A thriving community that sustains the earth together*

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

is a two-way process. Keystone Foundation firmly believes that the initiatives that it undertakes with these communities – like micro-enterprise development, marketing of non-timber forest produce, land and water management, reviving old agricultural practices etc. – help with poverty alleviation. However, the return benefit is infinite. Says Pratim Roy, co-founder: ‘Tribal people and forests have coexisted for centuries. Strands of culture, music, resource sharing, symbiosis of land, livelihoods and customs have formed them into complex entities who possess knowledge that the mainlanders, urban, rural folk need to learn, imbibe and internalize.’

The ecological principle of interdependence of natural systems is the bedrock on which the organization stands. And so it works hard to understand the connections between conservation, livelihoods, and enterprise in these communities, approaching the problem using both traditional and cutting edge knowledge. Keystone’s work began with an in-depth study of the honey-hunters and beekeepers of Tamil Nadu, ‘exploring their narratives, their stories, their economic, ecological lifestyles and strategies,’ says Pratim Roy.

Working with this community, Keystone developed a methodology that combined indigenous knowledge, local materials and skills, with training in modern technologies, sales, retail and marketing of the produce. The enterprise began small and is now booming.





Pure water tapped from wetlands and springs to slake the thirst of remote villages



*Preserving native species and ensuring a secure livelihood
Following pages (56–57) The rolling blue hills of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve*

From this start, Keystone has been driving ecological practices with tribal communities in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Programmes are diverse: pollination, water resources, human-wildlife interaction, health and community wellness, and environmental governance work towards the overall well-being of the community and environment. Successful projects include hill wetland conservation, preserving native and endangered plant species, and more. It has created a bee sanctuary and Asia's first Bee Museum. Its barefoot ecology monitoring protocol has been adopted across the region. Besides this, it has developed modules for conservation education in schools and has an active outreach through its Nilgiri Natural History Society to promote ecological thinking among civil society.

'Within our team today, we have adivasis, PhDs, school dropouts, resource persons – the strategy is to creatively use a mix of all these talents, contexts and capacities,' explains Roy. Before the raging

development of our times destroys this fountain of knowledge and ancient wisdom, Keystone Foundation pledges to preserve and adapt it to the context of modern needs.



KEYSTONE FOUNDATION PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Hill Waters & Wetlands for Communities & Wildlife – Eco-Restoration, Applied Ecology & Advocacy in Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve

BENEFICIARIES Indigenous and tribal people

LOCATION Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Western Ghats

The hill wetlands in the Nilgiris play a crucial role in hydrology systems of springs, wetlands, streams and rivers. The main objective of the project is to achieve water equity and security for both human and wildlife populations. This project will undertake practical implementation in two diverse landscapes with diverse stakeholders found in the Reserve. Our aim is to increase the indigenous ecology and better the quality of life.

The project strategy is to

- Create local leaders and supporters by continuous engagement with youth groups and community-led organizations
- Involve panchayat institutions and government organizations and include water-retention and restoration strategies in their planning process
- Implement a combination of interventions suited to each of the areas given the distinct location specific issues
- Set up 3 nurseries to promote native plant species
- Monitor water quality, quantity, land-use practices, wildlife movements, conflicts by conducting a baseline survey, periodic monitoring and end of project assessment
- Conduct primary field level surveys and bio-diversity assessments feed into the improved management of these resources
- Scale-up through awareness and advocacy.



Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL)



Founded by Sonam Wangchuk in 1988

Operating in the inhospitable geography of the Himalayas, SECMOL envisions a world where children get a meaningful education that prepares them for a life of dignity lived in harmony with nature. It works with existing educational institutions to demonstrate new possibilities in education and environment. Experimental approaches have worked well for SECMOL, with its Ice Stupa project for water conservation garnering much acclaim. Over 5,000 trees have been reared using this water source. Their first educational initiative worked on rewriting primary school textbooks to be more contextual to the lives of the children, sending 10th grade results shooting up from 5 to 75 per cent. The other is for school dropouts, teaching real life solutions for the community’s problems.

Facing page *The incredible Ice Stupas which melt to green the desert landscape of Ladakh*
Following pages (60–61) *Ice Stupas enhance the flow of streams, and the stark beauty of the valley*

SONAM WANGCHUK ONCE READ in a school text-book that ‘if you kill tigers, there will be floods’. Convinced by the wisdom of the idea that in nature, all things are connected, he and his fellow activists set up a unique experiment in the remote regions of Ladakh that has borne rich fruit today.

To start with, the Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh, or SECMOL, was established to address the mismatch between the standardized school curriculum and the lives of tribal children of the mountains. Alien to their ways, inaccessible in terms of language, and insensitive to their cultural context, the state education system did not allow even bright children to achieve good results. Addressing the root of the problem, Wangchuk launched Operation New Hope in collaboration with the community, government, teachers and civil society. They rewrote primary school textbooks that resonated with the children because they were contextual to their lives – transforming the matriculation results to an astounding degree: from 5 to 55 per cent, and then with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to an amazing 75 per cent.

And for those who still could not engage with the system, SECMOL had other ideas: The SECMOL Alternative Institute. Here, school dropouts could learn lessons born out of their own mountain environment, from a curriculum based on generating inventive solutions for actual issues faced by their people, rather than simply memorizing texts. By merely using school





Innovative technologies mean trees in the desert and solar heated buildings that stay warm all year



*Solving the community's real problems is the best kind of education
Following pages (64–65) Rainwater harvesting makes desert slopes verdant*

level science and technology, SECMOL believes that problems like climate change can be alleviated. It calls this process the rebuilding or re-launching of the students; in effect it is a second chance at life for such young people. And it all feeds back into acting together to conserve the natural environment using appropriate means rather than leaving their homes to become refugees in other places.

And the results have been phenomenal, starting with a fully eco-friendly campus, and taking up invitations from as far as Switzerland to demonstrate their truly unusual technologies. Says Wangchuk, 'The innovations have ranged from solar heated mud buildings that stay at +15 C even when it is -15 C in winter, and the Ice Stupa artificial glaciers that solve the problem of water shortage in the face of climate change – using which the ecologically damaged valleys are being restored.' The campus is not connected to any grid for power, it composts its waste, grows food organically, and has reforested its environs.

This spirited and optimistic organization works deeply from within the community, enabling it to look for original answers that address its particular needs. The community – working jointly with major stakeholders like monasteries, politicians, and the army – is involved at every step, from early discussions through to implementation. This process is controlled through village committees, and there is an emphasis on women and children. 'Our very existence is with the ideology of inclusion. From working with rural government schools instead of opening private schools, to re-launching students that have failed in the system, to choosing a valley that is the worst affected by climate change, it's all about reaching out to the marginalized,' explains Wangchuk, whose life, interestingly, inspired Aamir Khan's character in the movie, *3 Idiots*.



SECMOL PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Scaling up of the project Overcoming Water Challenges and Combating Climate Change to Restore Damaged High-Altitude Eco-systems through Artificial Glaciers and Environmental Education

BENEFICIARIES Tribal communities

LOCATION Phyang Valley, Leh, Ladakh

The project is a scale-up of two ongoing projects – constructing ice stupas or artificial glaciers to deal with an ecological damaged valley, and setting up a wing of the SECMOL Alternative Institute in the same valley to promote sustainable and innovative real life solutions for its problems. The valley in question suffers from both droughts and flashfloods.

- The Ice Stupa project has sustained 5,000 trees using melting waters from the large ice cones, which are made by freezing the winter stream water when nobody needs it.
- Tourism and sustainable use of products from the newly reforested valley to make the project financially sustainable.
- Apart from academics, the university will have an enterprise wing with live labs where the students get to work and learn from real life projects. For example
 - the School of Sustainable Mountain Tourism will run high-end solar heated hotels and homestays built using mud
 - the School of Sustainable Architecture will have a project to develop a smart green city around the university
 - the School of Environmental Studies will take up the eco-restoration and flashflood control systems using massive artificial glaciers.



ActionAid India



Founded by Cecil Jackson Cole in 1972 with two projects in India; registered as an Indian organization in 2006

ActionAid India's work is aimed at achieving long term transformation by ensuring the right to land and livelihood, women's rights and leadership, enhanced democratic participation of the poor, children and youth engagement and community-led humanitarian responses to emergencies. For example during the last six years, 1,11,353 individual land titles have been facilitated for homestead and agriculture, including under Forest Rights Act. 22,483 farmers practice Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture, of which 9,934 are women farmers organized in 433 collectives. 6337 land titles have been received by single women and 16,1671 children have been enrolled in school. 3,172 bonded labourers have been rescued. With a strong presence in 25 states and rooted in 77 long-term projects in the most backward areas, ActionAid reaches almost six million of the most marginalized people in India.

Facing page *Conserving ecology through people's action*

ACTIONAID INDIA RECOGNIZES the inherent strength of the marginalized communities it works with. By providing knowledge and support to grassroots and community organizations, this NGO, which is the Indian affiliate of ActionAid International, empowers the community to fight for human rights and against poverty, patriarchy, and injustice.

From agriculture and livelihoods, to education and childrens' rights; from gender discrimination to caste based conflict; from secular and peace-making agendas to strengthening democracy; from conserving natural resources to securing land rights – ActionAid India has worked hard to right the wrongs against the oppressed. It also responds during emergencies and disasters providing succour to survivors. It works closely with the government, both to provide research based evidence for policy and for last mile connect for programme deliverables in its project areas.

Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, explains – 'ActionAid believes that poverty is a consequence of a historic process of exclusion and injustice which is based on the identity of individuals and communities that stem from caste, class, gender, ethnicity, religion or location. Poor implementation of laws and systems governing ecosystems and protection of commons lead to further inequality. This process is further aggravated by a dominant thought that economic growth will take care of poverty without paying attention to inclusion.'

The people's collectives ActionAid and its partners have helped form are ensuring inclusion by leading the struggle for social justice through



Rebirthing water bodies and changing the face of rural life, especially for women



Sustainable farming benefits the farmer, the community and the soil

advocacy, getting members elected to local bodies, and designing public action. These collectives (often led by women) are working on the front lines of development issues including securing rights and benefits from government schemes, reclaiming water bodies, ensuring basic infrastructure for schools, and supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

For instance, ActionAid's mobilizing of the tribal Sahariyas galvanized the community to undertake the rejuvenation of a defunct dam. Another project with the same community led them to secure drinking water sources closer to their homes, rather than trek two kilometers one way as the women had been previously doing. Small victories, but transformative and confidence building.

Engaging with vulnerable communities and including them in discussions around policy is a driving passion of ActionAid. Presently, it has over 250 grassroots level bodies as working partners. On the other end of the spectrum, it has good relationships with the government and policy

makers which help in implementation of programmes.

With strategies rooted in the human rights framework, ActionAid goes beyond merely helping people solve their problems. Instead, its thrust is towards campaigning and building solidarity for action among all stakeholders. Adds Chachra: 'It is clear that in the years to come, our commitment to working in solidarity with the poor and excluded will have a stronger focus on ecology, climate change, and disaster resilience.'

HCL Grant Project Title Rejuvenation of Water Bodies and Building Community Resilience through People-Centric Decentralized Governance
Beneficiaries Dalit and tribal communities, landless labourers, and small farmers
Location Nanded district, Maharashtra; Lalitpur district, Uttar Pradesh; and Chamrajnagar district, Karnataka



CARE India Solutions for Sustainable Development



Founded by Wallace Justin Campbell and Arthur C. Ringland in 1945 in the US; India operations commenced in 1950

Through programmes in key areas like health, education, livelihoods, and disaster preparedness and response, CARE India envisions a world where poverty has been overcome and where people live in dignity and security. Its primary goal is to herald transformations in the lives of women and girls from marginalized communities, and this goal feeds into all their activities. CARE India is part of the CARE International Confederation working in over 90 countries. In 2016–17, CARE India directly reached out to 25 million people through 40 projects across 12 states.

Facing page *Introducing cleaner and more sustainable ways of cooking*

CARE HAS HAD A PRESENCE in every area of development in India. Starting its India operations over six decades ago, it first focused on food and relief. Over the years, it moved on to other crucial areas like agriculture, health, nutrition, and education. After 2000, it made a pivotal shift towards addressing the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice in India. This eventually brought it to what is now the core of its activities: the empowerment of girls and women from poor and excluded communities, mainly tribals and Dalits. 'We understood that no development can be meaningful and sustainable without women being active participants. They are the key catalysts in any kind of impactful social change,' says Rajan Bahadur, Managing Director and CEO of CARE India.

In 2008, the NGO registered itself as a national entity – CARE India Solutions for Sustainable Development (CISSD). Its multi-sectoral approach towards health, education, livelihood and humanitarian action is underscored by its long-term programme, which mandates that 'women and girls in the most marginalized communities are empowered and have secure and resilient livelihoods'. For instance, the project it has applied for in the HCL Grant promotes clean cooking solutions which will impact forest cover, reduce household pollution, and improve public health; it will also reduce the drudgery of daily work for women. The project will be implemented using women's leadership and involvement.



Environmentally friendly practices must permeate every aspect of the community's life



Empowering women to be leaders of change

CARE's strategy involves strengthening the agency of women and girls to make decisions for themselves. This is possible only if women and girls are given leadership roles, and recognition by others in the community or those outside of it. Take Shabnam, an alumna of one of CARE India supported schools in Uttar Pradesh. She had to fight her family in order to be allowed to study. Now she works tirelessly with her community to make sure other girls go to school, and child marriage is abolished. Or look at Banti from Odisha who attended the SHE (Sustainable Household Energy) school, and recruited other women from the community to do the same. She was also one of the first to volunteer to test the Improved Cook Stove (ICS) from which her family is benefitting tremendously.

Empowering women also has the added effect of reducing violence against them by giving women visibility and the confidence to stand up to abuse. Women need to gain access to resources, services, and opportunities. They need to own land. 'CARE works at – shifting attitudes on gender, promoting

inclusive governance, accountability and enhancing socio-economic resilience; all contributing towards community empowerment,' explains Bahadur.

Its gender-based approach is complemented and supported by alliances with stakeholders and government authorities to improve governance and sustain projects. 'True success for CARE India,' says Bahadur, 'encompasses changes in the lives of the individual, the household, and the community in a positive way that improves their quality of life, resulting in an overall growth and development of human potential and aspirations.'

HCL Grant Project Title Promoting Sustainable Adoption of Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS) among Poor Rural Women and their Households for Creating Cleaner Household Energy

Beneficiaries Rural households; in particular the women

Location Kalahandi district, Odisha; Jashpur district, Chhattisgarh



Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS)



Founded by Ullas Karanth in 1984

The Centre for Wildlife Studies, started by the well-known tiger expert Dr. Ullas Karanth, focuses on long-term wildlife research, conservation and education in collaboration with the government and non-governmental partners. CWS inspires and nurtures positive attitude towards nature through its scientific and conservation endeavours. CWS has helped over 2,000 people voluntarily resettle from within crucial wildlife habitats. It has aided more than 20,000 households in human-wildlife conflict mitigation and compensation efforts. Its Project Wild Seve has assisted more than 9000 families file compensation claims, with 3000 families receiving almost US \$138,000 back from the government.

Facing page *Keeping a watch on human-wildlife conflict*

ULLAS KARANTH HAS BEEN studying tigers for more than forty years. He has pioneered the advancement and application of wildlife methods including radio-tracking, line transect and occupancy surveys to study Indian wildlife. His other focus areas have been the development of advanced statistical models for animal population assessments, studies of human dimensions of wildlife conservation and more recently, adaptive management and structured decision-making in conservation. His scientific and conservation efforts have earned him a Padma Shri, and the WWF Getty Award for conservation.

It wasn't till the 1970s that a strong wildlife protection law was enacted in India. Destruction of forests, poaching, hunting, and exploitation of resources was common in all parts of the country, and many species were on the brink of extinction. It was during the 1960s and '70s Ullas Karanth became seriously interested in conservation. However, he may have always remained an amateur if it wasn't for a chance meeting that led him to study, at the age of 35, at the University of Florida. Mentored by globally renowned scientists and collaborating with the government, he set up CWS, and was soon asked to expand the work of the New York based Wildlife Conservation Society in India. He went back to the forest he was familiar with, Nagarhole in Karnataka, to begin his research project on the tiger. This is now the longest running tiger project in the world, backed by ground-breaking science and strong conservation efforts.



Facilitating compensation and solutions for wildlife encroaching on human settlements



Maintaining the fragile balance between conservation and human activity through scientific methods

Conservation successes have included the closing down of the Kudremukh iron ore mine and assisting the resettlement of over 2000 families from within the forest. CWS has aided more than 20,000 households in human-wildlife conflict mitigation and compensation efforts. Says Karanth: 'CWS's initiatives include assistance with human wildlife conflict mitigation, education, healthcare, agriculture, finance, jobs training and alternate livelihoods.'

Finally, CWS has a firm belief that India's biodiversity will benefit greatly from the emergence of well-qualified and committed wildlife professionals. CWS partners with WCS and National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS, GOI) in running a master's programme in Wildlife Biology and Conservation. Graduates from its master's programme now work across the country on a wide range of species and ecosystems, furthering science-based conservation of wild lands and wildlife in India.

CWS, Karanth, and now his daughter Dr. Krithi Karanth, who developed project Wild Seve, strive to

ease human/wildlife conflict and maintain the fragile balance that conservation requires. Project Wild Seve has assisted more than 9000 families file compensation claims, with 3000 families receiving almost US \$138,000 back from the government. He says: 'I believe that true success is bringing back animals and natural ecosystems at a scale that is necessary, and recovering for our future generations what our forefathers have devastated.'

HCL Grant Project Title Wild Seve: Addressing Human-Wildlife Conflicts and Transforming Mitigation and Compensation in 10 Wildlife Reserves across India

Beneficiaries Wild animals and families living close to forest reserves

Location Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore, Tadoba, Pench, Kanha, Amrabad, Kawal, Bandipur, Nagarahole and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks



National Institute of Women Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD)



Founded by Rajesh Kumar Malviya in 1982

Active in the fields of tribal and rural development, NIWCYD's work is premised on thorough empowerment of beneficiaries from over 5,000 villages. The 50,000 people who have been organized into women's self-help groups or farmers collectives are now in charge of their own destinies, with capacity building in place to improve access to markets and good prices for produce. The NGO's strategy is to utilize natural resources available locally, enable sustainable development, and catalyze community-based organizations to fight to safeguard the rights of the poor and the tribal. Food security and forest rights are being striven for by communities. Crèches have allowed thousands of children to join mainstream schools. Every project is vetted from an ecological and gender based perspective.

Facing page *Fair prices for a rich harvest through the collective strength of women's and farmers' groups*

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, a group of young idealists decided to stage an intervention to better the lives of the vulnerable people of the Baiga tribe in Madhya Pradesh. This involved not only helping them with fulfilling basic needs like food security, drinking water, medical aid, and education, but also reviving the forests they depended on for their livelihood and sustenance. Overcoming prejudiced authorities, bad roads, and ingrained practices like child marriage and alcoholism within the community, this bunch of activists who formed the National Institute of Women Child & Youth Development (NIWCYD), began a small revolution that has reaped immense benefits for the tribal folk.

The organization successfully replenished the area's forests, and used the inherent wisdom of ancient tribal practices to increase the output of agricultural lands. This, combined with the force of participatory action from the community and bodies like the gramsabha, gave NIWCYD the tools to spread its beneficial efforts from an initial 14 villages to around 5,000 villages today. Explains Rajesh Kumar Malviya, Chief Functionary and Vice President: 'The strategy for all interventions was the formation and strengthening of people's institutions like village grain banks, fodder banks, water user groups, women self-help groups and children's groups.' These, he says, 'ensure the people's participation right from the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation stages and take the outcomes towards sustainability.' NIWCYD attempts



Programmes that operate from a gender-aware platform



Regenerating forest produce so that food is never scarce

to collaborate with government agencies as well as grassroots bodies to ensure understanding of the Forest Rights Act and government schemes. Although this has been an uphill task for the most part, its persistence is paying off. 'If community groups and their institutions are managing the outputs after incorporating the learning they acquired during the project period, we ensure the ownership,' says Malviya.

NIWCYD works towards sustainable farming and management of commons, child rights and education, rural livelihoods, disaster management, health and sanitation, leadership programmes, strengthening of women's federations, establishing market linkages and more, all through an ecological and gender-aware lens.

In Baigachak, for instance, where it has been working for decades, the impact has been astounding. The tribal people have organized themselves and conserved their tracts of land, bringing back sustainable practices they already possess in their pool of knowledge. Water levels have increased, forest produce has flourished again, and is collected

using scientific methods; plant species with food and medicinal value have multiplied. Tree felling and man-made conflict are a thing of the past. The villagers are in great demand to share their successes with nearby communities.

Says Malviya, 'The lesson we learned from their life and experience is the organic relationship between humans and nature. Before every action, an organizational self-assessment is necessary about its impact on ecology and human life in the long run.'

HCL Grant Project Title Scaling Up Restoration, Conservation, Protection and Sustainable use of Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity among the Baigas, a particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group and Korku tribe

Beneficiaries The Baiga tribe and the Korku tribe
Location Sixty-two villages of the Baiga Chak area of Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district, along with the Dharni area of Amravati district in Maharashtra



Siruthuli



Founded by Dr. S.V. Balasubramaniam, Ms. Vanitha Mohan, Dr. R.V. Ramani, Mr. Ravi Sam, Mr. N.V. Nagasubramaniam and Mr. Kanaklal Abhaichand in 2003 as a Trust

Coimbatore was declared a chronic drought-prone area by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in the 1980s. But it was only in 2003, when groundwater levels sank to a catastrophic low, that the problem was addressed seriously. Siruthuli was born at this desperate time with a mandate to preserve water resources, green cover, and proper waste management through local bodies. It functions using innovation, and awareness initiatives. Other objectives include bringing back the water surplus character of the region and restoring the river Noyyal, a tributary of the Kaveri. As of 2017, twelve lakes have been de-silted by Siruthuli and over 600 rainwater harvesting structures built in schools, educational institutions, and corporate offices.

Facing page *Restoring water bodies and the community's hopes*

SIRUTHULI MEANS 'A TINY DROP'. With a tagline that promises 'Clean Kovai, Green Kovai', this organization owns a single-minded commitment to save the Noyyal River that serves Coimbatore, a river that had become a victim of rapid industrialization and urban sprawl. Inspired by past generations who understood the potential of the river and used it to irrigate over 20,000 acres of farmland, Siruthuli was born as a trust on the initiative of a few conscientious corporates. Today it is a people's movement.

'We have worked out a master plan starting from the Western Ghats, the catchment area for the river. We plan to restore all the streams and feeder channels which gave the river Noyyal its perennial nature once upon a time and to ensure that there are no encroachments,' says Vanitha Mohan, Siruthuli's Managing Trustee.

Through rainwater harvesting, Siruthuli also works hard at raising groundwater levels. Related to this is its campaign to rejuvenate the lakes in the area by de-silting and cleaning them. Mohan recalls, 'When we took up the first water body – Krishnampathy Lake – to de-silt, we cleaned up the channels and we cleaned up the water body which was encroached; we cleaned the un-encroached part, went down 17 feet, and removed silt. With just two days of rain, the entire tank filled up.' This success not only emboldened Siruthuli to forge ahead with its plans, but also provoked the government into taking up de-silting more seriously. Finally, it gave the people and the authorities confidence in the work that Siruthuli was doing.



Bringing back green and water-rich landscapes



Clearing the river's path, bringing prosperity to the land

Creating awareness among the community is an integral part of Siruthuli's strategy. After all, if people do not understand the value of conservation, the sustainability of any project is doomed from the start. Tree planting drives, children's nature camps and rallies are used to recruit people to the cause and give them a sense of being a part of the solution. Planting over 600,000 trees in the region has been a major milestone for Siruthuli. 'We have not worked as an NGO in a silo. We have made sure it is an all-inclusive initiative combining the energies and efforts of the public, including students, corporates, trade bodies, industrial associations, farmers, residential associations and everyone who needs water for their survival,' says Mohan.

A Water Bodies Restoration Committee is the spearhead for activities related to water. It works closely with all stakeholders like the government, local communities and other bodies. Related activities like forming urban forests and effective waste management are also other vital agendas of Siruthuli.

The NGO's website puts it succinctly: 'There are 2 trillion liters of fresh water for every man, woman and child on Earth. And each of us only needs less than three liters a day. Therefore, what we have is not a shortage of fresh water. What we have is a management problem, one that requires us all to get smarter about how water is used; individuals, governments, and industry.'

HCL Grant Project Title Noyyal River Restoration
Beneficiaries Populations of West Tamil Nadu
Location Noyyal Upstream, West of Coimbatore



The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)



Founded by J.R.D. Tata, Sumant Moolgaokar, N.A. Palkhivala, Darbari Seth, A.B. Bilimoria, Sharrokh Sabhavala, Kamalakar Hinge, and Jamshed Dadachanji in 1974

TERI is a research and knowledge organization that advances the causes of sustainable development, energy access, protecting the environment and non-exploitative use of natural resources in India and the developing world. Its vision is clear: to create innovative solutions for a sustainable future. These solutions, in the form of policy as well as technology, have been very successful. TERI's clean lighting and cooking solutions have impacted the lives of nearly 4.5 million people in rural India and parts of Africa. Nearly 600 small and medium enterprises in India have adopted its energy efficient technologies and practices. TERI has helped over 200 buildings go green in India. And its sustainability programmes have reached 25,000 schools across the country.

Facing page *Preserving the integrity of our natural wealth*

A YOUNG MAN with environment conservation on his mind (Darbari Seth) came together with an industrialist with foresight and vision (J.R.D. Tata) to start TERI, the Energy and Resources Institute. Originally intended to be a think tank, to document and disseminate information, TERI was talking about climate change and energy issues much before they became the buzzwords they are today. Evolving over the years, it is now at the forefront of researching cutting-edge solutions for making the world a better place. More importantly, TERI makes robust efforts to link its research with practice and policy for long-lasting effect.

These innovative solutions, primarily relating to clean energy, water management, pollution management, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience, are implemented at the grassroots level – with pointers to gender equity and social inclusion – where they have the most impact. 'If we are able to provide a section of rural populace access to clean lighting and cooking, or help micro and small enterprises adopt energy-efficient and environmentally benign technologies, or reclaim thousands of hectares of contaminated cropland and toxic wastelands, help conserve precious bio-diversity, or help different sectors become more resource-efficient, or help formulate policies that promote sustainability; those may be termed as success albeit the incremental ones, given the size of the challenges,' explains Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General.



Strengthening community-conserved areas



Restoring the balance of the earth earns rich rewards

With an integrated thought process, TERI is able to definitively link economic welfare and protection of the environment. For example, the Lighting a Billion Lives project facilitates access to clean energy. By getting this access, it is often found that lifespans, incomes and productivity all increase manifold.

TERI has several partnerships and collaborations – for example, with government, industry, and academic organizations – to further its goals. From the Forest department to the local bodies it works with, TERI has maintained a stellar reputation for its commitment to the cause of sustainable development. It builds capacity and trains people at different levels to feed into its programmes. In-house, as well, its human resources are remarkable. ‘Our workforce of over a thousand people comprises scientists, sociologists, economists, and engineers who work together to design holistic solutions,’ says K. Rajagopal, Senior Manager.

Community engagement goes right from design to need-assessment and all the way through to identifying the solutions. The Centre of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services’ programme in Nagaland works in a multipronged way with communities

towards reviving traditional practices like community-conserved areas. Alternative livelihoods are generated through ecotourism and Payment for Ecosystem Services, ecological restoration and ecological monitoring are part of the programme. In their clean energy projects, women and youth are recruited as ‘energy entrepreneurs’ to further the sustainability and conservation agenda. ‘Over the last two decades, TERI’s research has consistently supported the Government of India in global climate policy negotiations. TERI’s programme on modelling and economic analysis helps policymakers prioritize policy options for low-carbon based green growth,’ says Amit Kumar, Senior Fellow and Senior Director.

TERI’s heartfelt mission is to join hands with diverse stakeholders to translate into action a shared vision of global sustainable development.

HCL Grant Project Title Leveraging Eco-Tourism and REDD+ to Strengthen Community Conservation in a Bio-diversity Hotspot

Beneficiaries Tribal communities

Location Zunheboto district of Nagaland



The Timbaktu Collective



Founded by C.K. ‘Bablu’ Ganguly, Mary Vattamattam, and John D’Souza in 1990

For decades now, the Timbaktu Collective has been working to rejuvenate depleted lands and natural resources and encourage the use of sustainable agricultural practices handed down over generations. On a macro level, it works to enable and educate marginalized rural people – landless labourers, small farmers, women, children, youth, Dalits and persons with disabilities – to get organized and work towards social justice and gender equity. More specifically, it enables the formation of co-operatives that look into income savings, growing trees, and marketing produce directly from the farmer. The collective works in 175 villages, and engages with over 21,000 families.

Facing page *Rejuvenating a barren landscape into a verdant grassland*

AN ARID, DROUGHT-RIDDEN LANDSCAPE.

Low yields, discrimination, and hunger. Poverty and farmer suicides. A jagged disconnection between humans and nature. This was the scenario Timbaktu Collective walked into. ‘Our challenge was to make a place like this sustainable, whether in terms of life, the economy or the ecology,’ explains Bablu Ganguly, who co-founded this determined NGO.

First, Bablu and his partner Mary tried to farm their own piece of land in the area, and failed. ‘We soon realized that the land and its surrounding areas needed to heal. So we began rejuvenating the hills around Timbaktu by protecting them from overgrazing and forest fires, in addition to planting scores of pioneering plant species. The results started showing in less than a year – the green cover was steadily increasing and so was the bird count. We realized that Mother Nature can do wonders if she is allowed to do her job.’ Not only did it work on regenerating farmlands by changing methods of cultivation and irrigation, it created a paradigm of community action towards the conservation of the commons, which is now ‘a vibrant Savannah-like grassland ecosystem’.

Timbaktu began to encourage farmers to revert to older methods of cropping, irrigation, and pest control, which are exponentially more sustainable. To generate revenue, it started a producer owned co-operative, Dharani FaM Coop Ltd, to procure, process and market the organic produce of its members under



Reviving livelihoods and water bodies with equal fervour



Village commons maintained by the community's joint efforts

the brand name Timbaktu Organic. This was when such ideas were just taking root worldwide. In the meantime, realizing the need for a holistic approach to the empowerment of the community, it began four women's thrift and credit cooperatives for pooling savings and getting loans. The Nature School, an alternative learning space for dropouts was founded. Conservation-based education for children was seen as crucial. With a focus on education for women, encouraging local self governance and resource management, working for the rights of the people with disability and the region's Dalit community, Timbaktu

'The results started showing in less than a year – the green cover was steadily increasing and so was the bird count. We realized that Mother Nature can do wonders if she is allowed to do her job.' Not only did Timbaktu work on regenerating farmlands by changing methods of cultivation and irrigation, it created a paradigm of community action towards the conservation of the commons.

Environment

propagated its ideology of giving rural people control over their own lives. Its values enshrine a celebration of life, equality, and peoples' wisdom.

Several decades and many awards later, the founders of Timbaktu Collective still hold their beliefs close to their hearts. Inspired by some of the greatest ecological warriors of our age, Ganguly says, 'Agriculture is the art of living with nature... you look after the land, you give it love, you affectionately call her *Bhumata*... But the Mother has to be looked after, Mother needs to be nurtured...'

HCL Grant Project Title Kalpavalli: A Landscape and Community-based Approach to Bio-diversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management in a Drought-prone and Ecologically Challenged Region

Beneficiaries Small farmers and landless families

Location Villages in Anantapuramu district in Andhra Pradesh and Tumkur district of Karnataka

HEALTH



Finalists 2018

Eleutheros Christian Society (ECS) **100**
Community-activated health models for the northeast

L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) **108**
High quality affordable eye health for all

Centre for Environment Education Society (CEE) **116**
Promoting environmental education and sustainable development

Shortlisted 2018

Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) **124**
Giving access to mobility to the marginalized through the Jaipur limb

Caritas India **128**
Human rights, health and disaster relief for vulnerable communities

Christian Fellowship – Society for Health Opportunity Rehabilitation and Empowerment (CF-SHORE) **132**
Integrated health and development in remotest Chhatisgarh

Helpage India **136**
Working for the dignity, rights and empowerment of the elderly

Lepra Society **140**
Strengthening treatment and early detection of leprosy and other diseases

She Hope Society for Women Entrepreneurs **144**
Mobility and opportunities for people living with disabilities in J&K

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) **148**
Education that responds to social realities and democracy

This category recognizes projects that enable transformative work in the areas of equitable & universal access to health for all; equal access to clean drinking water; sanitation and hygiene facilities for all; prevention and elimination of water borne diseases; maternal, adolescent, child health and nutrition; and eradication of communicable diseases. To qualify for the HCL Grant, the project should complement state efforts towards achievement of the goals of the National Health Mission and support innovative, scalable models that will help the nation meet its targets in rural India.





Affordable eye care in rural Andhra Pradesh, collaborative community powered health programmes in Nagaland, critical surgeries being performed in remote tribal belts of Chhatisgarh, rehabilitation of people with disabilities in border areas of Kashmir, and so much more. Spread across geographies, the shortlisted NGOs in our HEALTH category are making sweeping inroads into some of the most integral health issues facing rural India today.





Eleutheros Christian Society (ECS)



Founded by Chingmak Kejong in 1993

The Eleutheros Christian Society (ECS) believes that community-based activism can change the world. Its vision is to place people who are ‘lost, last, and least’ at the very heart of programmes. It started as a drug and HIV intervention initiative, bringing down the incidence of HIV among injecting drug users (37 per cent to 2.7 per cent) and ante natal women (8 per cent to 1.4 per cent). ECS then began to address the root causes of poverty and malaise, working in 46 villages in three administrative blocks. Through community action, the Public Distribution System has become more functional, people’s livelihoods, literacy, and monetary transactions have increased manifold over the years.

Facing page *Spreading quality healthcare to the farthest reaches*
Following pages (102–103) *A consistently high standard of healthcare for the people of the northeast*

IN 2002, A DISTRICT COLLECTOR in eastern Nagaland passed a revolutionary order. The order stated that development funds would not be released to any village that did not include women in its central management committee. This move was inspired by Naga women’s groups, who had used their collective voice to demand recognition. And supporting these vociferous women was a unique, passionate organization called the Eleutheros Christian Society, or ECS.

Nagaland is rife with socio-economic problems. The political conflict adds to the complexity of the development dynamic. Worse, the drugs that come over the border have caused an irreparable loss of life and livelihood, compounded by the epidemic-like spread of HIV. Add to this the apathy of governments and you have a recipe for hopelessness. But ECS is undaunted, full of hope and energy. Begun as a drug rehabilitation and counselling centre, it expanded into a district-wide intervention centre for HIV, managing to lower prevalence rates substantially in its district. Its Founder and Secretary, Chingmak Kejong says: ‘The government health structure was totally incapable of addressing HIV as an epidemic and therefore the organization decided to focus on “primary health” as the core agenda.’ This meant combatting poverty, illiteracy, HIV and other health issues.

But short-term solutions were not proving effective. That’s when Kejong saw the light. ‘In the process of our work, we began to recognize that the problem of drug use and HIV was not a stand-alone problem.





Technology supports compassionate outreach to ensure hope for the vulnerable and the sick



*Nutrition programmes invigorate the community
Following pages (106–07) The first level of care must be the strongest*

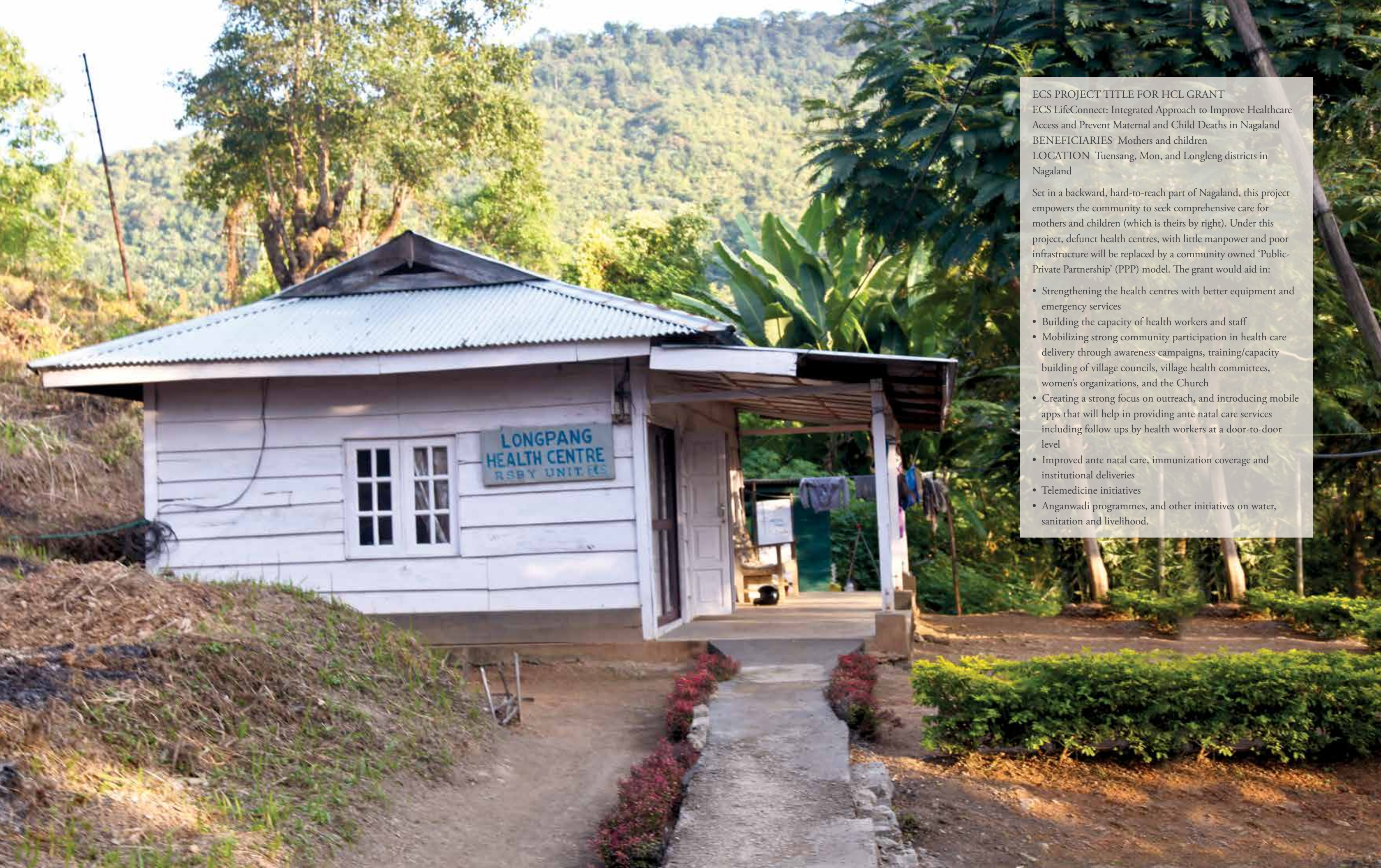
The underlying causes were deep-rooted and complex and connected with economic status, social fabric breakdown, and disengagement.’ He realized that what was needed was simply for the community to come together to find solutions.

The challenges were many: blind superstition, the perceived low status of women and the unwillingness of people to open up about problems. ECS chipped away at these to promote democratization, civic participation, and government accountability. It even convinced the Church (very influential in the area) to get involved in HIV awareness, treatment, and prevention programmes.

ECS’s strategy uses traditional methods combined with modern ideas like fostering leadership and participation in planning and decision-making among the disenfranchised – including women, children, and the elderly. Community-based activism is already threaded into Naga culture, and such strategies can further implement it as a tool for change.

Today, ECS has programmes for income generation, the formation of self-help groups, microfinance and more. It has partnerships with the Government of Nagaland (establishment of a Primary Health Centre through a public/private partnership, Anganwadi programmes, and Midday Meal programmes), with NABARD (livelihood promotion); with the Tata Trust (Livelihood promotion, WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene); Wipro Cares (health outreach) and the Government of India (through ‘NECTAR’ including constructing of health centres, bee keeping etc.). But, according to Kejong, ‘The most important impact is in the community’s confidence that change *can* happen. The process is more important than the end itself and getting the community to walk the process is most crucial to the journey.’

And ECS is determined to ensure that change does happen.



ECS PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT

ECS LifeConnect: Integrated Approach to Improve Healthcare Access and Prevent Maternal and Child Deaths in Nagaland

BENEFICIARIES Mothers and children

LOCATION Tuensang, Mon, and Longleng districts in Nagaland

Set in a backward, hard-to-reach part of Nagaland, this project empowers the community to seek comprehensive care for mothers and children (which is theirs by right). Under this project, defunct health centres, with little manpower and poor infrastructure will be replaced by a community owned 'Public-Private Partnership' (PPP) model. The grant would aid in:

- Strengthening the health centres with better equipment and emergency services
- Building the capacity of health workers and staff
- Mobilizing strong community participation in health care delivery through awareness campaigns, training/capacity building of village councils, village health committees, women's organizations, and the Church
- Creating a strong focus on outreach, and introducing mobile apps that will help in providing ante natal care services including follow ups by health workers at a door-to-door level
- Improved ante natal care, immunization coverage and institutional deliveries
- Telemedicine initiatives
- Anganwadi programmes, and other initiatives on water, sanitation and livelihood.



LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI)



Founded by Dr. Gullapalli N. Rao in 1986

LVPEI is a centre of excellence in eye care services, basic and clinical research into eye diseases, training, product development, and rehabilitation, especially targeting under-served populations in the developing world. The outreach of the Institute is staggering: 23.8 million patients, of which 50 per cent have received free care. A unique model of community-based integrated primary and secondary care spreads to 6,000 villages in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Odisha. The model is a pyramid-shaped angel of compassion. At the very top is the cutting-edge hospital in Hyderabad, and at the base, holding it up, is the care that reaches the doorstep of the poorest person through locally recruited volunteers. It has helped rehabilitate over 0.16 million patients with irreversible blindness or low vision.

Facing page *Equity, efficiency and excellence in eye care*
Following pages (110–11) *World class, affordable facilities for anyone who needs them*

BLINDNESS CAN BE PREVENTED or cured in three out of four people. But those excellent odds are rendered useless if patients cannot access treatment because it is too expensive, of inferior quality, or just geographically distant. Dr. Gullapalli N. Rao gave up an academic career in the United States and returned to India to attempt to address this issue. He founded an institute in Hyderabad that would provide eye care through a prism of three values: equity, efficiency, and excellence.

The LV Prasad Eye Institute (or LVPEI), was born out of this ideological vision, but its far-reaching efforts in treating eye problems are real and tangible, impacting thousands of people every year. The institute helps in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of various eye problems as well as rehabilitation, with high standards of facilities and care to everyone who comes through its doors, rich or poor. 'Every patient is a VIP' is a commonly heard refrain within the walls of this hospital.

The holistic model of the LVPEI's 'Pyramid of Care' ensures that needy patients are treated for free or at subsidized rates. Says Dr. Rao: 'We are now a network with a Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad at the very apex; three tertiary centres; 17 secondary level eye centres in rural areas, and 160 primary eye care centres in remote rural and tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha – ours is the largest such comprehensive eye care network anywhere in the world.'





Free visual aids and screenings change perspectives and lives



Through community outreach, the visually impaired see light at the end of the tunnel
Following pages (114–15) *Diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation brought to the people's doorstep*

Community involvement and ownership are the foundation of the pyramid's structure. Vision Guardians, usually locally recruited and trained people, set the ball of high quality care rolling at the grassroots level. They monitor the eye health of 5,000 people in their area through informal methods including door-to-door visits. Centres are often set up on land donated by the community. Local government and welfare schemes are looped in with LVPEI's strategy to make the model sustainable and replicable.

Dr. Rao explains, 'Vision Centres and Secondary Centres can eliminate 75 per cent of all avoidable blindness due to the need for spectacles, and detection and treatment of potentially blinding problems. Thus only 25 per cent vision impaired people in rural, remote areas need to travel to the cities to access tertiary care.'

It is no wonder that the government has adopted the LVPEI's model of eye care service delivery and plans to implement it in other states. Besides

treatment, LVPEI is known for its cutting-edge research. Their rehabilitation programme – which includes mobility and skills training, economic rehabilitation, inclusive education and more – is a boon for those with partial or diminishing vision, allowing them to lead a full life.

Other areas of work include an eye bank, innovation and product development to counter high market costs. Recently, advocacy and capacity building have taken the centre-stage. LVPEI is associated with the World Health Organization and is a WHO collaborating centre, as well. It is also part of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight Initiative.

Sending its powerful message out into the world, LVPEI can pursue its dream – so that all may see.

LVPEI PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Universal Eye Health Coverage Addressing Visual Impairment

BENEFICIARIES Rural communities, in particular, visually impaired people

LOCATION Nirmal district, Telangana

The aim is create a robust model of universal eye health coverage including prevention of blindness, promotion of eye health, treatment of all kinds of eye diseases, and rehabilitation. Nirmal has a population of 700,000 people, and is one of the most under-developed districts in India. Improving eye health will significantly improve the quality of their lives and contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

The goal: By the end of five years, the prevalence of blindness in Nirmal district is to be brought down by 50 per cent. By the end of the next five years, there will be:

- Eye screenings for 80 per cent of the population at their doorstep by well-trained community eye health workers
- Referrals of persons with visual impairment to eye care centres
- 25,000 pairs of spectacles provided at very low costs
- 25,000 surgeries performed, out of which at least 50 per cent are to be free of cost
- About 1,500 visually challenged people will be provided with vision rehabilitation services.





Centre for Environment Education Society (CEE)



Founded by Kartikeya Vikram Sarabhai in 1984

CEE came into being as a partnership between the Nehru Foundation for Development and the Union Government. Its vision is to propel local, national and global efforts towards sustainable development and be at the cutting edge of environmental education and education for sustainable development. It believes in the power of education to advance sustainable practices in rural/urban communities, businesses, and the public sector. This helps address climate change and biodiversity conservation through positive actions that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially beneficial. CEE is applying for the HCL Grant in the health category, with a project that links education with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools.

Facing page *Imbibing the value of conservation*
Following pages (118–19) *Small learnings can solve big problems*

FOR THE FIRST DECADE of its existence, the Centre for Environment Education Society (CEE) focused on the need of the hour, which was introducing environmental education into mainstream education and consciousness. 'Like a seedling planted and groomed well grows into a big tree, similarly, we believe that appropriate knowledge imparted to children (and adults) in an appropriate manner creates a deep-rooted impact in their minds which helps in developing positive behaviour (or in changing behaviour) and making them better citizens,' explains Senior Programme Coordinator, Dr. Simanta Kalita.

Perhaps the first organization to push this agenda, CEE has developed a highly practical approach to environmental education. Inductive education is replaced by deductive education, meaning the learning has to be experiential and hands-on, the exposure real-world and not bookish. Educators and local stakeholders have to be involved and trained. Developing engaging educational material is another integral activity.

After the first decade, CEE made a lateral move towards environmental action as well as education, both feeding into each other through state-of-the-art innovation and perspectives. Their projects spanned demonstrations, awareness and education projects and policy interventions that are adaptable to different cultural, social, and geographic contexts.







Ingraining hygiene into the community's pooled knowledge



Illuminating the future by taking action today
Following pages (122–23) 'WASH'ing away disease

Growing in width as well as depth, CEE now operates through more than 30 offices across India and two international offices located in Australia and Germany. Each one of these offices operates under one uniform code of discipline, but they all have maintained their unique identity and local focus, functioning nearly like independent NGOs. CEE works in almost all major languages of the country through a multi-ethnic, multi-disciplinary team ranging from environmentalists, zoologists, botanists, sociologists, architects, engineers, agriculture scientists, geographers, communication experts, business administrators, and language experts.

None of its work is done in isolation. 'In partnership with central and state government departments, grassroots community based organizations, local, national and international NGOs, UN bodies and the corporate world, CEE has created a network that has been strategically making an impact at different levels,' says Dr. Kalita. Besides

this, capacity building and empowering communities to ameliorate their own lot are a major part of its efforts, as it believes firmly in a bottom-up model of development. 'Although this approach may take more time and effort, the knowledge remains with the community and becomes a part of their lives. This brings in ownership and sustainability,' Kalita adds.

CEE's innovative programmes and materials address a plethora of concerns from climate change to biodiversity conservation, from saving tigers to engaging with youth, from teaching farmers sustainable techniques to offering marginalized women the opportunity to access sustainable livelihood options. Innovating play-based methods of education, forming online teaching models, facilitation of self-help groups and knowledge centres, and conducting public consultations are ways in which their ideology manifests itself.



CEE PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Water, Sanitation & Hygiene in Schools of Northeast (North East WinS)

BENEFICIARIES Students of government schools

LOCATION Goalpara and Sonitpur district, Assam; East and West Imphal districts, Manipur; West Tripura and Sipahijhala, Tripura

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) have an inseparable connection with children's ability to attend school. For girls, menstrual hygiene management in schools can determine dropout rates. The RTE Act mandates that along with academic infrastructure, schools must provide safe drinking water and clean, functional toilets. The Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya Mission envisages separate functional toilets, safe drinking water, group handwashing, capacity building, and proper operation and maintenance (O&M) of WASH facilities.

The proposed project aims to address the issues of poor WASH conditions in schools by intervening at various levels – behavioural change, infrastructure, O&M and policy dialogues. As an outcome of the intervention, students will be able to internalize WASH practices and influence their families and communities to adopt better hygiene behaviour. The project will reduce waterborne diseases, increase attendance and decrease absenteeism and drop-outs. CEE has experience in this area: its Daily Handwashing for an Ailment-free Life (DHaAL) project won the National Social Innovation Contest 2016 of NITI Aayog and the Ministry of External Affairs.

- For schools, the project plans Group Handwashing Stations; making schools Open Defecation & Open Urination Free; reducing waterborne diseases by improving drinking water safety and hygiene; and reducing absenteeism because of such diseases and menstruation through behaviour change
- For O&M, all stakeholders of the schools will be involved – students, teachers, school management committee members, mid-day-meal cooks, mother's groups, retired teachers, local youth groups
- At policy level, the team will engage at district, state, and national levels for monitoring, scaling up and replicating the project.



Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS)



Founded by Devendra Raj Mehta in 1975

Synonymous with the famous Jaipur Foot, Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) and its hospitals are where thousands of people with disability come to be fitted with that prosthetic limb. Its vision is to ensure the physical, economic and social rehabilitation of the people with disability, to enable them to regain their mobility and dignity. BMVSS's open door policy means that poor people receive artificial limbs, calipers and other physical aids and appliances free of charge. The Jaipur limb costs US \$50 (borne by BMVSS), compared to US \$2,000 in the United States. BMVSS conducts outreach programmes and rehabilitation camps in India and in other Asian, African and Latin American countries. Its beneficiaries in the last 42 years have numbered 1.65 million, including 25,615 foreign nationals.

Facing page *Climbing high with the help of the Jaipur limb*

EVERY DAY, A NUMBER OF small miracles occur at the 23 centres of Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) across India. People who had despaired of ever walking again after an accident, or polio, or a war injury, come here and on the very same day, walk themselves out. For here, they are fitted with a Jaipur Foot, for free.

Jaipur Foot, an innovative prosthetic limb, which differs from those available worldwide, was first developed in 1968 out of an unlikely collaboration between a doctor, a master craftsman, and a tyre-repairman. Made of rubber, the Jaipur foot was customised for the rural Indian. It was far more affordable, suitable for walking barefoot, and allowed squatting. Suddenly a person with physical disability could hope for a life of mobility and productivity, of dignity and opportunity.

BMVSS came into the picture when retired bureaucrat Devendra Raj Mehta suffered an accident and realized the need for a prosthetic for the masses. SMS Hospital where it was developed, was only able to fit a few limbs a year. BMVSS increased that number manifold. It now provides prosthetic limbs, calipers, crutches, wheelchairs and other aids and appliances. Limbs are custom fitted to the patient, and training in their use is included. According to Mehta, Founder and Chief Patron, BMVSS has 'developed an alternate, sensitive patient-centric management system to deal with a large number of beneficiaries who are climbing high with the help of the Jaipur



Regaining a life of dignity



Innovative design and low prices grant mobility to thousands

limb mostly poor, neglected, underprivileged and often uneducated. One of the main features is our open door policy, where any person with disability can visit our Jaipur centre at any time of day and night without any appointment. All patients receive artificial limbs totally free, and besides this, they are provided with boarding and lodging.' Donations from individuals and corporates, and aid from the government help to keep the mission afloat. The administrative and overhead costs of BMVSS are as low as 4 per cent of the budget. Besides the centres, BMVSS holds rehabilitation camps and patient outreach programmes. Camps to fit limbs have been held in several countries across the world, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Honduras, Nepal, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Fiji.

Such is the innovative and widespread impact of the Jaipur foot that Stanford University tied up with BMVSS to further study and improve on the design of the knee joint, called the Jaipur Knee, which was listed among the 50 Best Innovations by *Time Magazine*

Health

in 2009. Other collaborators include MIT, USA, the Indian Space Research Organization, and some of the IITs. Good news indeed for the 10 million Indians with locomotive disability.

HCL Grant Project Title HCL-BMVSS Project For Rehabilitation of the Disabled

Location BMVSS Jaipur Center as also its 23 branches and camps in rural areas

Beneficiaries People with physical disability

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Caritas India



Founded by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India in 1962

Caritas India is a member of the worldwide network of Caritas Confederation. With initiatives that target issues faced by the forgotten peoples of India, it seeks to restore human dignity and advocate for the rights of people and work towards a world with a just and sustaining order. Initially, the organization focused on food, shelter and education. Then it saw that communities had to take the reins of progress in their own hands for truly sustainable development and empowerment to occur. Its forays into diverse areas like poverty alleviation, community health, gender and child rights as well as upliftment of downtrodden groups, have been producing results. Caritas has been lauded for its disaster relief work and natural resource management.

Facing page *Bolstering community health among forgotten populations*

CARITAS INDIA IS FOUNDED on the ideal of compassion towards the poor. It understands that poverty is inextricably linked with the denial of rights and freedoms. With over 50 years of experience and co-sharing of expertise with a worldwide Caritas network which serves 200 countries, Caritas India is in a unique position to help empower the marginalized and socially excluded, and achieve sustainable development.

Says Fr. Frederick D' Souza, Executive Director: 'Caritas India has evolved over her five decades of experience in emergency response and recovery, reconstruction, community development and community health, thereby expressing solidarity and fostering capacities and linkages for resilient communities.'

Caritas India made its mark first in disaster management and rehabilitation, but has now undertaken several other initiatives in the remotest, often poorest parts of India like the Northeast and Odisha. It excels in humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction, climate adaptive agriculture and food sovereignty, livelihood and skill development, anti-human trafficking and migration, peace building and community health. Its methodology is sound: the rights-based approach melds well with the thrust of community mobilization and formation of grassroots bodies.

'Empowerment is the key to self-reliant human development. For Caritas India, this is an obligation



Disease prevention and healthcare through people-led campaigns



Happiness comes from healthy children

and not merely an option. We cannot also rest content with our contributions, as poverty is increasing and the poor are being pushed more and more to the margins in a competitive world economy. We need to engage in a more effective way to bring a paradigm shift in our engagement,' explains their website.

Programmes are executed through 200 member organizations and partners on the ground. Besides this, collaborating with the government and other non-profit organizations is an important part of its agenda. Caritas works tirelessly to ensure equity, gender mainstreaming, and environmental justice in all its endeavours. It expends effort on strengthening and broadening of partnerships, building capacity, and doing policy advocacy.

Caritas India excels in humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction, climate adaptive agriculture and food sovereignty, livelihood and skill development, anti-human trafficking and migration, and peace building.

Health

In the project Caritas India applied for, it will attack the problem of malaria in villages in Odisha through early diagnosis and treatment, surveillance, and distribution of long lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs); but it will also engage in behaviour change communication (BCC), and empowering the community to strike at the heart of the problem.

The word 'caritas', in Latin, means 'love in action'. There couldn't be a better illustration of that than Caritas India.

HCL Grant Project Title Empowering Communities to Combat Malaria in Difficult-to-reach areas of Odisha

Beneficiaries Rural and tribal, with special emphasis on women, children, and migrants

Location Keonjhar district, Odisha



Christian Fellowship – Society for Health Opportunity Rehabilitation and Empowerment (CF-SHORE)



Founded by Dr. P.A. Abraham and a young medical and paramedical group in 1953

CF is one of the oldest healthcare institutions in Chhatisgarh where its healthcare nodes were the only referral centres with surgical capabilities from its early days in the 1950s for nearly three decades. The CF-SHORE unit was established as an integrated health and development initiative for more extensive and meaningful work in the area. It performs the largest number of free cataract surgeries (second only to the government) in the state. Its programmes encompass health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture development, water and soil conservation, livelihood programmes, rehabilitation for persons with disability, and more. It actively facilitates people's participation and support, and collaborates with local and district governing bodies and other stakeholders in a vibrant way.

Facing page *Strong children means an empowered community*

IN THE INTERIORS OF CHATTISGARH, where poverty, isolation, and disease have rendered populations helpless, a group of doctors, nurses and social workers have sacrificed much personally to make a difference – and they have been doing it for over sixty years. Offering curative, preventive healthcare and surgical facilities in these under-served areas, including jungle clinics for the tribal folk, the Christian Fellowship is a faith-based organization with a secular outlook.

From outreach, to building a hospital, the journey has been a long and fruitful one. Says Dr. Thomas Abraham, CEO, 'The pioneers were mindful of their conviction to develop a hospital not just for running medical services but that it should be relevant to the health care needs of the community; that should be affordable to the poor and needy rural populace.' To support the running of this philanthropic institution, micro-enterprises were started in the campus, including dairy, poultry, fishery, animal husbandry and more.

In 2001, the community-oriented health and development services were integrated into the Society for Health Opportunity Rehabilitation and Empowerment (SHORE) to form CF-SHORE. Its model is a robust one, incorporating an integrated strategy with health as a component of community-based development programmes. To this end, they have



Constructing a solid foundation of nutrition and healthy child rearing



Good health is the right of every child

worked with UNICEF and the government of the state in the areas of nutrition, WASH, health, eye care and more.

CF-SHORE's interventions in the disability sphere have transformed lives. Take the case of Khushi, a young girl with multiple developmental disabilities, who left school in standard 1. After visiting her family and assessing her situation, CF-SHORE started therapy, counseled her parents and sensitized and trained the teachers in school on inclusive treatment of persons with disability. Khushi's mobility and physical condition have since improved and she back at school

Dr. Thomas explains, 'CF-SHORE has a strong, qualified and experienced core team with a background of doctors, experts in medicine, surgery, nursing, and social work among others who guide and manage the programmes. It has been implementing various projects in education, relief and rehabilitation, livelihood, and health and nutrition across the state of Chhattisgarh. CF-SHORE has also undertaken several training programmes, assessments and research studies in the

region including nutritional surveys among adolescent girls, prevalence of different grades of anaemia, salt samples measuring iodine levels, and health trainings for teachers among others.'

CF-SHORE operates on the premise that the community must stand for each other with mutual respect and care. The field staff is recruited from the community itself, and 'beneficiaries, caregivers and duty bearers are awarded, motivated, capacitated, and they play a huge role in advocacy and lobbying,' offers Dr. Thomas. Deep grassroots engagement is the USP of this long-standing friend of the poor.

HCL Grant Project Title SEHAT
Beneficiaries Women and children
Location Five blocks of Rajnandgaon district, Chhattisgarh



HelpAge India



Founded by Samson A. Daniel in 1978

Today, India is home to 103.9 million elderly people. About 35 per cent of them live below the poverty line and 60 per cent are in rural areas. HelpAge envisions a society where the elderly have the right to lead an active, healthy, and dignified life. The focus over the years has moved from welfare to development. Its commitments include – adequate incomes and livelihoods, health security, giving the elderly a voice, creating age-appropriate services in collaboration with the government and private bodies, and developing and showcasing models of age care. HelpAge helps form community-based institutions of elderly people – pressure groups to access rights and entitlements. Its operation is spread across 27 states with 127 project offices in India.

Facing page *Committed to giving the elderly a new lease of life*

IN ITS EFFORTS TO ADDRESS an under-served and neglected population, HelpAge India has evolved a unique model of development. Professional yet compassionate, self sufficient and sustainable, community driven and networked – this model brings dignity and respect to the lives of the elderly. By involving them in the initiatives, it gives them a renewed purpose in life.

Samson Daniel, the founder of HelpAge, learned early on that waiting for donations was not going to advance the cause of the organization. Instead, he learned how to raise funds and run the organization efficiently to optimize resources.

‘We chose this area of work as the elderly in India suffer from poor health and lack of social protection services and schemes along with minimal income. Our work aims to ensure that it is relevant to both the current population of older people and to create an environment where future elderly aren’t destined to live in poverty,’ explains Mathew Cherian, CEO.

HelpAge classifies the elderly – into Active, Assisted, and Destitute – not on the basis of age but of their ability to perform activities of daily life. Its interventions are designed to reach the most needy, and to mobilize them to community action, to raise funds, to boost their well-being. It also offers peer group psycho-social support and helps the elderly become independent, functional members of society. In addition to institution building-oriented work, its programmes include mobile health units, a 24/7 toll free helpline, awareness and advocacy in schools and



Empowering the elderly to become independent and productive



Access to health and well being for older people

general society, setting up old age homes throughout the country, cataract surgeries for the elderly, helping them get their entitlements from government schemes, and more. The community institutions HelpAge formed among the elderly have begun to instigate themselves into 'collective and social action'. As Cherian points out, 'I believe the turning point over the years has been that we now work *with* the elderly, not just *for* them. With 360 degree learning systems in place, community is always the primary stakeholder.'

HelpAge classifies the elderly – into Active, Assisted, and Destitute – not on the basis of age but of their ability to perform activities of daily life. Its interventions are designed to reach the most needy, and to mobilize them to community action, to raise funds, to boost their well-being. It helps the elderly become independent, functional members of society.

Health

This sense of ownership leads to tremendous impact and empowerment. Advocacy and active steps to shape public policy means that the problem is being attacked from all fronts.

Cherian adds, 'With time, the elderly have realized their strength and the *meaning of their existence* – the ultimate motto of the initiative.'

HCL Grant Project Title Scaling up of the Astitva Project: Empowerment of the Elderly through Health Inclusion
Beneficiaries The elderly
Location West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha



Lepra Society



Founded by Dr. K.V. Desikan, B.M. Kothadiya, R.S. Mani, E.A. Neil Winship, V.V.L. Narsimharao, Dr. Dinkar D. Palande, and K. Bhogishayana in 1989

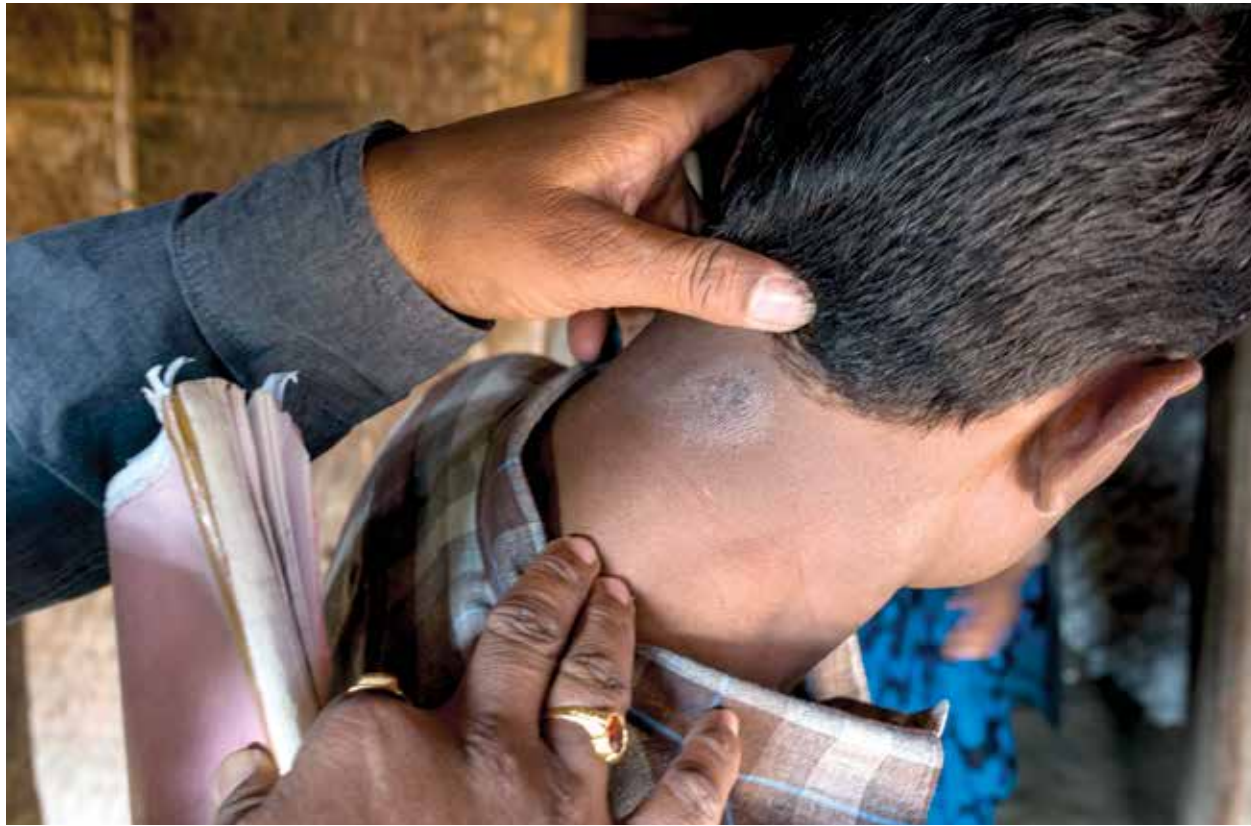
LEPRA Society's mandate is to reduce the incidence and impact of leprosy and other such diseases in India, treat patients, and help them overcome poverty and prejudice. With 25 years of experience in the field, LEPRA is the acknowledged leader in this struggle. It works on leprosy detection. Prevention and care of disabilities, rehabilitation, inclusion, awareness, advocacy, and community mobilization are other areas of work. LEPRA has reached more than 300,000 persons for early diagnosis, treatment, and services. Nearly 10 per cent of LEPRA's staff comprises of people from affected communities – including the CEO.

Facing page *Disallowing disability and disease to limit people's options*

THERE IS A NEW CASE OF LEPROSY in India every five minutes. That's surprising, since the disease is supposed to have been 'eliminated' in 2005, (i.e. a prevalence of less than 1 per 10,000). Because of this tag, the disease was struck off health agendas, budgets were slashed, and surveillance slackened off. Leprosy is completely curable, but highly contagious. According to official figures, only a third of infected people come forward to report leprosy. And so, early detection is the need of the hour. No one knows this better than LEPRA Society.

LEPRA Society is an organization with a stellar reputation and productive partnerships with the government in the preventive, curative and rehabilitative aspects of Leprosy and other tropical diseases. LEPRA was originally a part of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA) which functioned before India won her Independence. After multi-drug therapy (MDT) was introduced, LEPRA UK began some activities in India. Eventually, LEPRA India became an independent NGO.

LEPRA works unceasingly to detect active cases early, especially among women, children, and other marginalized peoples who are the least likely to report or recognize the infection. The chances of contagion are also much higher in these scenarios due to poor living conditions. If leprosy is not spotted and treated in time, it can lead to ulcers, neuritis, and disabilities. 'We strive for a world in which the social consequences of leprosy shall cease to exist and where women, men



An early diagnosis can make all the difference



Catering to specific needs of patients like comfortable shoes to make walking bearable

and children will seek medical help without fear of discrimination, just as they would for any another health condition,' explains Jayaram Parasa, Head of Programmes, LEPRASOCIETY.

LEPRASOCIETY's mandate includes supporting the government in its leprosy programmes, especially for outreach. They have 26 referral centres that offer specialized facilities and fill the gaps in the government's efforts. Here, MDT, rehabilitation and disability services, special shoes and more are available free of cost. LEPRASOCIETY is also committed to helping the affected with the social stigma and discrimination they face which can lead to the loss of income, mental agony and more. It has signed an MoU with national and state-level forums of leprosy-affected persons to advocate against the stigma and discrimination that unfortunately plagues to the leprosy-afflicted.

LEPRASOCIETY looks into advocacy, capacity building of healthcare staff, and even helps patients claim government entitlements. The NGO aims to foster research and innovation, too, and monitor

their impact closely through assessments and social audits.

Says Jayaram Parasa: 'Our approach and our values, especially in terms of listening to the people we work with, valuing their contribution and responding to their needs by designing interventions and innovative projects and demonstrating bold leadership at all levels, makes us stand out.'

HCL Grant Project Title Enhancing Leprosy Case Detection in Telangana and Bihar states

Beneficiaries Women, children, and other vulnerable groups

Location Komarambheem and Nirmal districts of Telangana state, and Banka and Jamui districts of Bihar state



She Hope Society for Women Entrepreneurs



Founded by Sami Wani in 2001

She Hope is a lifeboat for people with disabilities in the Kashmir valley. This non-profit, non-political, non-government, and non-religious organization is driven by a commitment to delivering equal rights and opportunities to people with disability, and bringing positive changes in their lives. Over 10,000 people have benefitted from its good works, which include access to quality health care, education, as well as livelihood support. This is beyond its first level of service, i.e. rehabilitation, physiotherapy, fitting prosthetic limbs, and providing assistive devices like wheelchairs. Through difficult conditions spanning violence, biting cold weather, and political conflict – finding allies in the police, the army, the government and hospitals – this NGO carries on its programmes with optimistic fervour.

Facing page *Home-based rehabilitation for those with disability*

WORKING WITH DISABILITY is an uphill task, but exponentially more so if you are located in a war-torn region with few facilities and minimum resources. The She Hope Society is a committed NGO that has helped thousands of people with disability, whether they suffer from loco-motor issues, speech and hearing difficulties, diseases like cerebral palsy, congenital disabilities or even landmine injuries.

She Hope was started by a young physiotherapist with two employees who worked out of a single room. It had an intervention programme in just one village. Along the way, She Hope has chosen partners who have helped it evolve into an effective force of change. Besides providing prosthetics, these collaborations with national and international NGOs like Handicap International have allowed She Hope to offer specialized services, as well as improve its organizational capacity. Says Sami Wani, Founder of She Hope: 'Currently we have increased the footprint of our specialized services related to physiotherapy, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, donation of aids and appliances, prosthetics and orthotics, surgeries, post-surgical interventions, networking, advocacy, audiometry and the like in both Jammu and Kashmir.'

Actively engaging with the community, She Hope has created programmes that take rehabilitation and disability services like ramps, hearing aids, and physiotherapy to peoples' doorsteps. Its outreach extends to remote villages – some within just two kilometres of the LOC – to work on enhancing



Bringing a ray of hope to the community

people's mobility and functionality. 'One of our major strengths is community acceptance and ownership. All our actions have been very participatory, and we involve communities from designing to the evaluation phase of the action,' explains Wani. Caregiver training, peer group support, and other such measures sustain the community further.

She Hope makes an effort to be well connected with its stakeholders – which include beneficiaries and partners. The organization is constantly evaluating its work internally as well as through external parameters

to remain cognizant of the impact created. And they do it in a simple, straightforward way. As Wani says, 'Our approach towards work is not to create any new system, but to use what is available and optimize the resources to the best extent.'

Actively engaging with the community, She Hope has created programmes that take rehabilitation and disability services like ramps, hearing aids, and physiotherapy to peoples' doorsteps. Its outreach extends to remote villages – some within just two kilometres of the LOC – to work on enhancing people's mobility and functionality

HCL Grant Project Title Humanitarian Assistance to Strengthen Inclusion and Safety of Vulnerable Persons – Especially Women and Children – in Conflict Affected Areas of J&K
Beneficiaries Women and children (including persons with disabilities)
Location Jammu and Kashmir

Making mobility the central goal



Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)



Founded by the TATA TRUSTS in 1936

Tata Institute of Social Sciences or TISS is a world-class university with multiple centres in India, including one in Ladakh. Besides academics, it engages in research, outreach, and training. TISS also works closely with governments and non-state actors on the development and implementation of public policies, schemes, and programmes. Its vision is to be an institution of excellence in higher education that continually responds to changing social realities through the development and application of knowledge, towards creating a people-centered, ecologically sustainable, and just society that promotes and protects dignity, equality, social justice, and human rights for all. TISS has over 5,000 students on its rolls, a fifth of whom are doctoral scholars.

Facing page *Enlivening childhoods free of care*

AN INCISIVE CURRICULUM combined with a real-world approach defines the unique institution that is the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Its students conduct research, but far from being confined to the ivory tower of pure academics, they penetrate the heart of the community through field action projects that impact the most vulnerable and influence policy. Their interventions have been diverse – disasters, epidemics, poverty – combating critical socio-economic, health, and environmental issues facing India.

Inspired by a conversation between Swami Vivekananda and Jamshetji Tata – the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work was started by the Tatas in 1936. It became a deemed university known as TISS under the Government of India in 1964. The essence of the university is to impart socially relevant education of a high standard, ‘bringing forth new generations of leaders who go on to head not-for-profit organizations and government institutions working for social justice and equity,’ says Prof S. Parasuraman, Director and Vice-Chancellor of TISS. Autonomous research of a superlative caliber is the second defining characteristic of the institute. The university has an NAAC score of 3.89, the second highest in India.

Most of TISS’s projects demonstrate how effective participatory models can be. Engaging with the government and local bodies throughout the process of an intervention – from planning, implementation, monitoring to evaluation is an integral feature of its



Health and welfare centres woven into the fabric of the community itself



Impacting the community everyday

field projects. Besides this, capacity building of local players and government functionaries, and powerful advocacy campaigns are all in a day's work for TISS's passionate students.

'Impact is at three levels. One is simply an impact on the local community. More important and less well-documented is the impact that it makes on policy.

One of the most frequent and effective pathways is when the Supreme Court or other courts either cite a TISS study, or commission TISS to do a study to gather evidence that can guide their decisions. The third and least documented effect is how the field action programmes make their impact as part of the institute's pedagogy and academic work,' says Prof Parasuraman.

Field projects deal with a variety of issues and needy populations. The programme 'Koshish' works with the homeless and destitute. 'Prayas' engages with those who have come through the criminal justice system (like released prisoners, children of prisoners etc.). Programmes in the health sector reach out to

the mentally ill, and support organizations fighting communicable disease.

The commitment that TISS fosters among its students is based on a belief that it has a responsibility as an institute of higher learning to proactively respond to issues faced by the local and global community. Prof Parasuraman says, 'In 2011, TISS closed all its teaching programmes for two weeks, so that its students, staff and faculty could undertake a comprehensive social, economic, health and basic services survey. This exercise was a massive effort to expose and deepen the engagement of the Institute's members towards the harsh realities of the people.'

HCL Grant Project Title Field Action Project to Evolve Optimal Design for Health & Wellness Centers for Rural and Tribal Maharashtra
Beneficiaries Tribal populations in the area
Location Dahanu in Palghar district, Maharashtra

EDUCATION



Finalists 2018

Foundation for Education and Development 158
A second chance at education for adolescents

North East Network 166
Gender equality through environmental sustainability

Sightsavers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) 174
Equality, inclusion and education for the visually impaired

Shortlisted 2018

Akshara Foundation 182
Evolving innovative models for education of the poor

Breakthrough 186
Making gender discrimination unacceptable

Butterflies 190
Enabling street children to transform their destinies

ChildFund India 194
Educating children to be the change-makers of the future

Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) 198
Fighting disparity, exploitation, and poverty in rural India

Samarthan – Centre for Development Support 202
Propelling the poor towards collective action from the ground up

Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) 206
Catalyzing co-operatives of women working in the unorganized sector

This category covers projects which support the Right to Education and strengthen primary, secondary and higher education; promote lifelong learning opportunities through skill development; work with adult literacy; advance girl children's and women's education and empowerment; and ensure digital literacy for all. To qualify for the HCL Grant, projects should be designed around equitable, inclusive and quality education, thereby strengthening state systems and attaining sustainability in rural development.





Spreading the seeds of learning far and wide, the NGOs shortlisted in the EDUCATION category of the HCL Grant work through exciting new methodologies. Women's federations in Gujarat; rights for street children in the Andamans; girls learning sport and skills in Jharkhand; education for conservation through photography in the northeast; and fun math in Karnataka – these are only some of the out-of-the-box projects they spearhead, engaging with local communities.





Foundation for Education and Development



Founded by Anil Bordia, Prof R. Govinda, Prof A.K. Jalaluddin, Dr. S. Anandalakshmi, and Prof Shyam Menon in 2000

Known best for its flagship programme, *Doosra Dashak*, this NGO was conceived to create a new social order through community participation. Its work among adolescents who have never been to school or have dropped out is pathbreaking. Having worked in 1,157 villages across nine blocks in Rajasthan, the NGO offers a priceless second chance for education to these children. An education which sends forth a cadre of committed adolescents and youth equipped with relevant skills and democratic values, who want to make a definitive change in their communities. *Doosra Dashak* has impacted more than 80,000 adolescents, of which almost 50 per cent are girls.

Facing page *New experiences to expand horizons*
Following pages (160–61) *Targeting adolescents and women as the harbingers of change*

DOOSRA DASHAK LITERALLY TRANSLATES to 'second decade'. The project works with children aged 11–20 years – that difficult, impressionable time of adolescence, which can define the future path of an individual. This definitive programme is the brainchild of Anil Bordia, an eminent educationist and social activist. It was started under the aegis of the charitable trust, Foundation for Education and Development. A series of residential camps spanning 4 months act as bridge schools, but more importantly, they impart a value-based 'holistic and integrated education' which intellectually, emotionally, and socially empowers these adolescents to become leaders and agents of change within their own communities.

The adolescents belong to extremely marginalized communities of Rajasthan where education is not a priority. These include Sahariyas (a primitive tribe), Bheels and Meo Muslims. Neelu Choudhary, the director of *Doosra Dashak (DD)* says: 'These youth are often perceived, vulnerable and directionless groups rather than as potential assets who can assume leadership roles for social transformation. *DD* seeks to educate and train them while respecting their dignity and self-esteem. Their enthusiasm and energies are channelled in constructive directions.' The camps offer classes in life skills, reproductive and human rights, hygiene and nutrition information, besides social sciences, Maths, Hindi and preparation for vocational choices.





A spirit of enquiry, and a contextual education makes for life-long learners



*Creating safe spaces where adolescents can blossom
Following pages (164–65) Growing up with a drive towards nation building*

The approach and curriculum of *DD* is an innovative and ever-evolving one, created through constant dialogue with experts, the local community and the adolescent students. Learning is continually linked to their real life, work, and environment. Curiosity and a spirit of inquiry, critical and creative thinking, and teamwork are encouraged. Teachers and peers influence the students equally. The atmosphere is one of transformation and creating life-purpose through education, using all available tools including technology. As Choudhary explains, their aim is ‘to harness their energies for nation building through the creation of a cadre who would provide educated, informed, and responsible leadership.’

Initially it was a struggle for *DD* to gain the trust of the villagers, but over time, it has generated considerable community involvement with the project. Now, with the support of the panchayats and local authorities, *DD* helps build organizations of youth

and women at the village and block levels, who make change so much more feasible.

To sustain what is learnt in the camps, *DD* has facilitated youth-friendly, safe spaces in different locations. ‘Ikhvelos’ as these are called, provide facilities for continuing education for adolescents and school children. Young people come here to acquire digital skills. It is also used as a forum for adolescents and youth to discuss how to solve the socio-economic issues that confront their community. It is in such spaces that the community has come up with strategies to close down alcohol shops in their villages, liberate bonded labour; improve access to benefits of government schemes like pensions and MNREGA or to stand up against superstitions and exploitative practices. Valli, a cattle grazer’s daughter and a participant of the project, worked tirelessly to bring electricity and to construct paved roads for her village. She stood for panchayat elections recently, and won against all odds.

That wouldn’t have happened without *Doosra Dashak*.

FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Scaling up of Doosra Dashak – Transforming the lives of Adolescents for Social Change

BENEFICIARIES Adolescents between ages 11–20

LOCATION Pindwara and Bali Blocks, Rajasthan

The project intends to apply *Doosra Dashak's* tried and tested strategies and interventions to a wider area in rural Rajasthan where education has been inaccessible. This will entail adapting the *DD* activities to context, technology-mediated learning, skills orientation, open schooling, and strengthening grassroots organizations for social transformation and leadership. A special emphasis will be placed on empowering women and girls by improving their literacy levels and participation in community issues. The project will be monitored and a Management Information System has been put into place. The following activities will be adapted to context in the new project:

- Mobilizing the community, especially through social mapping
- Supporting the right to basic education with the four-month residential camps
- Facilitating continuing education through Ikhvelos and need/issue based camps
- Imparting life-skill education
- Capacity building of teachers, School Management Committee members, and members of the gram panchayat
- Building and supporting community based organizations like Yuva Manch and Mahila Samooh
- Collaborating with partners so that the benefits of welfare programmes reach the most needy.





North East Network



Founded by Dr. Monisha Behal in 1995

Working in over 150 villages in the complex and multicultural regions of Assam, Meghalaya, and Nagaland, the North East Network is dedicated to upholding gender justice and equality through the prism of ecological sustainability. It galvanizes women to participate in political, public, and community spaces to address their issues like discrimination, violence, and safety. And it draws in the youth by creating innovative and fun programmes to promote the protection of the environment and bio-diversity. These include photography, film-making, and a digital archive which has already recorded 750 species of animals and plants. NEN is linked with over 120 organizations across the country and more than 5,000 people have come away stronger from their training programmes.

Facing page *Involving young people in conservation through atypical means*
Following pages (168–69) *Moving in new directions, towards social and environmental change*

WOMEN'S ISSUES ARE NOT ISOLATED. Links with nature, with income, and with social status have to be acknowledged. This idea defines the North East Network (NEN). 'Fully committed to gender justice, NEN strives to prioritize social, environmental and economic issues to ensure a perspective change in enhancing women's lives,' says Monisha Behal, the organization's founder and CEO. 'There is always a holistic approach where gender is not seen in isolation but as part of the larger eco-system – where livelihood needs, conservation, and youth engagement are all seen as connected to each other.'

For over two decades, this committed organization has been striving to achieve social justice with a slant towards gender rights in the isolated northeastern belt of India. It was during the Fourth World Women's Conference held at Beijing in 1995 that Behal and Roshmi Goswami, the founders of NEN decided to compile the unique problems of women in the northeast – so different from those in the rest of the country – into a report and present it at the Conference. Since then, the NGO has grown steadily and its work encompasses the diverse aspects of development in several of the northeastern states.

In a region where humans and nature have been so closely tied for centuries, the fractures due to climate change and rampant urbanization are beginning to have an adverse impact on the community, especially the youth. 'Today, the need to increase efforts that look at creation of livelihood by protection of natural resources rather than destroying them is being seen as a





The community plays its part in productive handling of natural resources



Exciting the curiosity of the young
 Following pages (172–73) *Looking into a future of worthwhile action*

more sustainable and progressive alternative. The need is to generate more projects with this ideology and creating a web of action is essential to give the youth and children a direction – a positive path that takes them away from despair and violence,’ explains Behal.

NEN has designed programmes that the community has fully owned and which simultaneously address discrimination, good governance, and natural resource management. A wonderful example of this is the NEN Resource Centre at Chizami in Nagaland, a women’s farmers collective which has evolved into a stronghold of environmental protection, improved health and incomes, revival of traditional agriculture and food security. All wrought by once marginalized women who are now successful farmers or weavers, and a major collective force.

Innovative methods to excite the curiosity of the youth worked well. The Green Hub, in partnership with Dusty Foot Productions, is one such initiative. It is a youth and community based fellowship and video documentation node, which encourages

young people to engage with conservation, wildlife, indigenous knowledge, and social change at the local and national level.

NEN’s strongest assets are the solid networks it has formed. Says Behal, ‘NEN links with women... regardless of ethnicity, sexual/gender identity, disability, culture and space. It links with rural and urban women as well as organizations on development related issues within the northeast... NEN collaborates with local NGOs, church-based schools, women’s groups, farmers and weavers from remote areas, academic institutions, youth groups, and finally with government departments, and national women’s networks.’

NORTH EAST NETWORK PROJECT TITLE FOR
HCL GRANT Scaling up of Green Hub, An Innovative Education
Model (in partnership with Dusty Foot Productions) for Involving
Youth in Conservation and Social Change through Fellowship and Video
Documentation

BENEFICIARIES Youth belonging to poor or marginalized
communities

LOCATION Across seven states of the northeast region and Chizami
village, Nagaland

The northeast of India is one of the Global Biodiversity hotspots.
However, it has been marred by negligence, insurgency, and violence.
The local youth need new avenues and opportunities to play a role in
re-building their region. Green Hub is the first youth and community
based fellowship and video-for-change project in the area, and connects
hundreds of youth, community members and government agencies.
Every year, 20 youth from across the northeast are selected for a one-year
fellowship comprising a video training module and an internship with
conservation, gender based, educational and grass-root organizations, as
well as government and forest departments. These Green Hub fellows are
envisioned to be the influencers of change in the future.

The programme involves the following:

- Bridging the gap between non-formal learning and academic courses
- Extensive documentation covering wildlife, traditional knowledge,
gender, education, music, folk dance, handicraft, village life and
grassroots development
- A digital archive is being developed for converting local knowledge
into digital textbooks so that it can enter mainstream classrooms, as
well as for community screenings
- Building links with the other educational initiatives of NEN.





Sightsavers India (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind)



Founded by Sir John Wilson in the 1950s in the United Kingdom. India operations started in 1966

This noble NGO's 'vision' is of a world where no one is blind due to easily preventable causes, and where the visually impaired participate equally in society. Started in the United Kingdom over 50 years ago, Sightsavers in India functions through its thematic portfolios of 'Eye Health', 'Inclusive Education for Disabled Children', and 'Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities'. It works with local partners to administer care, innovating new products to make surgeries accessible to all. It strengthens organizations and communities to develop practical and enduring solutions. Sightsavers has reached over 55 million people and has conducted over 36 million eye treatments since its operations began in India.

Facing page *Independence and productivity are crucial for those with disability*
Following pages (176–77) *The world is an exciting place, full of possibilities*

THE DOUBLE BURDEN OF POVERTY and disability can crush a person's soul. Which is why the Sightsavers India (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) works with a multi-pronged approach. Besides restoring sight where possible and preventing blindness, it spotlights inclusive education and equality for the blind, and campaigns aggressively for change in attitudes, policies, and environments.

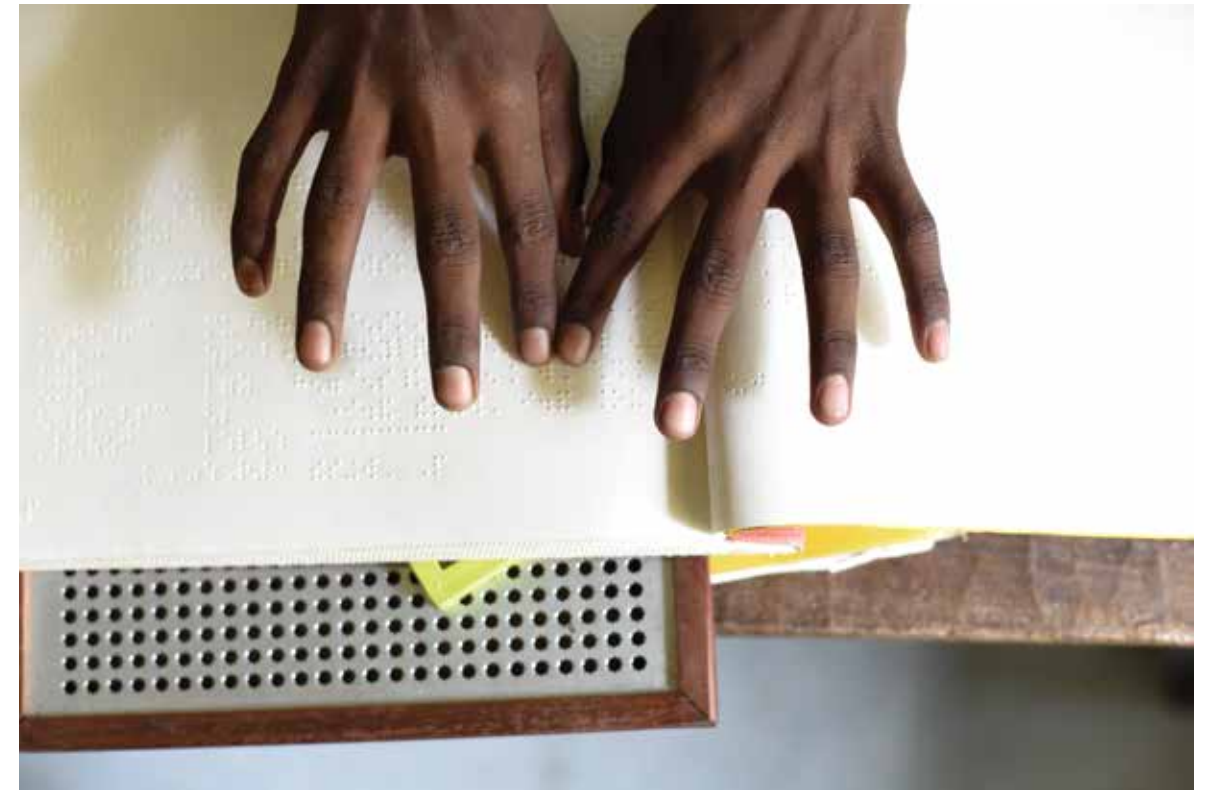
Sightsavers UK was started fifty years ago by Sir John Wilson, himself blind, but with a great vision to make eye care services easily available to poor people. In India, which has the largest number of blind people in the world, the NGO strives to help the blind lead lives of dignity, as independent and productive members of their communities. 'The reasons behind avoidable blindness run deeper than the eye diseases that cause them. They result from – and lead to – poverty, and are often accompanied by social exclusion and early death. So, instead of slapping a sticking-plaster on the problem, we work to ensure that people who are visually impaired or blind have access to preventive, curative and rehabilitative services without financial hardship,' says the organization's website. Efforts include screening and referring people, providing free spectacles, free surgery, and training eye care workers and doctors.

Working from within communities and mobilizing local partners, Sightsavers has been running the effective 'Inclusive Education Programme' to flow blind children into mainstream education. The child





Learning to move beyond visual impairment with courage and ability



Education can change how people see
Following pages (180–81) *Education is not the preserve of the seeing*

development projects also cover refraction for school children, educating mothers and most crucially, training teachers. ‘We support children and adults who are visually impaired or blind with the right technology, physical aids (i.e. educational materials in Braille; white canes, etc.) and tools such as low vision devices that give them greater independence,’ explains the website. Sightsavers has a positive long-term working relationship with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, and with education departments of the states they work in.

According to R.N. Mohanty, CEO: ‘We directly support service provision, while simultaneously strengthening education systems by training personnel, linking education with health services, and other interventions.’

The impetus towards achieving social inclusion and equality of opportunity is strong at Sightsavers. The aim is to help children and adults reach their full potential without discrimination and with access to their rights like health, education, and employment.

Influencing policies and shifting attitudes of local communities, governments, and schools is a huge part of their strategy. This can help not only with the blind being treated as equals, but also contribute to solve problems that can lead to avoidable blindness.

‘Sightsavers in India incorporates an increasing participation of visually impaired communities,’ says Mohanty. ‘It also works with its partners to strengthen the programmes, and shares its learnings with other organizations.’

SIGHTSAVERS INDIA PROJECT TITLE FOR HCL GRANT Sambalan – Inclusive Education for Children with Visual Impairment in Rajasthan, Bihar and West Bengal
BENEFICIARIES Children with Visual Impairment (CVI)
LOCATION Jhalawar and Udaipur districts in Rajasthan; Bhagalpur and Jehanabad districts in Bihar; Howrah district in West Bengal

In India, only 5 per cent of the two million visually impaired children go to school. Most of these children belong to poor and vulnerable communities. There is a high rate of dropouts because the special needs of the children are not adequately addressed. There is paucity of resource teachers, a shortage of teaching aids, and a lack of administrative support.

The Sightsavers project, a replication of an existing initiative, proposes:

- To train and work with teachers to develop a conducive environment for children with visual impairment
- To work towards enhancing and grading the learning levels of children with visual impairment
- To use technology as a critical medium in bridging the learning gap
- To develop two major assessment tools: the first to assess the learning outcomes of children, and the second to assess the effectiveness of the teachers in developing a conducive environment for the children. This will be the first time any scientific method will be used anywhere in the country to assess the learning level of children with visual impairment
- The government will be integrated into the strategy from the outset.





Akshara Foundation



Founded by C.V Madhukar and Upendra Tripathy

Akshara Foundation is a partnership between the government, the corporate sector, and the voluntary sector, founded on the belief that poor children have the right to high-quality education which will enable them to improve their standard of living and make their dreams come true. Over the last 17 years, Akshara has run multiple programmes – mainly in government schools – that are scalable, replicable, cost-effective, and designed to plug the gaps in the system. Thanks to their partnership with the government, they have a footprint of nearly 17,000 schools and a million children across 12 districts in Karnataka and two districts in Odisha. The programmes ensure enrolment increase, drop-outs decrease, and that improvement in children's learning outcome. Their programmes cover pre-school education, remedial math, English and reading skills, teacher training modules, and a library project.

Facing page *Ownership of impactful learning programmes is shared by the community*

THE AFRICAN PROVERB – 'it takes a village to raise a child' – has been embraced wholeheartedly by the Akshara Foundation, a well-known voice in the fight to universalize elementary education in Karnataka. Its motto, 'Every Child in School and Learning Well', has manifested as programmes providing interesting teaching material, resources, training, and support to government primary schools.

The village metaphor plays out in Akshara's methodology as the NGO works closely with the government and the community to ensure sustainability. Shared ownership of programmes is a direct line to harnessing the immense power of collective impact. So, state governments are involved, parents are engaged, local authorities catalyzed, and young people mobilized to support education for children. School Development and Monitoring Committees play an active part in the process.

Akshara employs scientific, robust and fun teaching/learning methods to support learning, as well as training teachers. The programmes have been in place for years in Karnataka, having impacted millions of children. Pre-school foundational learning programmes and English and reading remedial skill programmes have been exceedingly successful. The Classroom Library initiative has given countless children access to 'good content and exciting activities around books', explains Ashok Kamath, the Chairman of Akshara.

Akshara saw various studies showing that only 20.2 per cent of children in Grade 3 can do two-digit subtraction (2016) and that 90 per cent of



Colourful and well-researched materials which make Math easy, tactile and fun



Children respond in a delighted, positive way to innovative teaching

government school teachers are not trained in teaching maths. The maths module, Ganitha Kalika Andolana (GKA), was impelled by the dismal statistics. The folks at Akshara asked themselves, ‘How do we provide basic numeracy skills to a primary school child – before it’s too late?’ One of their solutions for 4th and 5th grade maths combines high quality teaching/ learning materials with an innovative activity-based learning pedagogy. The extensively researched Math Kit, which includes fun, colourful tools like counting boards and number grids gets a highly positive response from both children and teachers.

To guarantee sustainability, Akshara co-creates its interventions with panchayats and local bodies, and relevant government departments in both Karnataka and Odisha. Akshara hopes to be able to scale up to between 6-8 million across across 100,000 schools in these two states and others, too, by the academic year 2020–21.

Underlining Akshara’s work is a strong system of monitoring and assessments. A specially designed Android-based app called KLP Connect helps with

assessments. In 2016–17, inputs from around 200,000 community members were recorded through the app. Monitoring is done by trained locals through SMS, explains Kamath, ‘that collate reports from each school on how the programme is being implemented’. And all Akshara’s modules are shared in the Creative Commons. A brilliant example of the ‘village’ theory are the gram panchayat-funded maths contests in Karnataka ‘so that all community members become aware of the state of learning and then can arrive at a course of action to improve the levels of learning if found to be low,’ says Kamath.

HCL Grant Project Title Scale-Up of Ganitha Kalika Andolana in Rural Karnataka with Community Engagement

Beneficiaries Primary school children from government schools

Location Chitradurga, Chamrajnagar, Haveri, and Hassan districts of Karnataka



Breakthrough



Founded by Mallika Dutt in 1999

Breakthrough uses popular culture to bring violence and discrimination against women and girls into mainstream conversations and inspire action for change. It was the first organization to put domestic violence on the national agenda, and has created a very vibrant dialogue with men and boys, and the larger community. According to a study*, its activities have changed behaviours in the areas of intervention:

85 per cent of students believe that boys in their class have become more polite and respectful. There is a 30 per cent rise in the number of people agreeing that eighteen is the minimum legal age for a girl to marry. There is a 20 per cent reduction in the number of parents saying that finding a suitable match was their main responsibility towards their daughters.

Facing page *Headlining the conversation around gender imbalance*

FOR WOMEN IN INDIA, violence is sadly a way of life, ingrained into the societal set up in the form of rape, domestic abuse, and harassment, and through practices like sex determination and even early marriage. Breakthrough seeks to hack away at the underlying causes of this violence, which stem from attitudes and patriarchal frameworks. It employs unusual tools for this momentous task: the power of contemporary culture, the arts, and technology – including media and pop culture. These are tools that create dialogues and mainstream conversations on women’s issues, and bring them out from behind closed doors. It unleashes the effect of social media, animations, music videos, and video games on the youth. Theatre, music, and film are in play, helping create vivid campaigns that shake people out of their complacency, that give them the direct message that ‘human rights start with you’.

Breakthrough’s first campaign was *Mann ke Manjeere*, a music album with powerful, empowering videos. However, the most moving of its efforts has been *Bell Bajao!* which nudges bystanders to take action in cases of domestic violence... Says Sohini Bhattacharya, CEO – ‘With *Bell Bajao!*, our organization curated in-person interventions in leadership development around gender, sexuality, and human rights through innovative curriculums and trainings. The focus was on behaviour change along with our NGO’s larger, community-targeted, vibrant and integrated norm-shifting media strategy.’



Education and equality enable women to impact the socio-economic needs of their communities



Securing the community's participation is crucial to bridge the gender divide

Every high-profile media campaign, many of which have won awards, is accompanied by on-ground action in community mobilization activities, and there is deep engagement with the grassroots. Breakthrough's strategy has five prongs: creating public dialogue through media activations; developing young leaders/social actors who will make violence against women and girls unacceptable; creating community engagement; forming partnerships with schools, corporates, community based organizations, other NGOs (including UNICEF) and the government; and a strong learning/sharing model fuelled by research and dissemination. The NGO's latest campaign #askingforit aims to prevent sexual harassment in public spaces.

Breakthrough is convinced that to enable women's participation in improving socio-economic conditions of their community, programmes need to be more holistic, addressing the economic, livelihoods, health and psycho-social needs of those women and their families. This integrated approach which is implemented by Breakthrough, will give women the ability to speak up and be heard in their immediate sphere – and eventually, it can only be

good for a nation that women have a voice in its future. Bhattacharya says: 'Breakthrough focuses on advancing the human rights of women and girls by addressing the intersections of gender, violence, and sexuality. We have used domestic violence and HIV/AIDS as entry points for earlier multi-media campaigns and are now beginning to address the issues of early marriage, sex-selection and sexual harassment in public spaces to build a culture in which women's human rights thrive, enabling us all to be safe in our homes and limitless in our ambitions.'

**Studies cited
Programme Monitoring Reports for GBSS programme in Haryana Midline Survey by CMS on the Early Marriage Programme in Jharkhand and Bihar*

HCL Grant Project Title *Taaron ki Toli: A Programme to Enhance Education for Girls by Ensuring Gender Equality*
Beneficiaries Adolescent boys and girls between 11–18 years old studying in government schools
Location 120 Gram Panchayats in three districts of Jharkhand



Butterflies



Founded by Rita Panicker in 1989

Butterflies works to protect the rights of the most vulnerable citizens of India: street children. Armed with the conviction that institutionalizing them is not the answer, this organization has directly intervened in the lives of 19,224 children in a year. Its vision is of a world where every child is loved and respected, has food, clothing and shelter in a caring family environment. Also important are the access to quality education and training, health care, the right to play and leisure, a voice to speak out without fear, and a childhood free from exploitation and abuse and violence. To achieve this, it works in accord with peoples' organizations and the government to generate awareness and influence policy.

Facing page *Fostering an environment where child rights matter*

WHEN RITA PANICKER started interacting with children living on the streets of urban India, really listening to their concerns and stories, she realized that the conventional ideas of such children's welfare needed to be rethought. Along with Associate Professor P. Nangia (JNU), she conducted the first-of-its-kind 'Situational Analysis and Study of Street and Working Children in Delhi' for UNICEF in 1987. Their findings were enlightening, to say the least. The children they spoke to were found on railway platforms, under flyovers and around markets. They were in trouble with the law, or had been abandoned, and faced violence every day. They were fiercely independent. Several had run away from institutions.

Says Panicker, 'Butterflies was founded on the core belief and value that children have a right to participate in decisions related to their lives, and that we would be non-institutional in our approach. The approach would be rights-based, and our work would be guided by the Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.'

Butterflies believes in keeping children with their families or alternative care like kinship, adoption or foster care. It seeks, instead, to strengthen families and communities so they can support and care for their children. The emphasis is on facilitating children to continue their schooling, teaching them life skills, helping them get into professional courses, and being there to listen to them and mentor them. And most of all, letting them have a voice in deciding their own affairs.



A space where children can be heard without fear, where they can bring revolution into their communities



Giving street children the agency to script their own narratives

‘We owe it to children that they are given space and freedom to script their own narratives that are rooted in democratic values – equity, equality, tolerance, generosity and an exit from poverty,’ explains Panicker. If they can speak and be heard without fear, children can become powerful agents of change in their communities. Through Butterflies, children in India and seven other countries have formed Children’s Councils, a financial management co-operative called Children’s Development Khazana, and a health co-operative, which promotes preventive

health care and healthy practices. Children have a say in everything. Butterflies has also helped with the formation of Child Social Protection Committees, involving community members’ children, the local anganwadi worker, the school teacher, and the local authority.

Such experiences inspire children to new vistas, beyond their generational poverty, helping them rise above their presumed trajectories of violence and indignities. Instead, Butterflies helps them open wide the door of opportunities.

Butterflies seeks to strengthen families and communities so they can support and care for their children. The emphasis is on facilitating children to continue their schooling, teaching them life skills, helping them get into professional courses, and being there to listen to them and mentor them.

HCL Grant Project Title Transforming the lives of Island Children by Strengthening Education and Promoting Skill Development through Children’s Cooperatives
Beneficiaries Children from marginalized communities
Location Andaman and Nicobar Islands



ChildFund India



A branch of ChildFund International, founded in 1938 by J. Calvitt Clarke. India operations commenced in 1951

ChildFund India has been working with children and impoverished youth in backward regions for over six decades. Every year, it reaches over two million children, youth, and their families across 14 states and two union territories, in over 60 districts and nearly 6,000 villages through long-term interventions. It envisions a world of healthy and secure infants, educated and confident children, and skilled and involved youth – all empowered to become the change-leaders of the future. Its overall strategy is to provide a more conducive environment in terms of healthcare, education, safety, and financial stability for children, and to help families and local organizations network inside their communities for the development and protection of their young.

Facing page *Holistic support for children from birth till they are 24 years old*

THERE ARE NINETEEN LAWS IN INDIA to protect the rights of children. Yet, millions of children do not have their very basic needs met: health, education, safety, and dignity. Without these, how can they reach their full potential? How can they become the agents of change their communities need? ChildFund India focuses its long experience and community-based partnerships to ensure that deprived children receive holistic support from birth till they are 24-years old.

This support takes many forms, to deal with the multidimensional nature of what vulnerable children in India undergo. ‘The lack of material and social security exposes our children to all forms of abuse and exploitation. This most often creates an economic need that pushes children into child labour or child trafficking; parents often force them into early marriages, and hence forsake their right to education, normal growth, and recreation. As a result, these children experience both emotional and mental inadequacy, creating a generational cycle of poverty. ChildFund India’s programme strategy is designed to break this vicious cycle of poverty while addressing the root cause and issues related to it,’ says Neelam Makhijani, Country Director and CEO.

Targeting children from remote, tribal, Naxal, and hilly areas across the country, (most of whom are first generation learners), ChildFund has transformed many lives. Its initiatives keep child protection as the cornerstone while addressing



Nutrition, schooling, skills development and more for children from tribal and vulnerable homes



Community partnerships are the scaffolding for children's rights initiatives

other issues like nutrition, schooling, employability and more. In practical terms, this means access to schools, enhancing learning methodologies to suit multicultural contexts, activating the community to stop child labour and early marriage, vocational and life skill training, reproductive health awareness and much more.

Innovative interventions, often using participatory techniques of community engagement are implemented at every stage of a child's life, from maternal health and early child development (0–5 years); childhood and adolescence (6–14 years); and youth/young adults (15–24 years). Youth and child collectives, mothers' groups and community-based child protection committees have been formed and work closely with ChildFund's staff in structuring, executing, and monitoring projects. Many children and women who have been enabled by ChildFund have now become valuable resources within the organization. Collaborations with grassroots NGOs, and technology are powerful tools in ChildFund's arsenal.

ChildFund believes every child has the right to receive care, support and protection to grow up to be a healthy, educated, skilled, and confident adults; and that the well-being of children leads to the well-being of the family, community, country, and the world.

HCL Grant Project Title SMILE: Sustainable Multilingual Initiative for Learning Enhancement
Beneficiaries Children aged between 3–8 years, Anganwadi workers and teachers
Location 50 villages in Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh



Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK)



Founded by Satish Kumar, Girija Nandan, and P.N. Sharma in 1971

NBJK works in over 45 districts of Jharkhand and Bihar, with more than five lakh direct and indirect beneficiaries. Its vision is based on the values of equality, fraternity, and mutual-help. By promoting development as a liberating force for achieving social justice, economic growth and self-reliance, it strives to educate, organize, and empower the rural poor. NBJK works with disability, having supported over 26,000 persons with disability to get their disability certificates. Their eye care OPD and consultations have helped thousands of patients. Children's education, succour for homeless children, and maternal and child health are driven aggressively by the organization. NBJK has further initiatives in livelihood training for youth, food security, and sustainable agriculture.

Facing page *Shattering stereotypes to redefine girls' destinies*

THE IDEALISM OF THE YOUNG does not always die with age. In the case of a group of young engineering graduates, frustration with the injustice, poverty, and discrimination they saw in India focused their idealism and gave birth to a dedicated organization – Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) in Bihar.

For over 46 years, this NGO has been working in the areas of socio-economic development, health, education, livelihoods, disability and more. By successfully executing programmes of integrated rural development, engaging with voluntary organizations and building a rapport with government agencies, NBJK has built up trust and goodwill in the remote Naxal-infested areas of Jharkhand and the poorest regions of Bihar that it operates in. Its focus points are varied, but its commitment is singular.

Say Satish Kumar and Girija Nandan, two of the founders, 'Four of us who were highly sensitive to the causes of disparity, exploitation and poverty decided to desert our comfortable lifestyles and turn towards exploring ways to establish a "just" society. We worked on running schools, providing irrigation, safe drinking water, adult education, and other community awareness programmes.' Inspired by Jai Prakash Narayan's idea of Lok Sangharsh Samitis, NBJK works hard to strengthen community empowerment through peoples' organizations like SHG (Self-Help Groups), DPO (Disabled People Organization), youth groups, farmers' clubs, and women groups who have taken on local and group level responsibilities.



Driving education as a springboard for social justice



Football strategy can be a lesson for life

The team, equally balanced with professionals and social activists, execute their agenda through hundreds of voluntary organizations. They concentrate on development as well as advocacy initiatives. NBJK involves the community at every step, from planning, to monitoring, to sustaining the project after the intervention has run its course.

‘Building their organizations, developing their information level and local leadership can be seen in our working strategy,’ explain the founders. ‘Our active campaign, *Sharab Bandi*, has made many families happier. Irrigation projects, micro-financing, SHGs, and various other livelihood projects have brought sustainable, positive changes along with food security to struggling families. Our projects are all owned and managed by beneficiary groups,’ they say. They drive education through schools, an orphanage, 17 education centres, and a girls’ sponsorship programme.

The project NBJK has applied for is one where it seeks to increase the confidence and empowerment

of rural girls by using sports and games. The project looks at breaking stereotypes but also offers girls skills, training, and education. It indirectly impacts discriminatory practices like domestic abuse and child marriage.

All towards NBJK’s motto – ‘putting the last first’.

HCL Grant Project Title Empowering 1,800 Adolescent Girls through Games and Sports and Facilitating Education and Skill Development in two blocks

Beneficiaries School-going girls in rural areas

Location Churchu and Simaria block of Hazaribagh and Chatra district in Jharkhand



Samarthan Centre for Development Support



Founded by Dr. Yogesh Kumar in 1996

Samarthan is truly a peoples' organization. Its vision is to ensure citizens contribute meaningfully towards democracy and enjoy the benefits of equality and equity. By capacity building, generating evidence, and advocating on behalf of the most marginalized, it seeks to support equity and inclusion of unseen populations in development processes. In 2017, it motivated 20,000 families to construct toilets in Sehore, making it a public-defecation free district; it worked with 2,000 people regarding safe migration and migrant workers' rights; it supported 1,000 social audits to enhance accountability of government programmes, helping many poor families get their entitlements; in fact it helped over 60,000 poor people in remote rural areas access these benefits online.

Facing page *Using education to bring communities into the mainstream*

WHEN INDIA ENACTED the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution, the NGO Samarthan found a strong impetus for its work. Birted with the belief that peoples' participation in development and governance is crucial for any sort of sustainable progress, the award-winning Samarthan works to strengthen panchayati raj institutions and urban local bodies. Its mandate is to ensure that communities, especially of the marginalized, actively own, participate in, solve problems of, and influence mainstream development. Thus they can reap its benefits, and act as inspired instruments of socio-economic change and self-empowerment.

An unshakeable belief in participatory democracy powers every initiative of Samarthan, whether it is the Migrant Resource Centres freeing bonded labourers; or the Digital Information Centre helping a farmer complete a drought compensation claim application online to circumvent the corruption in the system. Explains Dr. Yogesh Kumar, Executive Director and Founder Trustee, 'Samarthan motivated teams to go down to the grassroots to provide support in the form of literal hand-holding to women representatives, who were from scheduled castes and tribes and were elected on reserved seats. In addition to this, voter awareness campaigns, gram sabha mobilization, participatory village planning and Right to Information (RTI) campaigns were some of our large scale capacity building initiatives.'



Encouraging participatory democracy as a tool for long-term change



Programmes focus on leadership development in every sphere

From these aspirational beginnings, Samarthan has now become a pillar of support for communities in Madhya Pradesh and beyond. Working in tandem with government systems and voluntary groups for true sustainability, the organization implements new ways of thought and action through three nodes: The Center for Social Accountability for Addressing Urban and Rural Poverty; the Center for Environment, Water, Sanitation and Community Health; and the Chattisgarh Samarthan for Participatory Development. Its programmes, whether they are in the areas of water and sanitation, health, domestic violence, migrant worker welfare or education, are designed with the panchayat at their centre and have achieved tremendous results. Local bodies are aided in developing their vision and mission, enhancing programme-management practices, leadership development and financial management, besides standing up to feudal and discriminatory forces.

Says Dr. Kumar: ‘Over the last decade, Samarthan worked to promote various tools of accountability

and transparency so that common citizens can explore meaningful ways of dialogue with the government and find joint solutions. Citizen’s report cards, community score cards, social audits, and public hearings under various rights-based programmes like Right to Employment and Right to Education are some of the examples promoted by Samarthan.’

Believing in the innate wisdom of the people to find their own solutions and access public services if they get the right support from grassroots organizations, Samarthan hopes that one day, the world will recognize the power of participatory democracy as the mightiest tool in the amelioration of the poor and disadvantaged.

HCL Grant Project Title *Majboor Kisko Bola?*

Empowering Migrants’ Children on Right to Education for Improved Quality of Life

Beneficiaries Children of migrant communities

Location Bundelkhand, Madhya Pradesh



Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)



Founded by Elaben Bhatt in 1972

Of the female labour force in India, more than 94 per cent are in the unorganized sector. SEWA brings these invisible workers into a family of member-based cooperatives, federations and companies, recognizes their work and propels them on the path to full employment. It is the largest organized movement of informal workers in the world. It strives to reverse the devaluation of women in India, giving them decision-making powers and validation as productive members of society. By organizing self-employed women, SEWA has grown to be a lifeline for thousands of women. Spread across 12 states in India and 14 districts of Gujarat, SEWA is an inspiration for community based organizations and co-operative movements worldwide.

Facing page *Radical alternatives for women working in the unorganized sector*

SEWA CELEBRATES THE invisible workforce, the informal, self-employed women of poor homes, who have no regular salaries or employment benefits. Started as a trade union by the Gandhian visionary Elaben Bhatt, SEWA is now a hub for women to come together and share their experiences, moving towards full employment and self-reliance through the strategies of 'struggle and development. The struggle is against the many constraints and limitations imposed on them by society and the economy, while development activities strengthen women's bargaining power and offer them new alternatives,' says Reemaben Nanavaty, the Director of SEWA. By organizing women into innovative structures and organizations, from the grassroots to the national level, SEWA gives them the ability to provide an income, and adequate food, healthcare, childcare, and shelter for their families.

SEWA executes a wide range of projects to promote community development through women's participation in cooperatives. SEWA organizes women, encourages them to save money at individual and community levels, and provides them with the skills to be owners and managers at the SEWA Manager *Ni* School. It has a bank for microfinance, literacy classes, and health insurance for its members. Its projects have addressed issues of agriculture, housing, alternative energy, livelihood, capacity building, and technology in the hands of the poor, including the use of mobile apps. The Surendranagar Women and Children's



Security of every kind, through the support of the collective



Instilling confidence in women to take on the world today, together

Development Mandal consists of over 65,000 women and provides services such as finance, employment support, housing services, as well as childcare.

Working in both rural and urban landscapes, SEWA uses a need-based, demand-driven model working through co-operatives to help women procure work security, income security, food security, and social security. For its members, who include street vendors, hawkers, kite makers, gum collectors, artisans, salt workers, agriculture workers, *bidi* workers, weavers, farmers and more, this 'full employment' is the means to change their lives and those of their families.

On a macro level, SEWA acts as the voice of these unrepresented women, lobbying and influencing policy for decades. It links grassroots organizations to government schemes and other larger bodies. SEWA has a research wing and is geared up for disaster relief. 'In the last four decades, SEWA has grown into family of organizations, like a banyan tree with numerous branches... Each organization is a separate branch and

each branch supports the larger organization, SEWA and its movement, contributing to the strength and beauty of the overall organization,' explains Nanavaty.

The most remarkable outcome of SEWA's work has been the confidence it has instilled in women, the respect it provides them within their communities, and the inspiration the organization has been for hundreds and thousands of collectives in India and across the world.

HCL Grant Project Title Providing Increased Livelihood Opportunities to the Youth and the Women Micro-entrepreneurs in the New Age Economy

Beneficiaries Grassroots members; small and marginal farmers; small and medium enterprise managers; self-help group members

Location Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh

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‘HCL Grant is not about awarding a CSR fund. It is an innovative step towards re-establishing the value of strong governance in the world of civil society and providing an international visibility to Indian NGOs that are doing path breaking work in the arena of rural development. It promotes sharing of best practices in the field of Environment, Health and Education – practices that are transformative in nature and work towards poverty alleviation.’

— Robin Abrams
Chairperson of the Jury



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