

A step towards Nation Building

HCLTech Grant Granule

(February–March 2025)



HCLTech Grant Edition X

HCLTech Grant Edition X is wrapping up and is preparing for the stage of Jury Review where the winners will be selected by the eminent panel of 6 jurors. The top 9 NGOs in the categories of Environment, Health and Education are currently undergoing Due Diligence and Video shoots. The governance partner is undertaking thorough background checks, review of relevant documents and discussions with the members and leadership of the organizations.

Stay tuned for The Fifth Estate - Volume IX, presenting the work of the top 30 NGOs by HCLTech Grant!



HCLTech Grant Edition X Due Diligence and Video shoots



Partnerships Bulletin

HCLTech Grant team joins the 10 year anniversary celebration of LLF

Language and Learning Foundation, the #Education category winner of HCLTech Grant 2022 celebrated its 10th anniversary on 27th February 2025. LLF is working towards the promotion of "Multilingual Education (MLE) in Bastar District of Chhattisgarh state". Honourable Minister of Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Secretary of Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar and Ex Secretary of Education Shri Vrinda Swarup were some of the dignitaries who joined the celebration from the field of Education.

Mr. Rahul Kumar, Manager and Ms. Shally Kaushal, Deputy Manager, HCLTech Grant, represented HCLFoundation at the event. Organizations including Language and Learning Foundation and Deloitte remarked that clearing the selection process of HCLTech Grant itself is a statement of credibility. The process has helped NGOs in improving their governance systems and also helped the funding agencies to comfortably support these NGOs.



Mr. Rahul and Ms. Shally at the 10th year anniversary of LLF



HCLTech Grant Impact Video Shoots

As the Edition VIII winners of HCLTech Grant complete 2 years of journey with HCLFoundation, the team visited all three organizations in the categories of Health, Education and Environment to capture the impact.

Combating TB in Rural Bihar with IIH India

The project impact of Innovators in Health (India), the Health category winner of HCLTech Grant was captured through a video shoot in Dalsinghsarai in Bihar. IIH India is working towards decreasing the incidence of TB cases in long term and reducing the mortality among TB patients residing in Rural Bihar through the project, "Universal Tuberculosis Care through Active Case Finding and Treatment Support in Rural Bihar". The video team visited the project site on 17th and 18th of February 2025. In the last two years, owing to the extensive advocacy efforts by the IIH (India) team, 18 NAAT sites were made functional in the Samastipur district, that had only 2 functional NAAT sites in the year 2023. TB screening among females was increased to bridge the gender gap in TB diagnosis and treatment, ensuring equitable healthcare access. TB Case notification has also seen an increase by 19% as compared to the previous year.



Impact Video Shoot at Dalsinghsarai, Bihar, Innovators in Health India

Preserving Heritage in Sikkim with Meghshala Trust

Meghshala Trust, the #Education category winner of HCLTech Grant Edition VIII has been working towards the project, "Technology- Enabled Teacher Capacity Building – A Case for the State of Sikkim" and has been instrumental in revitalizing indigenous languages in the region. A video shoot focused on capturing the integration of indigenous language curricula in government schools, the rich cultural heritage of the area, and the voices of local communities was carried out on 26th & 27th February 2025. Dr. Ushas George, Program Officer, HCLTech Grant, traveled along with the video production team to the picturesque Namchi district of Sikkim to document the profound influence of Meghshala Trust's work, showcasing educators and students who are preserving linguistic traditions while shaping the future of education.



Impact Video shoot at Namchi, Sikkim, Meghshala Trust

Witnessing Environmental Solutions with PlanatEarth

The Project "Recover and Recycle Plastic from Ocean and Protect Water Bodies from Water Hyacinth Infestation by Manufacturing Briquettes – Drive to Recover Ocean Plastic (DROP)", executed by the Environment category winner – PlanatEarth in 4 districts of Kerala was captured by HCLTech Grant. The video shoot was carried out in the districts – Ernakulam and Alappuzha of Kerala from 9th to 11th March 2025. The project has been successful in raising awareness among the local community by engaging with them. Over 2,60,715kg of plastic waste has been recovered and processed from coastal panchayats and both coastal and inland water bodies. 2,43,377 kg of Water Hyacinth has been removed, clearing canal stretches and improving water flow and aquatic biodiversity, covering an area of ~5,30,020 sq ft. The organization has implemented sustainable and effective solutions and infrastructure in the Pallipuram Panchayat, that have also been shared as models for replication along Kerala's coast and backwater regions.



Impact video shoot at Cochin, Kerala, PlanatEarth

Capturing the on-ground Impact of PRADAN's work in the West

A two-day visit was conducted at the project site of PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action), the 2022 HCLTech Grant recipient in the #Environment category, working in Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram district of West Bengal towards biodiversity treatment. The organization is working towards the project – "RESPONSE - Restoring Eco-System by Promoting Nature Sensitive Endeavor". Mr. Rahul Singh, Manager, Mr. Ankit Kumar, Manager, and Mr. Shyam Sundar B, Associate Manager, from HCLFoundation visited the project sites on 20th and 21st of March 2025. The focus of the visit was to understand the type of rainwater harvesting structures created under the project. These water bodies include Wells and Small Ponds also known as Happa. These serve not only as rainwater harvesting structures, but also ensure better livelihood opportunities for the local tribal communities who are primarily dependent upon NTFP collection. This project is also quite helpful in reducing local migration and increasing average family income of these households.



Mr. Rahul, Mr. Ankit and Mr. Shyam Sundar visiting the project site of PRADAN

Strengthening NGO Leadership for Effective CSR Management

To capacitate the second line of leadership of the NGO Partners and the team members of HCLFoundation over Effective CSR Management, a two-day residential training program was organized by HCLFoundation in collaboration with IIM Calcutta. The focus of the course was towards increasing the capacity and understanding of the leaders working in the CSR space. The batch V of the training programme "Effective CSR Management for Higher Social Impact" was conducted on 24th and 25th March 2025 with 22 participants enrolled in the course from the HCLFoundation team and NGOs across the country.



Participants from the fifth batch of Effective CSR Management for Higher Social Impact at IIM Calcutta

Mrs. Rajitha N. receives the Shikshagraha Award

Mrs. Rajitha N, one of the anganawadi supervisors at Heggadadevanakote, working with the 2024 HCLTech Grant #Education category winner - Makkala Jagriti, received the prestigious national Shikshagraha Award, at InvokED on 7th February 2025, instituted by The Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives for her preschool education work in tribal region. The award celebrates leaders who go above and beyond their roles to build an equitable and inclusive education ecosystem. Shikshagraha believes that every step toward education equity deserves to be celebrated—especially the often-unsung leaders who turn vision into reality.

These awards are more than just recognition; they aim to amplify stories of courage and inspire action across the movement toward education equity.

The awards were presented at InvokED 4.0 on 7th February 2025 at Bangalore, an annual global dialogue on education leadership where experts, educators, and changemakers came together to build the movement for education equity.



Mrs. Rajitha N, anganwadi supervisor receiving the Shikshagraha Award

Stories of Transformation

Environment



From homemaker to community changemaker



In the remote village of Purbasridharpur, where opportunities for women were once scarce, Saraswati Halder's story stands as a testament to resilience and transformation. A dedicated housewife and mother of two, Saraswati faced immense challenges in securing a stable livelihood. Her husband, a carpenter, often had to work away from home, leaving Saraswati to manage both household responsibilities and the future of their children—her daughter, a Class VII student, and her son, in Class IX.

Financial uncertainty loomed over her family, but Saraswati refused to accept her circumstances as fate. When she learned about a community initiative run by Mukti, supported by the HCL Tech Grant, she saw a glimmer of

hope. Determined to change her family's future, she joined the program, which focused on environmental conservation and livelihood enhancement for rural women.

As part of this initiative, Saraswati actively engaged in watering and maintaining the trees planted along the river embankment system. This effort was crucial in protecting the village from soil erosion and the adverse effects of climate change. With each tree she nurtured, she also cultivated her confidence, discovering a newfound sense of purpose beyond her household duties. The initiative not only provided her with a sustainable income but also ensured she received essential dry ration support every month. This eased the financial burden on her family, allowing her children to continue their education without interruption. More than just a source of livelihood, the project became a platform for Saraswati to redefine her identity. From being a woman struggling to make ends meet, she transformed into an active contributor to her community's resilience. Saraswati's story is not just about financial stability—it's about dignity, self-reliance, and the profound impact of community-driven change.

"Banrai" – A New Direction for Employment and Self-Reliance

Many villages in Akole Taluka have received forest rights claims with the help of the Lokpanchayat organization. However, no village had undertaken any work in this regard until now. In 2024, with the support of Lokpanchayat and HCL Foundation, the Climate Action for Community Forest Management project was launched in the villages of Lavhali Otur and Kothale. As part of this project, the CFR (Community Forest Rights) committees were reorganized and their monthly meetings were initiated. From these meetings, with the aim of generating employment, youth groups were formed in both villages and a president and a secretary were elected for the group. The youth in these villages face serious employment challenges. Many migrate or rely on seasonal wage labor. Lokpanchayat recognized this as an opportunity to utilize local natural resources and forest produce to generate employment.

With the objective to organize village youth and make them self-reliant, the Banrai Youth Group was established. Through this group, the youth took steps toward starting their own business. The youth were trained in business skills, stall management, and financial planning.

It was decided to establish forest produce-based sales centers (NTFP stalls) in the villages for these youth. The group corresponded with the forest department to secure space for their stall and sell products derived from local forest resources including products like Hirda, behda, honey, vavding, rice, etc.

The journey of the Banrai Youth Group not only creates employment but also addresses the problem of migration, builds sustainable livelihoods, and promotes the responsible use of local resources. This model has the potential to become a source of inspiration for many villages.



Inauguration of the NTFP stall by Banrai Youth Group, Ahmednagar, Lokpanchayat



Preparing young Educators

Chhamila, an adolescent girl from Vishrampur has emerged as a beacon of awareness and change for Menstrual Hygiene. She has been an active participant of the Menstrual Hygiene Management programme, executed by Social Revival Groups of Urban, Rural and Tribal (SROUT) in collaboration with HCLTech Grant. From the very beginning, she remained consistently engaged and committed. Through this program, Chhamila has fully absorbed and understood all the essential information related to menstrual health and hygiene.

Today, Chhamila doesn't just attend sessions—she leads them. She has led 05 para meetings with local women health workers (Mitansins) and adolescent girls, sharing everything she has learned with clarity, confidence, and compassion, including the importance of personal and menstrual hygiene, eating nutritious vegetables and greens (bhaji-pala) to maintain strength and energy, letting go of shame or embarrassment associated with menstruation.

What makes her truly special is her dedication to educating less literate adolescent girls in her community. She explains complex ideas in simple language, ensuring no girl feels left behind or confused. Chhamila Manjwar has proven that you don't need age or authority to make a difference—just courage, knowledge, and heart. What once was a subject wrapped in silence and stigma, is now openly discussed—thanks to her unwavering dedication.



Strengthening ground level healthcare administrators

"Now the community trusts us. They say, 'Why go to town when we get treatment here?'" says Ms. Florence, a dedicated Community Health Officer posted in Chedema Village, Nagaland. The ECHO CPHC training has refreshed and deepened her clinical knowledge, polished her skills in patient-counselling which has led her to confidently manage medical emergencies/cases in the community.

Additionally, the flexibility to attend virtual sessions from anywhere, be it the health sub-center or her home allows Florence to continue learning without interrupting her daily responsibilities—making the process more consistent and effective over time.

With each session, Florence deepened her understanding of patient needs, and the community noticed. Her ability to listen, explain, and guide with empathy has built lasting trust—turning her sub-center into a place of healing and hope.



A Shift in Mindset, A Rise in Attendance

At Udburu Anganwadi, attendance was critically low due to a lack of teacher engagement. Despite 15 years of experience, Mahadevamma was initially unmotivated and doubtful about change. Through consistent encouragement, she recognized her role's impact and gradually transformed her approach. She collaborated with peers to create learning materials and actively brought children to the center. Her dedication led to a rise in attendance from two to eight children. Mahadevamma's journey highlights how patience and motivation can empower educators, fostering a nurturing learning environment for young children.



The Power of Language

Salemata is a small village about 45 kilometers from the Bastar block headquarters. A young girl named Komal (name changed) lives here with her parents and younger sister. Her father works in brick making, and the family often moves to different places for work. When Komal turned six, her father enrolled her in the village school, which was very different from what she was used to. At home, she played freely and roamed with her parents. In school, she had to sit in one place, listen to the teacher, and follow a routine. This was difficult for her. She became quiet, was scared of the teacher, and did not talk to other children. She didn't enjoy school at all and even cried many times. Sometimes her mother brought her to school, but as soon as she left, Komal would cry and run back home.

One day, when her mother stayed in the classroom for a while, something special happened. The teacher, Mr. Netam, began the class with a song in Halbi – Komal's home language. It was a song she had heard before, and she started singing softly. Then the teacher told a story in Halbi, and all the children listened happily. After the story, they were asked to draw pictures. Komal also drew one. The teacher came to her, praised her drawing, and asked the class to clap for her. She smiled.

Next, the teacher did a fun sound game where the children had to close their eyes and guess the sounds around them – dogs, birds, fans, wind, and vehicles. When the bell rang, Komal was surprised to find her mother had already gone. She had been so involved in the activities that she didn't even notice!

That day, for the first time, she stayed in school the whole day. She completed her workbook, played with her friends, and talked to them too. The next day, the teacher again started with a Halbi song and story. Komal now felt comfortable and happy in school. Speaking in her own language helped her overcome fear and enjoy learning.

Her teacher, Mr. Netam, shared, "Since she started coming regularly, Komal has learned very fast. She can now read over 70 words per minute and does her work on time. Teaching in the child's language in early classes removes fear and makes learning easy and joyful."

Komal's story shows how using a child's home language in school can change everything. When children feel understood and safe, they learn better and begin to love school.

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For any query contact:

Anisha B Chacko: anisha.bchacko@hcltech.com

Website : www.hclfoundation.org