

Stories of Change

2018-19



Stories of Change: Case Study Challenge

Azim Premji University

Modern India has a history of a vibrant and active social sector. Many local development organisations, community organizations, social movements and non-governmental organisations populate the space of social action. Such organisations imagine a different future and plan and implement social interventions at different scales, many of which have lasting impact on the lives of people and society. However their efforts and, more important, their learnings from these initiatives remain largely unknown not only in the public sphere but also the worlds of 'development practice' and 'development education'. This shortfall impedes the process of learning and growth across interventions, organizations and time.

While most social sector organizations acknowledge this deficiency in documentation and knowledge creation, they find themselves strapped for time and motivation to embark on such efforts. As a result, their writing is usually limited to documentation captured in grant proposals or project updates or 'good practices' literature with inadequate focus on capturing the boundaries and limitations of action. Writing with a sense of reflection and self-analysis which goes beyond mere documentation and creates a platform for learning requires time and space.

Recognizing this need, Azim Premji University launched 'Stories of Change: Case Study Challenge' with the objective of encouraging social sector organisations to invest in developing a deeper knowledge base for the sector. We are delighted to report that in the inaugural year of this challenge we received 95 cases, covering a range of interventions from education, sustainability, livelihoods, preservation of culture and community health. The target groups ranged from adivasis, small farmers, children, women, youth and differently abled persons, among others. Through a two-stage evaluation process, the university has selected 3 winners and 3 special mentions for the 2018-19 Stories of Change Challenge. In addition, we have selected 4 additional submissions, which together with the cited winners, will appear in a jointly published compendium.

We hope that educators and practitioners alike find these stories valuable in their teaching and action from influencing policy, to building capacity of practitioners, documenting good practices for future learners, providing space to practitioners in teaching, collaborative research and even incubation of new ideas for social change.

For more details, please write to case.study@apu.edu.in

1. Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad

Radio of the jungle, Dang district, Gujarat

Raan Rede, literally translated as “Radio of the Jungle”, was an effort by Centre for Social Justice at building a symbiotic relationship between a Community Radio and a robust socio-legal intervention. The intervention encompassed the entire spectrum of action, from awareness-generation, to addressing issues arising from within the community, to providing a follow-up mechanism for redressing rights violations. It thus developed a mechanism not solely for legal awareness building – the domain of Community Radio per se – but followed it up with a strong response strategy involving the local law centre, Kanooni Salah Kendra – this forming an integral part of Raan Rede’s theory of change. Being communally owned, and operated by an all-Adivasi team, Raan Rede established a novel legal intervention strategy symbiotically combining legal action-research along with a strong cultural rejuvenation and empowerment.

Started in the Dang district of Gujarat first in 2006-07 and then again in 2011, it remains a unique Community Radio initiative that was backed by CSJ’s law centre in Ahwa, Dang (Kanooni Salah Kendra). At its peak, Raan Rede had a listenership of over one lakh people, reaching over 400 villages. This included all the 311 villages in Dang, along with several villages in bordering districts. Across the border in the state of Maharashtra, villages bordering Dang also received these broadcasts and because they all spoke the same language, the transformative message of Raan Rede reached them as well.

Raan Rede’s impact on the community have continued long after the program’s termination, and to this day, it provides a model for effective use of media within a larger socio-legal intervention.



2. Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT) and OBGYN Department, Government Medical College, Aurangabad

Integrating gender in medical education and clinical practice, Aurangabad, Maharashtra

Despite the role of social determinants in health care being well established, neither medical education nor public health services in India have taken cognizance of it. This non-recognition has led to several biases in the dispensing of treatment and care to patients, especially those who are marginalised. Scholars have critiqued the field of medicine as being gender-blind and male-biased because the body of medical knowledge views the male body as the norm, with men's experiences forming the basis for describing signs and symptoms of illness. CEHAT in collaboration with Directorate of Medical Education and Research (DMER) and Maharashtra University of Health Sciences (MUHS) undertook a research project on integrating gender in medical education in MBBS curriculum in Maharashtra. The project was conceptualised so as to integrate gender in medical teaching by building capacities of medical educators.

Medical educators in Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBGYN) of Government Medical College of Aurangabad to create gender sensitive practices in patient management and incorporation of gender sensitive attitudes amongst doctors of all levels including professors, lecturers, residents and interns. This included renaming the "Family Planning" Department to "Comprehensive Contraceptive Services for All", introducing the concept of respectful maternity care, establishing medico legal care for survivors of sexual violence and integrating first-line care for pregnant women facing violence.

The initiative is remarkable in its ability to bring about radical changes in the deep-seated biases embedded in medical education and practice. The initiative not only improved patient-provider relationships but also led to positive health experiences and outcomes for users of these services.



3. Empowering Women in IT (eWIT), Trivandrum

Child Care Hub as a Change agent

Child Care Hub is a social inclusion project run by eWIT, a not-for-profit networking group for empowering women in IT and ITeS. It was a public private partnership program between IT industry and Kudumbashree, the grass-root level enabling program for women by the Govt. of Kerala.

This project has brought women from two strata of the society together to enable and empower each another. A day care center is a pressing need for young mothers in the tech-world to enable them pursue their career post maternity by achieving better work life balance. By encouraging and supporting local marginalized women to establish a day care centre, it offers them a more secure work opportunities. This pilot was successfully run as a self-sustainable profit center and is replicable in communities across the country. The key for success lies in running this as a public private partnership program with community intervention as a not-for-profit venture for social inclusion. This connects the dots of social security, women's livelihoods and child welfare across multiple strata of society.



4. PRADAN, New Delhi

Collaborative learning unleashing sustainable transformative development, Purulia, West Bengal

Churinsoro is a village under Ayodhya panchayat of Baghmundi block, Purulia district, in West Bengal. It is one of the most remote and under-developed areas of West Bengal. The people living here are homogenous tribal groups—Santhals. They maintain exclusive identities. For them, earning a livelihood involves back-breaking physical labour with low returns. Women suffer the most, their identity being that of a labourer, regardless of whether they work in their own fields or on others’.

Considering the complicated context, the need to develop a scalable, context-appropriate model, ensuring sustainable changes for the community, their water security and their resilience to climate change was developed. A research project was designed aimed at improving farmer livelihoods—especially of women—by helping them develop flexible and responsive cropping systems that made better use of available water resources. This project was collaboration between PRADAN, ACIAR, ACWADAM and AVRDC and the community, making it transdisciplinary. The project was designed for both research and development outcomes. A unique, farmer-focused research methodology and social learning theories were applied. Women farmers collectivised into SHGs were involved in everything - identifying and developing research questions and implementing experimental treatment in farmers’ fields, helping interpret results and communicating them to other farmers.



5. The Working Group of Women for Land Ownership (WGWLO), Gujarat Swa Bhoomi Kendra, multiple locations, Gujarat

Swa – Bhumi Kendra at Gujarat

WGWLO is a network of organizations committed to sustained grassroots action and policy advocacy around the issue of women's land rights, to enable women's access and ownership of land and other productive resources by establishing Swa Bhoomi Kendras at the block level. The core work of Swa Bhoom Kendras involves creating awareness about issues of women's land ownership, women's identity as 'farmers' and importance of access to productive resources. These Kendras are run collectively by para-legal workers trained by WGWLO members.

The Swa Bhoomi Kendras help guide women for gaining land rights, accessing productive resources by helping preparing their documents, meeting their family members and taking up matters with relevant block revenue and agriculture officials. So far, the Swa Bhoomi Kendras have reached out to more than 20,000 women, enabled 8000 women to gain land ownership, enabled more than 7000 women to get trained by government agriculture training organizations and enabled more than 7000 women farmers to claim productivity-enhancement related entitlements from the government.

Three out of the 15 Swa Bhoomi Kendras being run by WGWLO partners have been running for more than five years. The case study establishes the importance and impact of having an institutional mechanism like the Swa Bhoomi Kendras with a specific purpose of augmenting livelihoods of millions of women farmers of India by ensuring women's land ownership, enabling their access to productive resources and motivating them to shift to sustainable agricultural practices.



6. Foundation for Education, Ecology and Livelihood, Bangalore

Kaigal Education and Environment program, Chittoor

The Kaigal Education and Environment Program is an integrated intervention which combines education, conservation and sustainable livelihoods, rooted in social-ecological principles. The program works in Chittoor district, along the fringes of the Kaundinya Wildlife Sanctuary. The communities here are marginalized mixed communities; many being scheduled castes/ tribes. The program had its beginnings in the early 2000s, when a team of teachers from The Valley School and scientists went to the area to document local biodiversity. This team documented the biodiversity, built a germ plasm bank and attempted to educate the community about these topics. However, the words of two community elders asking the team to do something for their children affirmed the belief of the core team that there is a need for a deeper engagement with the community, for building mutually sustaining relationships between the forests and the human being for developing ecologically restorative and sustainable development paradigms. The intervention at Kaigal was thus conceptualized in 2008, in a three pronged manner – a) education that is contextual to the community, b) conservation that is anchored by the community and, c) livelihoods that can support, protect and nourish the local ecology by strengthening the communities.



7. People's Science Institute, Dehradun

Fluorosis mitigation through community based safe drinking water supply, Dhar, Madhya Pradesh

Dhar district is one of the most fluoride affected tribal regions of Madhya Pradesh. In several parts of Dhar, the deeper sources of groundwater, viz. the handpumps and tubewells, have fluoride levels much higher than the permissible limit of 1.5 mg/l prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards, GoI. The consumption of fluoride contaminated water results in severe physical deformities in the form of dental and skeletal fluorosis and impedes physical growth in children. It affects livelihoods and socio-economic conditions of the people. There is no treatment for fluorosis. However, the disease can be prevented by consuming fluoride safe water. Interventions such as handpump-based defluoridation units have been largely unsuccessful in this region due to difficulty in operation and maintenance.

Peoples' Science Institute (PSI) has successfully implemented community based safe drinking water supply systems in thirteen villages of Dhar during 2013-18. The interventions were based on hydrogeological studies, groundwater and urinary fluoride monitoring, identification of fluoride-safe water supply systems, building awareness on fluorosis, health & hygiene and developing village level institutions for operation and maintenance of the water system. Health camps and material support was arranged by the local administration. The major outcomes were increased availability of fluoride-safe drinking water benefitting more than 7000 people, sharing of water resources within and between the villages and development of a methodology that can be replicated in other fluorosis affected areas. The impacts were positive in terms of health improvements, reduction in drudgery of women and children for collecting safe drinking water, behavioural changes for improved cleanliness and personal hygiene.

PSI now plans to extend its work to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach for groundwater recharging and source sustainability in the villages. The initiative has set a successful example of decentralized management of groundwater resources without the use of any defluoridation or filtration units and promises a sustainable and cost effective approach for fluorosis prevention.



8. *Sahjeevan Trust, Bhuj*

Intervention on community of pastoral people in Banni, Kutch, Gujarat

The pastoral people of Banni have faced many serious challenges since Independence, such as, loss of access to grazing lands, marketing of pastoral produce, and not being recognized as practitioners of an occupation that is both economically and ecologically valuable. A firm belief in traditional governance systems and ethos of the practice has helped the communities tide over such problems for some time.

Their troubles came to a head in 2008. The age-old system of generating food and other resources with an ephemeral carbon footprint was at a serious risk of survival. All indications pointed towards the demise of this practice, as has been the case with many other such production systems across the country. But a handful of the elderly pastoralists rose to the occasion and decided to organize themselves into a collective and challenge the seemingly inevitable downward spiral.

These elders organized their fellow pastoralists into a community based organisation (CBO) and guided the CBO in developing a milk economy. They documented the bio-cultural protocol of the community, formalised governance systems, initiated a process to gain formal rights over their traditional grazing lands, and started regenerating grasslands taken over by the invasive *Prosopis Juliflora*. Some of these activities have met with unexpected success and continue to inspire pastoral communities across the country, while the others are still in the process of negotiating obstacles.

This case study speaks about the actions of these pastoralists and documents the trials, triumphs and tribulations during the journey. More importantly this case study documents how a handful of determined women and men, convinced by their traditional wisdom, can turn tables and work wonders.



9. Humana People to People India, New Delhi

The Kadam Step-Up Programme, multiple states

According to the latest government figures, the number of out-of-school children in India is more than 6 million. While the government, both at the Centre and State levels, is committed to bringing these children into the formal system of education, many barriers have hindered a successful outcome. To address this, Humana People to People India (HPPI) inceptioned the Kadam Step-Up Programme to bring such children, who had either never been to schools or had dropped out, back into the schools with sustainable learning outcomes.

The Kadam programme was piloted in 2015 in Madhya Pradesh and was scaled up in Haryana in 2015-16. It is presently being implemented in the states of Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and will be rolled-out in Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand soon. The operational model of Kadam is for achieving scale by leveraging the Universal Education Missions in the States and, hence, has been built to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the State programmes. Its activities include identifying out-of-school children in the age group of 7-11 years through need assessment and survey, enrolling them in Kadam centres to provide accelerated learning to bridge learning gaps, subsequently placing them in age-appropriate grades and following-up on their retention in schools for the following six months. The programme is built on a foundational platform of engaging pedagogy, and targeted curriculum and teaching practices.

In the next 5-6 years, HPPI, through the Kadam programme, aims to create enough impact to move States and teachers to adopt methodologies and practices that enable children to learn 'how to learn with responsibility' and to construct knowledge in a natural progression, truly in line with the spirit of the National Curriculum Framework.



10. Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), Mumbai

Youth collective: A promising torchbearer of change, Mumbai, Maharashtra

As per a recent UN report, India is home to the world's largest youth population, numbering 356 million 10–24 year-olds. A young demography offers innumerable opportunities as well as challenges for the country, depending on access to opportunities and conditions of living experienced by the youth. For a large share of the youth, especially those living in marginalised communities in high-density bastis with scarce resources and abysmal development standards, the struggle for survival often makes it difficult to imagine a better tomorrow.

The case study highlights how a local urban youth collective, the Malvani Yuva Parishad, from the city's north-western suburbs of Malvani (Ambujwadi, Malad) has worked towards the assertion of young people's citizenship and undertaken action at different levels, ranging from the individual level, to the family-unit, community, society, city and beyond.

The case study highlights the unique local context and its many challenges, such as the way in which the local neighbourhood and its youth are popularly imagined and represented in the mainstream, and the efforts towards strengthening the youth and building their capacities to facilitate their collectivisation and active engagement towards social transformation. Over time, the youth have become more confident and assertive about their rights. Adolescent girls who were previously only restricted to within the four walls of their home have developed confidence to step outside and inspired others to join the collective and drive change. The youth collective is actively engaged in co-creating democratic, participatory and inclusive spaces with support from one another, and have forged solidarities and networks across the city and beyond. Youth from these collectives have also shared their concerns and experiences at the state, national and international levels.



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