

GROW+ Jodhpur Convening

2025-2026



At a Glance

Thirty-four network partners. Four landscape Anchors. Two days that moved from honest reflection to a shared sense of purpose.

The second GROW+ convening brought 34 civil-society partners from the Desert Landscape and the Peninsular Plateau into one room, Anchored respectively by Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) and Partnering Hope into Action (PHIA) Foundation, alongside the network's two newest Anchors, Seven Sisters Development Assistance (SeSTA) from the Himalayan Mountains and Jan Sahas from the Northern Plains, who came to experience the format before running their own. EdelGive Foundation and Social Lens joined for the second day. More than 80 people, in total, sat through the two days.

The first day belonged entirely to the NGO partners in the room: three linked Baithak sessions that asked partners to say plainly what communities are actually living through, where an organisation's own programme design quietly stops matching that reality, and what each partner can offer a peer organisation who is stuck. The second day changed gear: a morning of financial reporting with Aria Advisory, the launch of the GROW+ HUB learning platform, updates from both established pyramids, an open conversation with EdelGive's CEO, and a closing plenary marked by candid exchanges and valuable insights.

Background and Objectives

GROW+ runs on the pyramid model where an established Anchor organisation such as GRAVIS for the Desert Landscape and PHIA Foundation for the Peninsular Plateau, connects a cohort of grassroots partners working across climate-vulnerable geography. Jodhpur in Rajasthan was the network's second convening, following Ranchi in Jharkhand in February 2026, and it doubled as a milestone with the formal onboarding of two new Anchors, SeSTA for the Himalayan Mountains and Jan Sahas for the Northern Plains, into the shared GROW+ ecosystem.



Objectives

To bring together GROW+ Pyramids for the following:

- Generate collective reflection on programme realities, climate impacts, and organisational responses.
- Look at their GROW+ journey so far and share collective updates.
- Deliver in-person capacity-building session.
- Baithak discussions to surface what communities are going through, where results differ from plans, and what needs to change in organisational systems.
- Newly onboarded Pyramid 3 and 4 Anchors experience the convening format and are brought into this shared way of working.

The sequencing carried deliberate logic and reflection before response. By the time the finance session opened on Day Two, the room had already spent a full day naming exactly the pressures that make financial discipline non-negotiable in this work: droughts that force a mid-year re-budget, migration that scatters staff mid-project, donor cycles that rarely move at the speed of a climate shock.

Carrying the Thread from Ranchi

Jodhpur opened by picking up where Ranchi had left off. Ms. Leena Chauhan of GRAVIS recapped February's outcomes for the room: partners had first mapped landscape-level disruption- erratic rainfall, groundwater depletion, migration, weakening traditional institutions and rising debt- alongside organisational strain of a more internal kind: short-term funding, thin documentation and digital systems, staff attrition and compliance pressure that never quite lets up. Ranchi had also surfaced what the network could already draw on: deep grassroots presence, women's leadership, hard-won climate-programming experience, and an early sense of where partners could converge- water restoration, resilient agriculture and collective action.

Jodhpur convening's idea was to go further: deepen that understanding, document what adaptive practice actually looks like on the ground and name the organisational changes that resilience will actually require.



The Anchor Organisations, GRAVIS and PHIA, introduced a paperless, tech-enabled participant experience, with registration managed through QR codes and digital access provided to agendas, pre-reads, and expectation-mapping forms at each table. Happy and familiar faces started pouring inside the room and taking seats as per the bio regions.

An energiser followed that grouped people by how far their home was from Jodhpur, breaking the ice and quietly mixing the two landscapes before the formal sessions even began. Partners then formed two rotating circles, PHIA on the inside and GRAVIS on the outside, moving in opposite directions to introduce themselves in pairs and trade updates from the last five or six months- a warm-up act that turned out to preview the entire day's real work.

Expectation Mapping

Ahead of the formal sessions, Ms. Archana Toppo ran a live poll on two questions: what people hoped to get out of the two days, and which of their own initiatives from recent months they were proudest of. Based on the responses, five themes dominated the wish list, climate knowledge and action chief among them, followed by peer learning across the two landscapes, organisational development, clarity on the GROW+ roadmap itself, and stronger monitoring and evidence systems.





Participant interaction and engagement during Day 1

Partners were just as ready to talk about what they had already built. The two landscapes showed distinct emphases- the Desert Landscape leaning into direct community awareness and adaptation and the Peninsular Plateau leaning into institutional and biodiversity infrastructure though the same underlying balance surfaced in both: community resilience and organisational resilience advancing together, not in sequence.

Partners shared diverse initiatives reflecting both community-level climate resilience and organisational strengthening.



Desert Landscape

Partners focused on community awareness and adaptation practices.

- Partners conducted climate change awareness campaigns in project villages, engaging adolescents and community members on issues such as water scarcity, rising temperatures, and irregular rainfall.
- Community-led experiments in mixed farming, organic cultivation, and vermicomposting were initiated with farmers, alongside farmer schools and youth training.
- Organisations also strengthened internal systems through social media engagement, website audits, and policy development workshops.

Peninsular Plateau

Partners emphasized institutional development and biodiversity conservation.

- Partners revisited Human Resources (HR), Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH), and Child Protection Committee (CPC) policies, developed climate-led micro-planning models, and initiated a carbon credit project.
- A partner prepared Village Biodiversity Registers (BRs) across six Gram Panchayats, documenting local biodiversity and climate-related changes, thereby strengthening community participation in resilience planning.
- Other organisations advanced Management Information System (MIS) software development, website redesigns, and strategic documents to improve transparency and organisational efficiency.
- Community climate fellowships for women were launched, linking gender and climate adaptation through the pillars of Organise, Learn, Act, and Celebrate.



Across both landscapes, partners demonstrated how GROW+ project is enabling community and organizational resilience.

- Community resilience through awareness, sustainable farming, biodiversity registers, and fellowships.
- Organisational resilience through audits, policy reforms, MIS strengthening, and strategic planning.
- From projects to systems: Partners are investing in organisational systems, leadership and governance alongside programme implementation.
- From isolated interventions to landscape approaches: Climate action is being integrated with biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and resilient livelihoods.
- From individual organisations to a learning ecosystem: Organisations are increasingly collaborating, sharing knowledge and co-creating solutions rather than working independently.

This showcases a balance between grassroots climate action and institutional capacity building marking a significant step forward in embedding resilience within both communities and organisations.



The Baithak: Reflections and Insights

“Baithak” — a gathering for conversation is the network’s name for its closed-door reflection format. In Jodhpur, it ran as one continuous reflection in three movements: communities, then organisations and then what partners can offer each other. Designed as participatory dialogues, the Baithak moved beyond numbers to uncover lived experiences, hidden costs, and adaptation practices across landscapes.

Community-in-Place: Daily Trade-offs

Each division was asked the same five questions: what people already do to cope, what’s changed beyond the obvious, what an outsider would miss, what trade-offs communities are forced into, and where the pressure is worse. The specifics varied by geography- mining in Ajmer, quarry labour and silicosis in rural Jodhpur, a summer water-walk in Santhal Pargana- but the shape underneath was the same everywhere: coping that looks more like constraint than choice, costs invisible from outside (unpaid work by women, quiet exclusion, hidden debt), and trade-offs that are rarely dramatic in the telling and always serious underneath. Water, migration and the debt that follows both cut across nearly every division.

Eleven Bioregions, One Set of Pressures

One speaker per division carried their group’s conversation to the full room, moderated by Mr. Johnson Topno. The geography changed from speaker to speaker; the underlying pressure didn’t. Climate stress travels through water, land, forests, wage work, migration, nutrition and health all at once, and seasonal migration is now the default response nearly everywhere, disrupting schooling and pushing workers into unsafe, informal labour with no real safety net underneath. Communities lean hard on Gram Sabhas, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and traditional knowledge to fill the gaps of governance.





Speakers representing different regions during the Fishbowl session.

“In Madhiya village of Manatu, Palamu district, 132 out of 140 households used to migrate every year. This time they unanimously decided to switch to maize cultivation and harvest rainwater instead, rejuvenating a community water structure and taking up afforestation. The seed-ball campaign mobilised 55 other villages, with women joining to prepare the seed balls.”

— Mr. Mrityunjay Ratnakar, Mahila Samagra Utthan Samiti (MSUS)

Mr. Johnson Topno closed discussion by naming five words that kept resurfacing across every bioregion — *jal, jangal, zameen, swasthya, swashasan*: water, forest, land, health and self-governance and one governance gap sitting underneath all of them: resilience can’t be built by communities alone.



Organisation-in-Place: Programme Truths

The room opened this session by acknowledging Mr. Laxman Singh Lapodiya, Padma Shri awardee for water conservation and Secretary of network partner Gram Vikas Navyuwak Mandal, Laporiya (GVNML), before turning to a harder question: where does an organisation's own programme design quietly stop matching community reality?

"Ecological restoration in commons through traditional methods like the chauka system can significantly support climate-change adaptation."

— Mr. Laxman Singh Lapodiya, GVNML, Padma Shri Awardee



Gaps identified and adaptations needed, as charted live by participants.

The second Baithak turned the lens inward: **if community realities are this interconnected, are programmes designed to match them?**



The answer was uncomfortable but productive. Participants recognised that programmes can sometimes be shaped more by donor structures and administrative convenience than by how people actually live. A training assumes people can attend. An entitlement assumes they have the right documents. A livelihood intervention assumes water, time or market access exists. And a log frame may record outputs while missing caste stigma, unpaid care work or chronic stress altogether.

This led to an important shift in the conversation: **the question was no longer only how communities need to adapt to climate change, but how organisations themselves need to adapt.**

The discussion therefore moved from diagnosis to commitment. Partners identified seven shifts they wanted to carry back into their organisations:

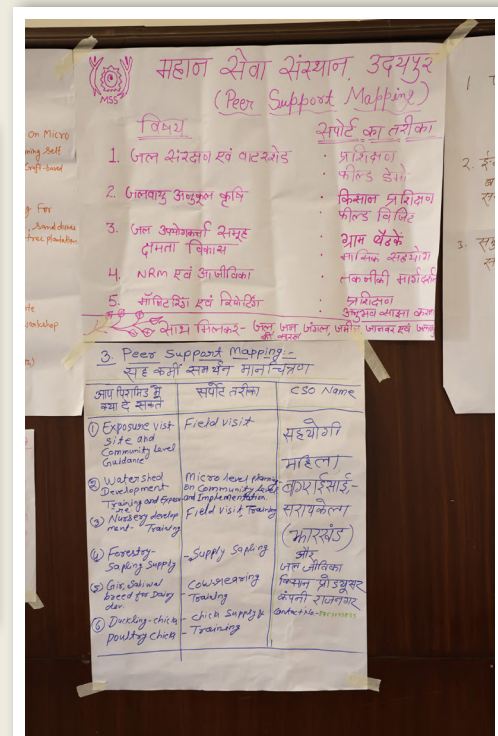
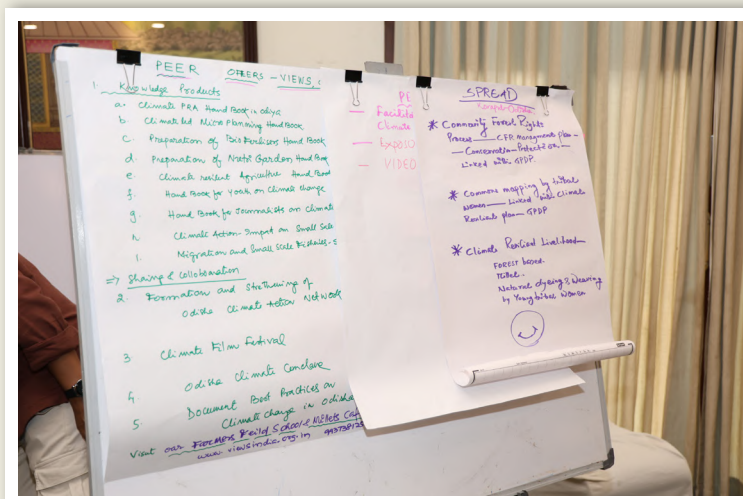
- Integrate climate resilience across all programmes, using climate-centric, landscape-level and systems-based design.
- Build genuinely participatory planning that puts communities and marginalised groups inside the timeline-setting, not just the consultation.
- Build flexibility into schedules, budgets and delivery so migration and livelihood cycles bend the plan, not the other way round.
- Run climate-risk assessments before locking in a design, and revise vision and strategy to match.
- Move from isolated sectoral work toward integrated models linking climate, livelihoods, education and gender.
- Build staff capacity in climate literacy, data management and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), and standardize the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and toolkits across teams.
- Allocate dedicated budgets for climate resilience and realistic field costs and adopt modern tools for documentation and fundraising.



Network – in – place (Climate and Adaptations)

A Directory Built From Scratch

The day's final Baithak flipped the lens from problems to assets. Every organisation diagnosed its own bioregion's pressure points and mitigation attempts, then mapped what it could actually offer a peer-which expertise, which tested practice, through which mode of support, and to whom. Several partners finished their entries after the session at organisational level, given the time. The point was never a polished document; it was making sure the next organisation with, say, a water-security problem, doesn't start from zero when a peer three states over has already solved a version of it.



Above are charts prepared by Network Partners Showing Peer learning support they can offer

Beyond named organisations, partners also clustered their offers by theme- a shorthand the network can search when a specific need arises, rather than paging through every profile.

Peninsular Plateau themes

- Grassroots governance and forest rights — Gram Sabha strengthening, Community and Individual Forest Rights (CFR and IFR) facilitation, commons mapping linked to Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and SAMVAD's Indigenocracy framework.
- Climate-resilient livelihoods — millet cultivation, natural dyeing and weaving by tribal women, nutri-gardens and biofertiliser preparation.
- Knowledge products and training — climate Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) handbooks, youth and journalist training and field-based learning videos.
- Community engagement and networks — the Odisha Climate Action Network, film festivals and peer-support mapping.

Desert Landscape themes

- Farmer-to-farmer learning — organic farming, vermicompost, water conservation, demonstration plots and livestock training.
- Technical and institutional capacity — baseline surveys, farm-pond follow-ups, Village Development Officer (VDO) meetings and climate-resilient agriculture modules.
- Government convergence — subsidies, veterinary services, GPDP integration for rainwater harvesting and goat farming.
- Policy advocacy and networks — national and state forums and campaigns such as *Dharti Jatan Yatra*.



Disaster and gender justice — humanitarian assistance, cash transfers, Gender-based violence (GBV) -prevention training and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).	Gender and youth engagement — gender-sensitive practice and occupational health for waste workers.
Water security and Natural Resource Management (NRM) — village-level water plans, revival of traditional sources and Catchment Area Treatment planning.	Water and NRM — traditional water conservation (<i>taanka, nadis</i>), watershed DPRs and village water security plans.
Legal and rights capacity — training on Forest Rights Act (FRA), Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), the Land Acquisition Act and access to entitlements.	Inclusion of persons with disabilities — Civil Society Organisation (CSO) capacity building, skill-based training, community counselling.

The mapping is meant to work as a living directory rather than a one-time exercise so cross-learning doesn't depend on chance encounters at the next convening.

Read together, the three movements are less three separate exercises than three passes over the same question, asked at a different altitude each time: what does this network actually know, where does it still fall short of its own intentions, and how does what it knows reach the people who need it next.



Day 01

Closing Circle

The first day closed with a reflective circle facilitated by Mr. Rajendra Kumar of GRAVIS. All participants stayed to reflect on the day, identify what had resonated, what needed strengthening, and where the GROW+ platform should go next.

Participants emphasised the Baithak format precisely for what it wasn't- not the usual run of presentations, but a room where every organisation could both contribute and learn, connecting operational topics like programme planning, finance and reporting to the larger goal of building resilient climate-action organisations.

Climate injustice came up directly and without much softening: Adivasi communities, Dalits, women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) have contributed least to the crisis and too often carry the most of it, and the field staff who work closest to affected communities are too often missing from the rooms where programmes get planned. Migration and water surfaced again as tightly bound together; several participants pushed the room to see today's water scarcity as shaped as much by social and institutional inequality as by nature itself.

"We need to discuss both who is driving the climate crisis and who bears its costs, rather than focusing only on those who must cope with its effects. Migration is often not a free choice — communities should be able to recognise the structural conditions that compel them to migrate."

More than one person floated a national platform for joint climate action. Climate-risk analysis, the room agreed, needs to sit alongside needs analysis from the very first draft of a proposal, not bolted on afterward. And the arc from Ranchi to Jodhpur was felt as real progress: desert, Jharkhand and peninsular realities increasingly experienced as one platform rather than three separate silos.

"Rather than making general statements that climate change has an impact, we were encouraged to ask: what is the impact, on whom, why does it occur, and how can it be reduced through detailed work with communities?"

Mr. Rajendra Kumar closed the circle by naming the thread that had run through the whole day- communication, collaboration and coordination- that drives adaptation and shapes resilient, self-reliant communities.





Participant interaction and engagement during Day 1

What Partners Asked For Next Time

- More time for small-group discussion and synthesis.
- More field-exposure and immersion opportunities to see successful community-led work directly.
- Deeper cross-landscape interaction to identify shared priorities and forge new collaborations.
- Continued, immediately applicable capacity building on finance, budgeting, planning, MEL and organisational development (OD).
- A structured follow-up mechanism so peer-support commitments outlast the room they were made in.

Day 02

Capacity-Building Session: Financial Reporting & Analysis

The pitch behind the morning was simple: financial reporting isn't a donor obligation or an audit formality, it's a decision-making tool most organisations only ever use for the first purpose. To make every concept land with a real number attached rather than float as theory, the facilitators built the whole session around a single invented organisation, ABC Foundation.

The Golden Triangle

The session introduced participants to the **"Golden Triangle" of financial management**: reviewing budgets, actual expenditure, and grant utilisation together rather than in isolation. The discussion highlighted that a programme may appear financially healthy from one lens while risks become visible only when all three are considered together.

The Golden Triangle: Review all three together, never in isolation

Budget	Grant	Actuals
Adequately funded?	Used on time?	On track?

True-Cost Budgeting

A key takeaway was the importance of **true-cost budgeting**, which accounts not only for programme activities but also for the organisational functions that enable delivery, such as finance, administration, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, communications, and governance. Participants reflected on how overlooking these costs can lead to under-budgeting and long-term financial stress.

Through practical exercises, participants explored how to analyse budget-versus-actual performance, understand the causes of variances, and use expenditure projections to identify potential shortfalls early. The facilitators emphasised that effective financial management is less about tracking numbers and more about understanding what those numbers signal.





Participants during the Golden Triangle activity

Budget-versus-Actual, and the Five Types of Variance

Participants worked a live programme-level example- approved budget, expenditure incurred, projected spend for the period remaining, and expected year-end utilization. The exercise made one point hard to miss: reviewing expenditure alone gives half a picture, while regularly updating projections lets an organisation see a shortfall coming well before year-end. Reviewing individual budget lines matters as much as the overall percentage, since a healthy total can still hide serious under- or over-spend within a single activity.

The session also introduced a simple **Red-Amber-Green approach to grant utilisation monitoring**, helping organisations identify potential implementation or spending risks in a timely manner. To respond to emerging variances, participants were encouraged to follow a practical decision-making process: update projections, protect essential costs, defer non-critical expenditure, identify efficiencies, and mobilise resources where gaps remain.

The whole day sat inside a single progression the facilitators emphasized that most organizations stop halfway through: Transactions → Reports → Insights → Decisions → Action.

The wish list for next time reads as a mandate rather than a suggestion: a longer or full-day format; more hands-on exercises built around each organisation's own numbers; and follow-on sessions on annual budgeting, financial statements, FCRA compliance, GST, TDS and ITR, and how to connect all of this to Tally, which most partners already use.

A Platform Goes Live: The GROW+ HUB

Midway through Day Two, Ms. Nayanika Rungta of Social Lens launched something partners had been hearing about for weeks: the GROW+ HUB, a self-paced digital learning platform built to sit alongside the in-person convenings rather than replace them. It had been rebuilt and relaunched just days earlier, on the Monday before the convening, with onboarding emails already out to each organisation's nominated staff.

The platform emphasizes flexibility and inclusivity, offering access anytime and anywhere through desktop and mobile devices. A dedicated mobile app, supported by QR-code login, enhances accessibility for field staff and ensures that learning is not restricted by geography. Certificates are awarded upon course completion, reinforcing motivation and accountability.

The HUB supports organisations in moving along a structured pathway:

Assess → Learn → Apply → Strengthen → Sustain

This approach ensures that learning is embedded within organisational processes, resulting in stronger governance, improved financial management, better HR systems, greater digital readiness and more resilient institutions. For the GROW+ partners, the launch of the HUB represents a shift from episodic capacity building to continuous organisational learning.



Rollout of The HUB on Upside LMS

Pyramid Updates: Two Landscapes

Ms. Leena Chauhan of GRAVIS and Ms. Archana Toppo of PHIA gave the room an update on where the year had taken each landscape and both Anchors used the moment to explain how they arrived at this point, which says as much about how the pyramid model works as any progress metric does.

GRAVIS is putting its weight on building deeper capacity building through thematic workshops, stronger networks across the desert, semi-arid and tribal regions; water harvesting and natural farming taken to scale; and women, youth and marginalised communities put at the centre of leadership, not the edge of it.

PHIA once ran one of the country's largest civil-society forest-area programmes. In GROW+ network, they are focusing on pooling technical expertise across partners rather than leaving every organisation to build it alone; exploring collective fundraising as a cohort; and continuing to grow the SAARTHI Just Transition Network, already the widest bridge the landscape has to mining-affected and policy-dependent communities.

Open Dialogue with Leadership: From Programme Design to Community-Led Climate Action



Ms. Naghma Mulla interacting with participants during the convening

The open dialogue with Ms. Naghma Mulla, CEO, EdelGive Foundation, quickly evolved into one of the most engaging segments of the convening. Such was the enthusiasm from participants that the session extended beyond its scheduled time, spanning themes of programme design, climate justice, organisational sustainability, indigenous knowledge, and pathways for strengthening local leadership.

A recurring area of curiosity centered on the intentionally adaptive design of GROW+. Participants reflected on how the programme had evolved over time and what had informed its flexible structure. In response, Ms. Mulla emphasised that the programme was designed to create space for partner organisations to articulate their own realities, priorities, and emerging needs before solutions were predefined. As these diverse experiences came together, common aspirations and shared challenges naturally surfaced, allowing more structured collective action to emerge. The discussion reinforced a core belief underpinning GROW+: that lasting systems are built when local voices shape the process from the outset.

The conversation also explored how organisations working across distinct landscapes could remain connected through a common climate vision. Ms. Mulla highlighted community-led evidence and lived experience as the thread that binds the network together, noting that grassroots realities often capture nuances that broader policy and funding frameworks can overlook. In this context, EdelGive's role was framed as that of a convener and catalyst, bringing together diverse actors, encouraging collaboration, and creating platforms where local knowledge can influence climate action.

Several questions focused on organisational resilience and long-term sustainability. The discussion underscored the importance of strengthening governance and compliance systems, investing in meaningful collaborations, and diversifying funding sources to build readiness for future opportunities. Reflections on indigenous knowledge further highlighted participation, cooperation, and harmony with nature as enduring principles that have guided communities for generations and continue to offer valuable lessons for climate action today. Conversations on youth and women's leadership similarly emphasised practical enablers such as fair compensation, supportive organisational cultures, and policies that create genuine pathways for participation and growth.



Plenary Session: Connecting the Dots



The Plenary Session: Connecting the Dots

The day's final session brought all four GROW+ landscape Anchors and Social Lens together, moderated by Ms. Sukhreet Bajwa of EdelGive Foundation, who opened with the question the network had been circling for two days: what does it actually take to build organisations that can effectively respond to an increasingly uncertain climate?

Dr. Prakash Tyagi of GRAVIS opened by relocating the conversation away from money and toward endurance: organisational resilience, he argued, is measured not by size or resources but by an organisation's ability to withstand persistent climate stress. Desert communities have adapted continuously to harsh conditions for generations, he noted, while climate finance and policy attention remain concentrated elsewhere. "Climate change has the most amount of funding, but it is restricted to a few organisations due to limited capacities. The desert landscape is the most neglected area in climate-change funding. There is a need for collectivity and complementarity among organisations, instead of competing for funds and resources," he said, calling for decentralised climate finance and stronger local evidence generation, so desert realities inform national and global discourse rather than sit at its margins.

Mr. Johnson Topno of PHIA picked up the same thread from a different landscape, to trace how declining rainfall, forest degradation, migration and the disproportionate burden on women are together reshaping community wellbeing across the plateau. “There is a need to make government systems more accountable and to influence policy,” he said. Climate action, he stressed, has to stay community-led, rooted in traditional knowledge, and backed by data communities themselves control rather than simply supply. Democratisation of data was the central insights and GROW+, must build adaptive institutions and empowered communities capable of designing locally grounded, resilient and accountable climate solutions.

If Dr. Tyagi and Mr. Johnson were making the case for local knowledge, Ms. Nayanika Rungta of Social Lens turned the lens inward, onto the organisations doing that work. Reflecting on organisational diagnostics across both landscapes, she framed OD as a continuous journey rather than a scorecard: compliance and governance have strengthened well across the network, while strategic thinking, fundraising and long-term sustainability remain live priorities. “Organisations need to pay more attention and invest in their internal capacity-building journey for areas like learning, communication and strategic thinking, and the HUB platform will help them respond to these needs,” she said, pointing to a broader shift already underway, from externally driven capacity building toward partner-owned learning, which is really the emergence of a genuinely collaborative, network-led ecosystem.

The two newest Anchors offered the outside view. Dr. Swati Jha of Jan Sahas summed up her first experience of the ecosystem in a single word: confidence. “Organisational development is a continuous process,” she said — not only about systems and processes but about nurturing organisations capable of learning, adapting and leading through uncertainty, with leadership development and culture deserving as much attention as programme efficiency. Mr. Pradyut Bhattacharjee of SeSTA went further, naming a risk his own organisation is actively watching for: “As an Anchor organisation, we will be mindful of not becoming the ‘big brother’ — not creating hierarchy, but building a bridge and maintaining transparent systems.” Drawing on SeSTA’s own path from a GROW100 partner to a GROW+ Anchor for the Himalayan Mountain landscape, he reflected on how unrestricted OD funding changed the organisation’s trajectory: the early excitement was about flexible funding, but the deeper realisation was that investing in policies, systems, governance and institutional process, often intangible, is what actually builds long-term resilience. He named SeSTA’s five-year target plainly: 100 future-ready civil society organisations across the Himalayan landscape.



Underneath five different answers sat one consistent pattern, which the discussion drew out explicitly: partners are strongest where donors already require them to be—compliance, financial reporting, HR policy and weakest where strength only gets built through internal ownership, such as learning culture, communication and investment in staff. The Anchors were careful not to frame this as a deficiency. No organisation needs to be strong everywhere, and the entire point of a peer network is that an organisation confident in financial management can support one still building that muscle, with the reverse holding equally for governance or communications.

That framing set up the session's most candid stretch. One reflection from the floor named a tension the panel kept circling back to: unrestricted, flexible funding is genuinely transformative, but easy to get wrong. Early excitement about new resources can outpace the systems, policies and culture needed to use them well, and organisations that build capacity around a single funding relationship rather than durable internal systems can unravel quickly once that relationship ends, a decades-old organisation that lost most of its programme within a short stretch after one major funder pulled out was cited from the floor as a caution against confusing money with resilience. The Anchors matched that candour with their own: an Anchor-partner relationship, they acknowledged, can quietly start to resemble a donor-recipient one if nobody actively works against it, and building enough transparency and humility for partners to approach them, and each other, without hesitation is ultimately a question of culture, real internal permission to question decisions, challenge even founders, and talk openly about what didn't work, rather than defaulting to whoever has been there longest.

Two questions from the floor stood out enough to shape the session's final stretch. Asked how communities can hold the parties most responsible for climate change accountable, the Anchors were candid that this remains unresolved, ongoing work rather than a problem with a clean answer, the more immediate task is education and awareness-building at every level, and platforms where affected communities and other stakeholders actually engage each other, with communities generating and owning their own data rather than remaining subjects of someone else's evidence. On local innovation, partners pointed to small, already-working practices, zero-waste colonies, household waste segregation, as exactly the kind of thing worth documenting and passing across the network, alongside a reminder that any policy advocacy is only as strong as the honest record of what has actually worked and what hasn't.



Where This Leaves GROW+

Jodhpur did not end with one big announcement. It ended with a clearer sense of direction.

The peer map needs to become something partners actually use. Financial reporting needs to move from a workshop exercise into monthly practice. The Baithak needs to remain a space for candid reflection. And collaboration across pyramids needs to continue between convenings, not restart every time the network meets.

Taken together, these are not separate actions. They point towards a GROW+ that increasingly functions as a shared infrastructure for learning, problem-solving and climate action.

If there is a single idea Jodhpur leaves behind, it's that institutional strength and climate resilience aren't really two different projects, they're the same project, described from two different rooms. A day spent being honest about community and organisational realities gave the network's second capacity-building push, on financial reporting, somewhere real to land. Partners left with sharper tools, a peer directory they can actually use, a live learning platform to build on, and going by how candid the closing plenary got a network increasingly willing to say the harder things out loud before the next convening asks it to.



The convening made one thing increasingly clear: GROW+ is becoming more than a funding programme—it is evolving into a collaborative learning ecosystem. Across the Baithaks, partners moved from reflecting on shared challenges to identifying what they could learn from and offer one another, creating the foundation for collaboration beyond the convening itself.

The next step is to turn these conversations into collective action—using the network for problem-solving, knowledge exchange and specialised peer support, with Anchors enabling connections across organisations and landscapes. As GROW+ expands, these learnings will help shape its three-year direction, strengthening locally rooted solutions and building a more connected, adaptive ecosystem for climate resilience.



Participant interaction and engagement during Day 2



Annexures

Reflections for Baithak 01:

The outcomes of this session were the following:

Division	Coping Strategies	Lived Realities	What's Not Visible from Outside	Community Trade-Offs	Place-Based Priorities	Priority Pressure Points
Ajmer Division	Water-efficient crops; seasonal migration; SHG microfinance; livestock rearing; NREGA employment; use of weather forecasts.	Groundwater depletion; Declining rainfall forcing migration to mines and informal work; youth giving up on traditional livelihoods; unsafe mining conditions; limited NREGA employment; increasing indebtedness from non-productive loans.	Hidden household distress, women's burden of fetching water, groundwater depletion due to invasive species of <i>Babul</i> , debt-traps, caste and gender inequalities, school dropouts, food insecurity, adolescent health issues, child marriage.	Income prioritized over safety through hazardous work; rising agricultural costs leading to debt and asset sales; reduced spending on health; school dropout for livelihood; migration affecting housing and sanitation.	Water conservation; water-efficient agriculture; pasture development; fruit & shade tree plantation; drinking water security; local livelihood generation.	Rainwater harvesting; natural & dryland farming; climate emergency preparedness; migration; convergence of government schemes; support for microenterprises.
Udaipur & Bharatpur Divisions	Traditional knowledge; rainwater harvesting; seasonal migration; NREGA employment; improved farming practices and organic/mixed farming.	Agricultural training improved yields and income (Moti Lal Meena case); reduced dependence on wage labour through mixed farming.	Hidden debt despite land ownership; food insecurity; caste and social norms affecting access to water and resources.	Families accept hazardous, low-paid work for immediate income; health risks borne by workers while families benefit from basic subsistence.	Bharatpur: Flood management, drainage, saline soil management, balancing agriculture with wetland ecology, livestock and value addition. Udaipur: Watershed management, soil conservation, tribal livelihoods, mixed farming, NTFPs, goat rearing, traditional knowledge.	Water security & climate risk; livelihood instability & migration; debt & financial distress; access to basic services & social inequality.

Jaipur Division	Rainwater harvesting restoration; drought-resilient crops; seasonal migration; livestock-based livelihoods; sale of land due to climate stress; improved seed varieties and technologies.	Groundwater depletion; Declining rainfall forcing migration to mines and informal work; youth giving up on traditional livelihoods; unsafe mining conditions; limited NREGA employment; increasing indebtedness from non-productive loans.	Hidden household distress, women's burden of fetching water, groundwater depletion due to invasive species of <i>Babul</i> , debt-traps, caste and gender inequalities, school dropouts, food insecurity, adolescent health issues, child marriage.	Income prioritized over safety through hazardous work; rising agricultural costs leading to debt and asset sales; reduced spending on health; school dropout for livelihood; migration affecting housing and sanitation.	Water conservation; water-efficient agriculture; pasture development; fruit & shade tree plantation; drinking water security; local livelihood generation.	Rainwater harvesting; natural & dryland farming; climate emergency preparedness; migration; convergence of government schemes; support for microenterprises.
Jodhpur (Rural) / Desert Landscape	Traditional water conservation (<i>Taanka, Nadi</i>) & improved livestock Rainwater harvesting & local diet Irregular rain-based farming (Isabgol, Cumin) Youth seasonal migration Inability to access social security schemes	* Severe weather and broken rain cycles damage local vegetation * Unexpected rain ruins crops (<i>Moong, Bajra</i>) near harvest, raising debt * Time spent securing drinking water shifts farm/domestic burdens to women as youth migrate	* Rising household debt burdens * Increasing physical workload on women * Continuous youth out-migration * Missing documentation for government schemes * Decline in community participation and traditional knowledge	* Earning immediate daily income vs. long-term water conservation * Farming locally vs. migrating for daily wage labor * Educating children vs. sending them to earn * Saving livestock vs. selling due to severe water shortages * Hazardous quarry labor (SC/ST) controlled by middlemen leading to Silicosis/TB	* Safe drinking water access * Groundwater recharge and conservation * Preserving traditional water structures * Climate-adapted agriculture * New livelihood options * Accessible welfare schemes * Leadership development for youth, women, and PwDs	* Escalating water crisis (over-extraction, lack of groundwater recharge) * Climate impacts on rainfed farming and livelihoods * Youth migration increasing workloads on women * Poor scheme access for remote <i>dhanis</i>

Kolhan -Palamu Division	* Gram Sabha-led water channels via <i>shramdaan</i> * Seasonal family migration * Short-duration crops (maize, <i>arhar</i>) * Reliance on NTFPs and forest gathering * Alternative models (strawberries, beekeeping, collective farming) * Informal credit & government welfare * Selling produce for cash while consuming ration food	* <i>Shramdaan</i> water channels compensate for weak government infrastructure * Collective farming boosts household income by ₹5,000–₹6,000 * Family distress migration disrupts schooling and relationships * Selling livestock liquidates emergency safety nets and reduces organic manure * Crop shifts prioritize survival over high value	* Migration is misread as a choice rather than distress-driven * Chemical/hybrid seed use is driven by risk reduction, not resistance to sustainability * Sanitation non-use stems from water scarcity and maintenance, not behavior * Unpaid labor burdens of women remain invisible and unspoken due to routine social norms * Social stigma hides debt and food insecurity	* Income from migration vs. family safety and child education * Hybrid seeds vs. indigenous seeds (higher costs vs. short-term yield) * Immediate food security vs. climate-resilient farming * Informal borrowing to manage emergencies vs. long-term debt traps * Using open spaces vs. maintenance costs where water/sanitation infrastructure lacks	* Restoring degraded forests & commons * Addressing chronic water scarcity & groundwater depletion * Reducing distress migration via local jobs * Conserving indigenous seeds & traditional farming knowledge * Mitigating mining, pollution, and dam displacement * Strengthening Gram Sabha governance	* Water scarcity and declining agricultural productivity * Distress migration and limited local employment * Forest degradation and loss of common resources * External input dependency and severe informal debt
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Santhal Pargana Region	* Strengthening Gram Sabhas & traditional governance (<i>Baisi, Pradhani</i>) * Women's SHG empowerment for financial inclusion * Agroecological farming (mixed cropping, native seeds) * Soil/water conservation (contour bunding, greywater) * Plantation drives & forest protection * Participatory GPDPs and multi-stakeholder platforms	* Drying drinking water sources in summer forces women and girls to walk long distances, harming health, education, and productive time	* Time and physical effort invested daily by women to fetch drinking water * Critical household reliance on forests for food, fuel, and medicine * Ongoing decision-making role of traditional customary leaders * Unrecognized unpaid care and resource collection work done by women	* Borrowing from informal moneylenders vs. lack of institutional credit * Seasonal migration vs. child education and family stability * Immediate forest resource extraction vs. long-term ecological conservation	* Strengthening customary forest governance (<i>Baisi / Pradhani</i> systems & Gram Sabhas) * Conserving forests, springs, and watersheds * Climate-resilient agriculture with native seeds * Protecting <i>Adivasi</i> cultural identity and customary rights * Sustainable livelihoods from forest produce and local enterprises	* Severe water scarcity (drinking, agriculture, public health) * Deforestation (loss of biodiversity and livelihoods) * Changing rainfall patterns (crop failures) * Heat waves (health and labor productivity risks)
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Eastern Region	* Climate-resilient agriculture (millets, native paddy) * Alternative livelihoods (goatery, fisheries, duckery) * Distress migration & forest rights protection * Seed balls for forest regeneration * Watershed development & Replacing water-intensive crops (e.g., sugarcane) * Dependence on government welfare (PDS)	* Community forest protection (Koraput & Ambikapur) using seed balls protects life and livelihoods * Growing local awareness of the vital role common resources play in climate adaptation	* External agencies have no direct connection to ground realities and fail to understand local livelihood struggles	* Local forest income vs. compromising on safety concerns * Pursuing migration for income vs. compromising on safety and family cohesion	* Protection and sustainable management of Forests, Land, Water, and Indigenous communities	* Agri-ecology (primary dependence of communities) * Forest commons (tribal livelihood dependence) * Water security (erratic rainfall impacts) * Coastal livelihoods (depletion of marine life and coastal ecosystem destruction)
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South Chota Nagpur	* Strengthening Gram Sabhas for climate adaptation, education, and women * Transitioning to daily wage labor over farming * Using forest fires to gather NTFPs (<i>Mahua</i>, mushrooms) * Relocating to urban slums (e.g., Jagganthpur) as ragpickers	* Women leading adoption of scientific natural farming (mulching, <i>Jeevamrut</i>) to build peer learning plots (Jyoti Kongari) * Youth leaders organizing villages around tech-based farming (bee farming, dragon fruit, <i>Tasar</i> silk) to curb migration	* Tokenism in Gram Sabha participation regarding genuine gender inclusion * Fertilizer and hybrid seed reliance is driven by a lack of viable natural alternatives rather than intent to damage soil	* Choosing immediate income over environmental/ personal safety due to lack of choices * Choosing short-term gains over long-term stability due to urgent survival needs	* Creating income-generating livelihood options * Building local topographical knowledge for climate adaptation * Engaging youth to foster local ownership * Strengthening community institutions and women's participation	* Building topographical knowledge for contextual climate action * Creating local livelihoods to halt youth migration * Engaging youth and building community belongingness * Strengthening community institutions for inclusive, women-led development
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Jodhpur Urban	* Modified Utility Tools: Waste pickers use improvised transport (<i>jugaad</i>) to collect larger volumes of waste in less time. * Specialized Support: Families with differently-abled children increasingly rely on specialized reform centers as social awareness grows. * Helpline Services: Shift to Women Counseling Centers. * Doorstep Care: High-risk groups (FSWs and MSM) rely on mobile, door-to-door testing to avoid the stigma of visiting physical health centers.		* Hidden Development: Growth and skill development of special children is subtle and cannot be judged visually from the outside; it requires structured, ongoing interaction. * Invisible Populations: While female sex work (FSW) areas are identifiable, MSM (Men having Sex with Men) populations remain hidden to outsiders and are only identified via specific social platforms or community parks. * Unspoken Topics: Highly sensitive issues remain unspoken because community members often ignore or downplay them despite being aware.	* Basic Dignity & Burial Rights: Lower-income families face compromises even for basic needs like drinking water and securing physical space for cremations or burials. * Education & Livelihoods: Women and young girls frequently trade off access to education, while unemployed youth compromise on working conditions to secure basic employment.	* Ensuring proper documentation of IDs: To mainstream the marginalized groups and enabling them to access government facilities (like housing, ration, medical aid etc.) * Inducing Behavioural change: To create conditions for waste workers, FSW, MSMs, PwDs, where society becomes more accepting towards them.	*Linkage to government schemes *Capacity building of PwDs *Awareness on Gender Rights *Better outreach of government laws against GBV
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Reflections for Baithak 02:

The responses from the divisions in this discussion are listed in the following table:

Region / Division	Taking Stock of Current Interventions & Adjustments	Gaps Between Design and Lived Realities	Organizational Level Changes Needed
Ajmer Division	* Labour Rights: Organizing unorganized workers across source/destination streams, legal aid, and advocacy. * Water & NRM: Rainwater harvesting, community water budgeting, and revival of traditional water resources. * Livelihoods: Scientific livestock (goat management), natural farming, and women-led FPOs. * Youth & Empowerment: Digital education, case work, and youth leadership.	* Stationary program designs fail to account for the high mobility of seasonal migrant workers, creating follow-up gaps. * Limited local alternative livelihoods and low institutional convergence with government schemes. * Rainfall dependency and resource constraints limit scale.	* Strategic and policy realignment to design flexible, migrant-centric programs. * Capacity building in resource mobilization, MIS & MEL, and R&D for policy advocacy.
Udaipur & Bharatpur Divisions	* Water & Climate Crisis: Rainwater harvesting, soil conservation, agri-livelihoods, and local capacity building. * Adjustments: Inter-CSO collaboration to prevent overlapping agendas and maximizing government scheme convergence.	* Programs designed around donor/funder priorities rather than local community demand. * Rigid government scheme rules mismatch local environmental/social contexts. * Mismatch between implementation team hours and community availability schedules. * Lack of women's active participation in decision-making and post-construction infrastructure maintenance.	* Updating the organization's vision, mission, and strategy at governance and implementation levels to match evolving times. * Adopting modern technology and social platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, social media, website management) for fundraising and visibility.

Jaipur Division	* Water Conservation: Construction and repair of farm ponds, check dams, <i>tankas</i>, and field bunding. * Mobilization & CBOs: Mobilization campaigns and forming VDCs, SHGs, PIMCs, and farmer groups. * Capacity Building: Stakeholder training for farmers, youth, and women.	* Rigid workplans assume universal stakeholder availability, ignoring peak agricultural seasons, domestic workloads, exams, or unforeseen local events. * Incomplete social inclusion across community groups within VDCs/CBOs. * Rigid budget heads fail to cover true field operational costs (travel, admin, unit costs).	* HR/Staffing reforms for selecting eligible candidates. * Involving communities directly in setting project activity plans and timeframes. * Adding time buffers to activity schedules and restructuring budgets for realistic field costs. * Priority-based selection of water structures and beneficiaries.
Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Divisions	* Rights & Social Protection: Forest/land rights (FRA, PESA), Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) entitlement access, and child protection (combating child labor/marriage). * Waste Pickers & Informal Labor: Health safety, social security, <i>NAMASTE</i> scheme profiling, and Responsible Sourcing Initiatives. * Education & Relief: Outdoor Learning Centres for SC/ST children and need-based relief support.	* False assumptions that target groups have basic identity documents, bank accounts, digital devices, stable daily incomes, or land titles (ignoring tenant farmers). * Daily wage loss incurred by beneficiaries attending program meetings/trainings. * Quieter Gaps: Loss of dignity due to caste/occupational stigma, unpaid care burdens on women, chronic stress, and exclusion from local governance.	* Resource mobilization targeting invisible/quiet gap areas. * Enhancing staff capacity to engage strategically with decision-making authorities. * Transitioning to integrated program models (combining education, livelihoods, climate, and gender). * Upgrading MEL systems to capture qualitative shifts in dignity, inclusion, and agency.

North Chhotanagpur Division	* Sustainable Agriculture: Subsystem integration, crop diversification, and farmer collectives. * Forest Livelihoods: Community mobilization, skill building, and forest enterprise support. * Governance & NRM: PRI leader mobilization and small-scale natural farming/water segregation.	* Flawed assumption that communities lack knowledge and merely need “education,” mistaking bad meeting timing for lack of community interest. * Administrative credit barriers (KYC updates) and timeline conflicts between project plans and seasonal calendars. * Lack of follow-up support in short-term projects threatens asset sustainability. * Quieter Gaps: Internal community conflicts and deep-seated gender/child discrimination.	* Adopting systemic thinking to tackle root causes rather than isolated symptoms. * Embedding climate resilience directly into core organizational strategies. * Shifting operational focus from individual beneficiaries to holistic landscape-level approaches. * Enforcing stricter compliance and board governance.
Santhal Parghana	* GROW+ & Biodiversity: Community Biodiversity Registers (CBRs), village-level planning, and PVTG orientation. * Governance & NRM: Gram Sabha capacity building, mixed cropping, soil conservation, and plantations.	* Assumes year-round water availability for agriculture, flexible household schedules, and uniform government scheme access in remote areas. * Severe summer water scarcity, poor road/digital connectivity, seasonal migration, and literacy barriers. * Quieter Gaps: Increased domestic burden on women during water shortages, loss of traditional ecological knowledge among youth, and budget limits leaving village plans unfulfilled.	* Systematically integrating climate risk assessments into annual program planning cycles. * Upskilling organizational staff in climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and community facilitation.

Odisha & Chhattisgarh Divisions	* Natural Farming: Promoting natural farming and climate-resilient agriculture among marginal/women farmers. * Forest & Livestock: NTFP collection support and livestock management. * Governance Linkages: Capacity building for SHGs, FPOs, and PRIs to access government schemes.	* Complete lack of focus on non-ragi millets, indigenous seeds, and organic produce marketing. * Middlemen exploitation, lack of capital/tech for NTFP value addition, and policy bottlenecks. * Shrinking common grazing areas, inadequate livestock vaccination/insurance, and marine pollution. * Programs designed at too small a scale; severe lack of human resources with climate science backgrounds.	* Institutional staff capacity building on climate literacy. * Allocating dedicated organizational and donor budget streams specifically for climate action. * Redesigning interventions to be climate-centric. * Building multi-stakeholder climate advocacy networks and platforms.
Jodhpur Rural Division	* Grow+ Climate Action: Youth leadership training, Village Climate Action Plans, kitchen gardens, and traditional water structure revival. * Social Protection: Door-to-door documentation support and scheme convergence (PMAY, MGNREGA, e-Shram, pensions).	* Programs assume scheme information reaches remote hamlets (<i>dhanis</i>) and that households possess complete documents to apply easily. * Lack of IDs, digital divide, long travel distances to offices, and scheme exclusion for households living on Gauchar (common grazing) land. * Quieter Gaps: Neglect of long-term maintenance for traditional structures (<i>tankas, nadis</i>) and unaddressed needs of nomadic tribes and disabled persons.	* Incorporating water conservation and climate adaptation into long-term strategic plans and securing funding for traditional structure revival. * Institutionalizing regular convergence and partnerships with government departments for streamlined entitlement delivery.

South Chota Nagpur Division	* Gender: Assessment of impacts of climate change on gender Biodiversity: Community Climate Fellows, and TEK (traditional ecological knowledge) documentation (published 2 books). * Agroecology (GROW+): Mobilizing youth and farmers through Green Clubs.	* Social sector data collection remains ambiguous with unclear end-use frameworks. * Forest assessment methodologies are time-consuming and lack necessary technical accuracy. * Lack of a holistic, integrated framework to deal with climate-induced health crises, acute water distress, and youth distress migration.	* Engaging external experts to build organizational capacity in data management and data utilization. * Building internal technical capacity on rigorous forest assessment methodologies and sustainable forest produce utilization.
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