

GROW+ Field Visit Report

2025 - 2026



Ramdevpura & Bhakhri, Jodhpur District

30 July 2026

A delegation of philanthropists, corporate CSR teams, Anchor organisations and GROW+ stakeholders spent a day moving through two villages on the arid edge of Jodhpur: Ramdevpura in the morning, Bhakhri in the afternoon. This was an opportunity to witness the rural part of Thar Desert landscape.

The visit was designed to be lived, not narrated, to sit inside a household's water problem before hearing it described in a meeting, and to watch a five-hundred-member farmer company argue about audit compliance rather than read about it in a slide.

Facilitated by Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), the Anchor organisation for this desert landscape, working here on water security, agriculture, health, education and community mobilisation since 1983 and its network partner Vasundhara Seva Samiti (VSS), which has run its own four-part programme of rights advocacy, livelihoods, capacity building and drought mitigation out of Ramdevpura since 1996, the visit followed

the pyramid the way it is actually built on the ground: one household, then a village committee, then a network of collectives, then the institutions that hold all of it together.

People in this belt have spent generations building ways to hold on to whatever water falls: a *nadi* to catch runoff for an entire village, a *taanka* to store it for one household, a *beri* sunk deep enough to reach a layer of clay or gypsum, a *khadin* to trap monsoon flow over a field. The khejri tree does more work than any of them nitrogen-fixing, drought-hardy, its pod a staple food and much of what grows around it, from the millet in its shade to the fencing cut from thorny ber branches, is built around what the tree itself can survive.

Canal water arrived there from the 1950s onward and helped, but it hasn't solved the underlying problem, groundwater in several blocks is now being pulled up faster than the



Ramdevpura's Landscape



Bhakhri's Landscape

desert can put it back, and officials in the worst-hit blocks have already stopped sanctioning new pump connections. Ramdevpura and Bhakhri, the two villages, sit inside that same stretched water economy, months into a monsoon that arrived late and fell short of what the season is supposed to bring.

We crossed the recently constructed Bharatmala Economic Corridor from Jodhpur to reach our first stop: Ramdevpura village, under Nagana Gram Panchayat in Kalyanpur Tehsil, Balotra district, Rajasthan. The village is situated in arid and semi-arid zone of western Rajasthan, facing extreme climate event like extreme temperatures, and erratic and low rainfall. This village is spread over approximately 2-3 square kilometres, with approximate population of 1,206, with around 201 families residing here.

An orchard in the desert

Ramdevpura offered the first window into an orchard grown by one man against everyone's advice, and into the single household's water problem that made the orchard possible at all. The group arrived at the household of Anoparam ji and his wife Pushpa Devi.

Initially, the land was considered unsuitable for horticulture due to the soil lacking moisture and organic matter. With the support from VSS, the process of establishing the Arid Horticulture Unit (AHU) involved, improving the quality of soil by introducing water content and nutrition to it. Pushpa Devi and Anoparam (her husband), received drought resistant varieties of plants and material for fencing. At present, the AHU consists of approximately 105 drought-resistant fruit trees, including *Ber*, *Amla*, *Gundi*, *Lasora (Gunda)*, lemon, moringa and fodder varieties like *Tharshobha khejri*, all of which have survived and are producing fruits. They have also introduced growing Mango, as an experiment to come up with a drought resistant variety of the same.

“यहां कोई फल फ्रूट यहां होता ही नहीं है। मैंने कहा, क ना क तो होगा।”

“They said no fruit grows here at all. I said it will. Something or the other will definitely grow.”

— Anoparam ji, Ramdevpura

Getting the trees through those first years meant carrying water by hand in two-litre bottles picked up from the roadside. A small hole was punched into the base of each bottle, which was then buried near the roots and refilled every fortnight or so, before being dug up and moved to whichever side the roots had grown towards. Like much of the region, Ramdevpura experiences drought approximately every three years and faces challenges of saline groundwater.



“इस जमीन का पानी खारा है। पौधों के लिए थोड़ी-बहुत मात्रा ठीक है, हम उन्हें उतना पानी दे सकते हैं। लेकिन इससे ज्यादा के लिए इस पानी पर निर्भर रहने के साधन मेरे पास नहीं हैं।”

“The water in this ground is salty. A little is fine for the plants, we can give them that much. But I don’t have the means to rely on it for more.”

— **Anoparam ji, Ramdevpura**

What survived now feeds both the household and its budget. By the family’s own account, a good monsoon and a good harvest bring in close to ₹1 lakh a year from the orchard, an average year is closer to ₹50,000, with the produce sold at Kalyanpur, Jodhpur and Barmer, or booked in advance for the sweets and pickles made from *lasora* that weddings in the area still ask for. The regional arid-zone research institute, now drive out to buy saplings directly at around ₹500 a plant. But before any of that income, the fruit goes into the house *lasora* pickled and cooked as a vegetable, *ber* eaten raw by whichever children are nearby, *gunda* leaves fed to the goats when the animals won’t take them fresh.

Almost every one of Ramdevpura’s roughly two hundred households now keeps at least a couple of fruit trees of its own, a spread the community credits directly to Anoparam ji.

The AHU built into the same plot depends heavily on Pushpa Devi’s own labour—harvesting, weeding and gathering fodder—a pattern of women’s labour sustaining the harvest that the visit would see again, at scale, that same afternoon.



Anoparam ji’s AHU, Ramdevpura



Meeting with community members, Ramdevpura

Taanka: Water Lifeline

By the time the group reached the *taanka* itself, they had already heard most of what it makes possible. A key factor behind the success of the horticulture unit was the *taanka* – a traditional underground rainwater harvesting structure – with a capacity of 30,000-litre, filled by a catchment built to let silt settle out before the water goes in, enough in a good monsoon year to cover drinking water, the livestock, and the horticulture plot behind the house. Three generations have worked off what it collects: Anoparam ji's mother, Panchi Devi, kept the household running around it before him; today it's him, Pushpa Devi, and their son and daughter-in-law, splitting the family's rabi cultivation between them. What's changed isn't the tank, it's the demand on it, and there's no piped line into the house to make up any difference, whatever the *taanka* can't hold has to be trucked in. Nothing here goes to waste in the meantime fallen leaves become compost, manure feeds the fields, and thorny *ber* branches are woven by hand into fencing against *taanka*.

“पहले हमारे ये बारह मास चलता था पीने के लिए, अब ये लैट्रिन बाथरूम बन गए ना उसके बाद में दो महीने चलता है।”

“Earlier this water lasted us all twelve months. Now that we've built the bathroom and toilet, it lasts only about two months.”

— *Pushpa Devi, Ramdevpura*



Taanka and catchment, Ramdevpura



Pushpa Devi's household plot

Anoparam also showed the traditional grain storage structure – *Kanara/Kothi*– designed to preserve grains and seeds during drought periods. It was a huge oval basket-like structure made by weaving straws obtained from local shrub called *Arna* and sealed with a mixture of cow dung and clay to make it airtight. It is used to preserve grain throughout the year, and this traditional structure protect the grains from fungus, insects or rodents attack and moisture. These indigenous construction practices represent low-cost, environmentally sustainable climate adaptation measures of the community members.

A Village Lays Out its Ledger

The visitors were welcomed by the community with traditional *dhol-thaali*, *tilak* and folk songs by community women. The ritual is locally known as “badhana”, meaning “welcoming guests”. Young girls made *henna* designs for the guests as a memento of their visit to Ramdevpura. A walkthrough of the community’s social and cultural life was arranged for the participants. Species of indigenous, drought resistant fodder and fruit bearing plants like *rohida*, *khejri*, *tumba*, *kaachra*, *matira*, *ber*, *kair*, *jaal*, *kumath* and



Delegates with Anchors, Partners and community members

dried ridge gourd (for seed preservation); and important grains like *raatadiya*, *bajra* and *phog* were laid out on the table. Each was chosen because it can be stored for months without spoiling—exactly the trait a household needs when the next harvest is a gamble. Alongside sat the household inventory that doesn’t usually make it into a report: brass and copper vessels, hand-thrown clay pots, a *gudri* (hand-woven mattress), an *indaani* (the ring-shaped cushion women use to balance a pot on their head), and a Marwari *chang*, the percussion instrument that had been keeping time outside all morning. This was simply what the house already had, pulled onto a table so guests could ask what each thing was for.

When people come together for self-governance: Village Development Committees (VDC)

Before the group moved on, a Gram Sabha—style gathering at Ramdevpura filled in the institutional layer sitting just behind the household. What everyone here calls simply “the committee” is a ‘Village Development Committee’ the basic unit through which both organisations choose to work in every village on their books, rather than negotiating with a few hundred households one at a time. The Village Development Committee is formed through a process of community mobilisation and collective decision-making. Village residents come together to identify common priorities, selected representatives from within the community, and gradually build an institution responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring local development initiatives. Over time, the committee functions as a platform through which the community manages resources, coordinates collective action, and engages with external agencies on its own terms.

Before discussing any of the committee initiatives, Peparam ji and Dungaram ji, both lifelong residents of Ramdevpura and committee members, spoke about the village’s tradition of hospitality. Looking after visitors, they said, is a responsibility that extends beyond financial exchange. The group was accordingly received with traditional folk songs and a selection of jaggery brought from across Rajasthan.

Peparam Ji talked next about his own path into the work: six years with GRAVIS straight out of school, followed by a school of his own in Kalyanpur block, and then Saturday trips from village to village. What began with twenty villages now spans four blocks and reaches roughly 15,000 families directly. The VDC itself, he said, has been behind the *taanka*-building, the AHU, and the *khadin* work we had already seen that morning, plus a longer push to get people to use *desi khad* (homemade compost) instead of buying fertiliser. Above the village sits a block-level pressure group that meets government officials on a fixed schedule, and, more unusually for a village this size, a registered laborers' union operating out of the local thana. None of it, he said flatly, happens without the committee. Multiply Ramdevpura's *taanka* and its *khejri* trees across every village VSS works in, and the tally becomes 3,200 taankas built, 180 community ponds dug, 50 wells and ground-level reservoirs restored, and 12,000 trees planted — one household's water problem, solved often enough that it stops looking like an exception and starts looking like a method.

Over time, he said, villagers had become more conscious of the hidden costs carried by certain customs. Multi-day ceremonies meant food, accommodation, and days away from work, expenses that often fell hardest on households with limited means. As livelihoods improved and financial awareness grew, conversations increasingly turned toward how families could preserve their traditions without placing themselves under unnecessary economic strain — *Mrityu Bhoj*, the elaborate feast once expected after a death, was the custom that went first. The money that used to disappear into a single funeral now flows into the Gram Kosh, a village fund the committee has built up to nearly ₹13 lakh. Since then, it has been used to renovate the common hall, restore the village pond, and fund events that were once paid for by individual households.

Veiled Conversations

The women were pulled aside into a smaller circle for this part, not by the visitors' choice but by the village norms: veiling and the custom of not speaking in front of older men keep most of them quiet in the bigger gathering. In the smaller gathering, Pauchi Devi, Lacchi Devi and Kiran Devi talked, and the three of them span the whole spectrum of what climate change looks like from inside a household rather than a field. Pauchi Devi, 70, still walks two kilometres for water and has watched forty years of rainfall stop making sense — drought she expects, but the erratic rain of recent years catches farmers off guard on exactly the decisions that used to be simple: when to sow, when to expect the harvest. Lacchi Devi, 50, described what happens when a crop fails anyway: daily wage labour, NREGA work when it is available, and a Rs. 1,100 monthly pension that she spends entirely on her grandchildren, never on herself. Between them they laid out a division of labour the whole village runs on — women sow, weed, harvest, husk and grade nearly everything that comes out of the ground, then hand it to the men the moment it's ready to sell. Kiran, 25, is the generation coming up behind them:



a yoga instructor finishing an MA by distance course, aiming for a government teaching post, who said plainly that veiling in this heat is simply hard in a way the older women have stopped noticing. And it was Pauchi Devi and Lacchi Devi, not the younger women, who offered the clearest sign of where this goes next — both said they'd keep doing the household chores themselves so the younger women in their families could stay in school.

Showing Up: Consistently

A household deciding to skip a costly wedding feast and a woman deciding her daughter's schooling matters more than a veil are the same instinct, just showing up at different addresses. That is the bet GROW+ is making: that sustained investment in one household's resilience does not stay there, it moves sideways into what a community will tolerate and upward into what an institution will fund. Ramdevpura had already shown that motion once, in the *taanka* that grew into a village-wide fund. Bhakhri, the group would find that afternoon, shows the same motion again, at a scale Ramdevpura has not yet reached.

The Seed Bank at Bhakhri

By early afternoon the group had moved to Bhakhri, one of the villages under GRAVIS's intervention. Water works differently here than it did at Ramdevpura that morning. Farmers described a shift away from the older *phad-and-nala* channel system, where a small diversion cut off a stream and filled a field by gravity, towards tubewells feeding drip lines and sprinklers. The change is largely driven by a groundwater table that keeps dropping across this part of Rajasthan, regardless of what any one farmer does. This particular year had already tested the new system: June passed without rain, the monsoon only arrived in the last week of July, and even what fell came in under the season's average. One farmer put a rough number on it: a borewell that used to hit water at 20–30 pipe-lengths down now has to go to 40.

The seed bank: seed layered with ash and neem inside a sealed mud pot, drawn down for farmer-members each season. This particular pot held 70 kilograms of IPM cumin



Community seed bank (matki), Bhakhri



FIG & SHG members with the delegation

seed, and by one farmer's own reckoning, 1 kilogram of seed comes back as roughly 2 quintals of cumin — a low-cost, entirely self-managed alternative to buying fresh seed every year. Before anything goes into the pot, it's sorted and graded by hand; when it comes back out to members each season, it's priced at whatever the grading and storage actually cost, nothing added on top, and returned to the bank at double the quantity once the harvest is in.

From FIG to FPO: Scale Matters

The bulk of the afternoon was long and filled with deep discussions with Farmer Income Group (FIG), Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) and Self-Help Group (SHG) members together three acronyms that sound like paperwork until you see what they stand in for in a village of this size.

“जैसे मेरे पास किसी चीज की कमी है, मेरे साथ वाले के पास वो चीज है, तो मैं उनसे मिलकर के मेरा काम चल लूंगा”

If I'm short of something and the person next to me has it, I go to them and get my work done.”

— FIG member, Bhakhri

That's a Farmers' Interest Group, FIG for short, the first layer of collective action in a village. It isn't registered anywhere, it's just farmers agreeing that when one of them is short of seed, labour or information, the group finds it from within itself before anyone looks outside. Shrawan ji's own FIG, formed in 2019 and now 30 members strong, is one unit inside the Harimala FPO — and it is far from alone: around 20–25 FIGs operate in the Osian cluster around Bhakhri, with another 25–30 next door in Phalodi, each one built up village by village on farmers' own sense of who's reliable enough to lead it. A recurring FIG function is nudging members toward organic farming, and the reason offered was less about yield organic methods here run an acknowledged 2–3 quintals per hectare, below what chemical fertiliser delivers than about a fear the group holds strongly, evidence or no evidence.

“पहले अपने इस गाँव में मैंने कैंसर का रोगी कोई नहीं देखा था, लेकिन अब ये दिख रहा है कि हर गाँव में एक किसान पीड़ित मिल रहा है।”

“Earlier I never saw a single cancer patient in this village. Now it seems every village has at least one farmer affected.”

— FIG member, Bhakhri



Some in the group had their own explanations for why any of this was happening in the first place—not just chemical farming, but a shift towards a more sedentary lifestyle brought about by modernisation and the factories that have come up nearby. One farmer said summers now regularly push past 40°C, something he doesn't remember from his own childhood. Whatever the cause, organic is where the group has put its faith on both counts better for the body, and, they were quick to add, better paid too. One FIG member had a batch of cumin lab-tested and passed the results around the delegation: proof, he said, that organic wasn't just a slogan, and that the crop was already earning a better rate than it used to under chemical fertiliser.

Punjab was named more than once as the cautionary example nobody here wants to become. Stack enough FIGs together with a legal registration and a shared bank account and they become an FPO, a Farmer Producer Organisation. Bhakhri's has grown from 250 members to 500 since it started, trading mainly in groundnut, cumin and wheat, sold direct to mandi traders instead of through commission-charging middlemen who, farmers were careful to say, don't cheat them outright but do eat into a margin the farmer would otherwise keep. Its ten-member board is chosen by community consensus rather than election leadership, honesty and a record of service to other farmers are the stated criteria and it currently includes one woman. Each of the 500 members put in roughly ₹1,000 to start the company, that seed money, plus a share of every season's trading margin, has grown into a reserve of about ₹5 lakh enough to cover the statutory audits an organisation this size has to file every year, which board members said more than once is far harder to keep up than registering the FPO was in the first place. For a farmer who might otherwise carry two or three quintals of cumin to the mandi alone, that reserve and that shared audit bill are the difference between negotiating a price by yourself and negotiating it as five hundred.

The Women Who Run the SHGs

The SHG discussion was largely led by Seema Devi, whose quiet confidence and clarity left a strong impression.

“हम किसी से कम नहीं हैं, हम भी इसी भारत की बेटी हैं, हम क भी कर सकते हैं।”

“We are no less than anyone, we too are daughters of the same India, we can do anything.”

— Seema Devi, SHG leader, Bhakhri

As Safi Ahsan Rizvi observed in his personal notes, “I could not help telling the most vocal of them that she had the skills to be a legislator.” Seema Devi didn't let the compliment pass unclaimed:

“मैं भी विधायक के लायक हूँ। मेरे पी भी वही सपोर्ट है।”

“I'm worthy of being a legislator too. I have that same support behind me.”

— Seema Devi, SHG leader, Bhakhri



She also noted, in passing, that she was the only woman in the room not wearing a *ghunghat*. Her SHG began with a ₹2.5 lakh loan, since grown to ₹5 lakh, across ten women who each run an independent enterprise tailoring, a flour mill, dairy, small trade. The group didn't start at that scale, though members recalled it beginning with everyone chipping in ₹30 a month, the pool growing slowly enough that a ₹2 lakh loan round once felt like a milestone. Members earn ₹5,000–8,000 a month, internal lending runs at about 1% a month, not for profit but to grow the shared pool “drop by drop, the pot fills,” as one member put it. For one tailoring member, a typical month brings in close to ₹6,000, of which roughly ₹2,000 goes straight back into fabric and thread, the rest, she said, goes toward her children. Dhapu Devi runs a flour mill earning ₹5,000–10,000 a month against an electricity bill of ₹500–700.



Seema Devi, SHG member, Bhakhri



Dhapu Devi, talking about flour mill, Bhakhri

As the day progressed from households to SHGs, from Village Development Committees to a thriving Farmer Producer Organisation, participants witnessed the interconnected layers of change that GROW+ seeks to nurture. The programme's approach is intentionally designed to strengthen communities from the ground up: supporting local organisations such as VSS to work closely with individuals and households, enabling Anchor Organisations such as GRAVIS to build and sustain community institutions, and fostering the conditions for collective action at scale.

Over time, these investments create a multiplier effect, where gains at the household level contribute to stronger village institutions, which in turn influence the resilience and adaptability of the wider landscape. The stories of Ramdevpura and Bhakhri illustrate that lasting change is not driven by any single intervention, but by the gradual strengthening of local leadership, community ownership, and institutional capacity.

In bringing these actors together, GROW+ is helping create landscapes where communities are equipped not only to respond to present challenges, but to shape their own futures with confidence and agency.

With the FPO's audit-cost pooling, the SHGs' 1% internal lending, and the FIGs' self-run seed bank together - the pattern is clear: this institutional layer is already substantially paying its own way. What it lacks is not motivation but specific technical capacity — business planning, statutory compliance support, water storage at scale.

This was not a tour of finished success stories. It showed:

- A household adapting, but still exposed to erratic rain and rising domestic water demand
- A committee that has quietly renegotiated its own social costs, without any programme asking it to
- A FIG-to-FPO chain that is real, growing, and already largely self-financed
- Women carrying much of the labour and an increasing share of the enterprise, but still thin at the institutional table

And between these realities, VSS and GRAVIS operate not as saviours, but as connective tissue. They turn a *taanka* into a replicable practice, a good harvest into a producer company, and a farmer's worry about cancer into a collective shift toward organic method.

Held side by side, the household, the community and the institution show the same mechanism repeating at different sizes: water security frees time; freed time gets captured by institutions rather than dissipating; institutional participation converts into income no single household could generate alone. Pushpa Devi's *taanka*, the FIG's seed bank, and Seema ji's SHG loan book are three sizes of the same chain which reiterate the GROW+ model- "a layered system, not a single intervention."

Gender agency is moving through that chain, unevenly strongest at the household and community level, thinnest at the institutional table (one woman on the FPO board). Perception is outrunning evidence on the cancer-and-chemical-farming link, and already driving real cropping decisions regardless. Social norms are loosening in parallel at every scale, without any single programme designing it that way.

None of what the visitors saw was the work of a single intervention. A *taanka* took one family's persistence; an orchard took two decades of one man's grafting; an FPO took a thousand rupees each from five hundred farmers who each had to be convinced separately that the paperwork was worth it. The pyramid this report has followed household to community to institution is roughly how change actually moved through this landscape, and roughly where it is still asking for help.

Closing Reflections: From Individual Learning to Collective Action

The immersion closed with an open debrief, and what came back from more than thirty participants across a dozen organisations was less a list of takeaways than the same handful of convictions, said in different words by people who'd just watched them play out on the ground.





Delegates participating in the GROW+ field visit

Communities here are not short on knowledge what they lack is the institutional scaffolding to act on it at scale, and that scaffolding, the VDCs and FIGs and FPOs this visit walked through, is what turns individual persistence like Anoparam ji's orchard or Pauchi Devi's water walk into something a whole village can lean on. None of it arrived through a single grant or a single project; it built up over decades of the kind of unglamorous, recurring support VSS and GRAVIS have been giving since 1996 and 1983 respectively which is precisely why it has held.

"Each community has its own approach to address its problems. These approaches need to be supported with collaboration and orchestration."

— **Ashwin Iyer, Gates Foundation**

"Similar models of funding grassroot partners for their capacity building and organizational development should be extended to CSRs as well."

— **Bina Joshi, Forbes Marshall**

A second thread ran through the debrief: this landscape looks nothing like the Rajasthan most visitors thought they knew. As Johnson Topno of Partnering Hope Into Action (PHIA) Foundation put it, the culture, language and daily rhythm here are shaped by *jal, jungle aur zameen* — water, forest and land — and every institution this visit met, from a household taanka to a five-hundred-member FPO, is ultimately organised around managing those three things when two of them are scarce. Pradyut Bhattacharjee of SeSTA singled out VSS's own trajectory as the clearest proof that this model scales: an organisation that started by helping one household dig a tank has since learned to unlock government financing for drought mitigation across four blocks, a shift from dependency to negotiation that several participants called the most replicable part of the whole day.

But the reflection that outlasted every acronym in the room came from the community members themselves, in how often someone cut in with “*Mujhe bolne dijiye*” — let me speak. Thirty-plus visitors had come to hear about resilience; what they got, unprompted, was people who no longer waited to be asked.

With Gratitude

This visit would not have been possible without the openness and generosity of the communities of Ramdevpura and Bhakhri. Our deepest thanks to:

Vasundhara Seva Samiti (VSS) — for grounding the visit in lived reality at Ramdevpura, for accompanying this community since 1996, and for ensuring that every interaction remained rooted in dignity rather than performance.

Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) — for anchoring the desert landscape pyramid and the visit as a whole, and for grounding the afternoon at Bhakhri in decades of institution-building — FIGs, FPOs, seed banks, SHGs — that made it possible.

Our thanks also to Jan Sahas and Seven Sisters Development Assistance (SeSTA), GROW+’s newest Anchor Organisations, for joining as observers and peer-learners, and to EdelGive Foundation, along with the donors and CSR teams present, for making the day’s conversations as candid as they were.

MacArthur
Foundation



Jagdish Chander
Mehta & Family

Rashesh & Vidya Shah
Family Foundation



Your commitment and trust make it possible for grassroots leaders and communities to respond, adapt, and create lasting impact in an increasingly dynamic world.

While GRAVIS and PHIA continue to lead this work as Anchors, it is the many grassroots partners across these difficult landscapes bringing their own expertise, dedication, and willingness who make it whole.

We deeply value the trust and openness this partnership is built on, and it is with that same spirit, alongside PHIA and GRAVIS, that we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

GRAVIS's 16 Partner Network — Desert Landscape

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|---|--|
| 1. Apna Sansthan | 8. Mahan Seva Sanstha |
| 2. Center for Labour Research and Action (CLRA) | 9. Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti |
| 3. Society For Education Conscientisation Awareness & Training (ECAT) | 10. Meera Sansthan |
| 4. Foundation for Ecological and Environmental Sustainability Trust (FEEST) | 11. Navjyoti Mano Vikas Kendra Sanstha |
| 5. Gram Bharti Samiti | 12. Prayas Kendra Sansthan |
| 6. Gram Chetna Kendra | 13. Roman Catholic Diocesan Social Service Society (RCDSS) |
| 7. Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Laporiya (GVNML) | 14. Unnati |
| | 15. Urmul Khejri Sansthan |
| | 16. Vasundhara Seva Samiti |

PHIA's 18 Partner Network — Peninsular Plateau Landscape

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Abhivaykti Foundation | 11. Prakash Jan Sewa Sansthan (PJSS) |
| 2. Agragati | 12. Pratigya |
| 3. Alert Foundation | 13. Sahyogi Mahila |
| 4. Badlao Foundation | 14. Samvaad |
| 5. Chaupal Gramin Vikas Prashikshan Evam Shodh Sansthan | 15. Society for Advancement in Tribes, Health, Education and Environment (SATHEE) |
| 6. Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) | 16. Society for Promoting Rural Education and Development (SPREAD) |
| 7. Farmer's Organisation for Research, Welfare, Agriculture and Rural Development (FORWARD) | 17. Torpa Rural Development Society for Women (TRDSW) |
| 8. Jago Foundation | 18. Voluntary Integration for Education and Welfare of Society (VIEWS) |
| 9. Karra Society for Rural Action (KSRA) | |
| 10. Mahila Samagra Utthan Samiti | |

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to each participant for the seriousness, humility, and openness they brought to the visit. A field immersion asks something particular of those who undertake it, to set aside preconceived judgment and simply be present with what is in front of them. That quality of engagement was evident throughout the day, and it shaped the depth of the conversations that followed.

Sr.No.	Name of Participant	Organisation Name
1	Vidya Shah	EdelGive Foundation
2	Bina Joshi	Forbes Marshall
3	Sandilya Mutluru Venkata	Rainmatter Foundation
4	Ashwini Saxena	GMR Varalakshmi Foundation
5	Sakshi Grover	Ecolife Foundation
6	Supriya Koli	Raintree Foundation
7	Shivdas Wayal	Raintree Foundation
8	Manjyot Ahluwalia	Global Methane Hub
9	Sneha Philip	IDR
10	Tanmay Nag	SED Funds
11	Sai Kishore	GMR Group
12	Biswaranjan Kar	GMR Group
13	Abhishek Taneja	Earth Just Ecosystems
14	Tushar Verma	Earth Just Ecosystems
15	Ashwin Iyer	Gates Foundation
16	Mukesh Kumar Jain	Ambuja Foundation
17	Safi Ahsan Rizvi	Former IPS, Risk Analyst, Strategist
18	Zahid Johar	Altaz
19	Donald Lobo	Tech4Dev and Chintu Gudiya Foundation

Your participation enriched the exchange of ideas and reinforced the shared sense of purpose that binds our community together.



GROW+ : Climate Intelligent, Community-First Institutional Strengthening

Grassroots Resilience Ownership and Wellness (GROW) was launched in 2021 to provide flexible philanthropic support to 100 nonprofits across India, helping them rebuild institutional capacity in the aftermath of COVID-19. Based on the experiences of these organizations, GROW identified financial resilience, human resource strengthening, and technology adoption as critical areas for capacity building.

The program demonstrated that when nonprofits are empowered to invest in core organizational needs, they build the skills and resources necessary to address complex challenges. **Flexible funding allows organizations to first secure foundational needs—such as infrastructure, financial stability, and technology—before advancing toward sustainability and systemic impact.**

This progression mirrors Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: nonprofits address basic operational needs before enhancing adaptive capacities like network building and strategic communications, ultimately positioning themselves to drive systemic change through coalition-building and scaling solutions.

Building on these insights, GROW+ aims to continue investing in sector-wide capacity building. **GROW+ is a climate-intelligent capacity strengthening model that enables grassroots organisations to build resilient institutions, interpret climate realities, and drive community-led climate action.**

GROW+ is committed to:

- Facilitate the flow of financial resources to local actors who are best placed to implement solutions.
- Provide relevant capacity-building support to understand, absorb, and deploy the resources in ways that maximize their impact.
- Create systems for learning and adaptation, enabling the advancement of community-led climate action.

A landscape approach: A landscape-based approach will be developed basis broadly six landscapes in India based on physio geographic contours, such as:

- The Himalayan Mountains.
- The Northern Plains.
- Indian Desert.
- Peninsular Plateau.
- Coastal Plains.
- Islands.

These landscapes are further informed by climate signals such as temperature, rainfall, and air quality, allowing learning and strategy to respond to environmental realities.



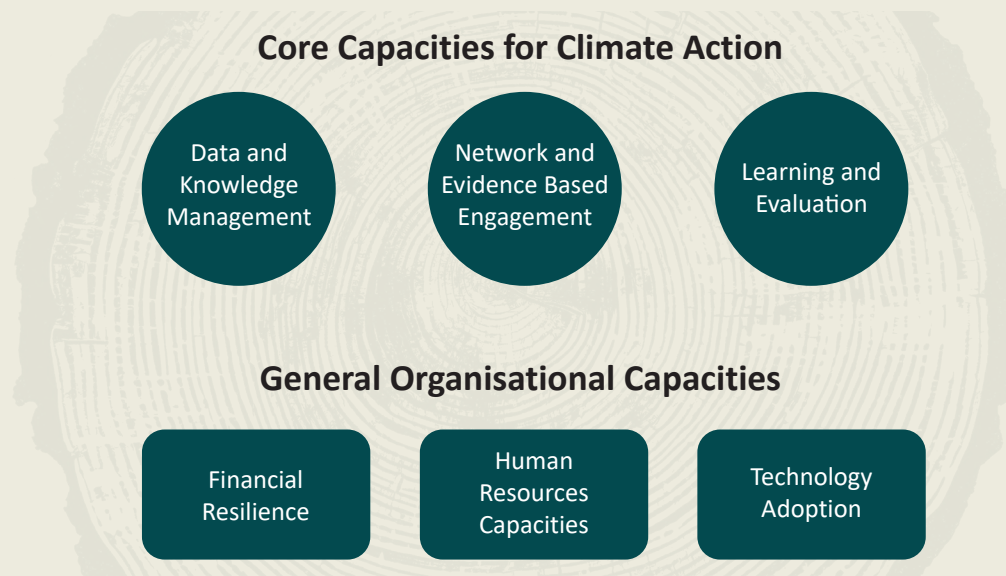
Why GROW+ Exists

Climate change is not only environmental disruption. It is institutional stress.

When rainfall becomes unpredictable, forests shrink, wildlife patterns change and migration intensifies, community organisations are the first line of response. Yet they are often the least structurally supported.

GROW+ addresses this gap. Resilience is not built by projects alone. It is built by strengthening the institutions that communities rely on.

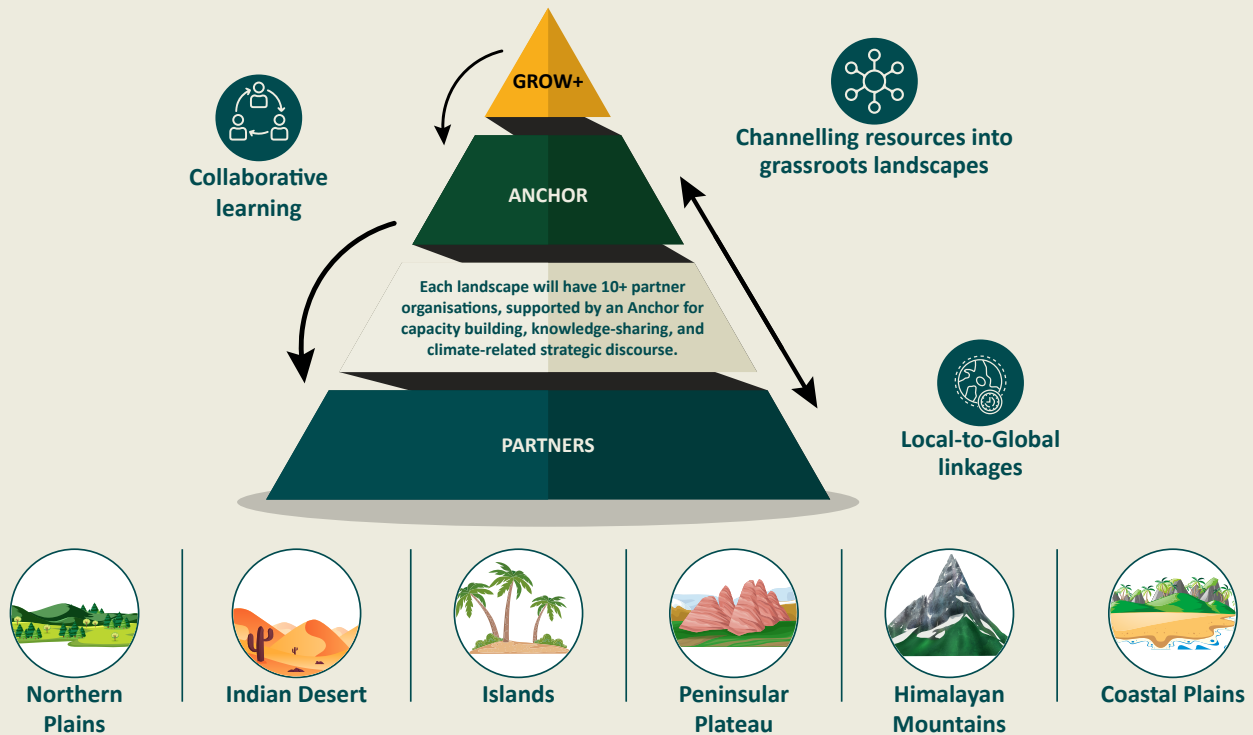
The Three Capacities



GROW Fund identified **financial resilience, human resource strengthening, and technology adoption** as critical areas for capacity building. GROW+ aims to build on the framework by integrating three interconnected capacities:

1. **Data**-Environmental signals, program data, and ecosystem realities are layered to understand climate stress in context.
2. **Evaluation**-Beyond outputs, organisations reflect on structural realities shaping impact: migration, governance, land rights, ecological shifts.
3. **Network**-Anchors and grassroots partners connect laterally across landscapes, allowing lessons to travel sideways rather than remain isolated.

The Pyramid Architecture



Each landscape is organised as a pyramid:

- **Anchor Organisation**-Long-term presence, institutional strength, coordination capacity.
- **Grassroots Partners**-Deep community trust and local knowledge.
- **Community Institutions**-Gram Sabhas, SHGs, farmer collectives, forest committees.

The pyramid is not hierarchical control. It is distributed reinforcement.

What Institutional Funding Enables

Institutional support translates into:

- Functional Gram Sabha secretariats
- Strengthened documentation and rights access
- Safety equipment and livelihood tools
- Cross-learning between landscapes
- Organisational steadiness in volatile climates

The impact is infrastructural, not episodic.

What Makes GROW+ Distinct

- Climate lens embedded in capacity strengthening
- Long-term Anchor commitment
- Cross-landscape learning (Desert ↔ Plateau)
- Community institutions treated as core assets
- Institutional funding rather than projectized grants

The Strategic Question for Philanthropy

If climate resilience depends on institutional strength, are we funding symptoms — or strengthening systems?

GROW+ chooses systems.

