



INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT GROWTH (ICRG)

Community-Led Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience  
October 2020- March 2024

# Impact Stories on Resilience Building

# Introduction:

The Infrastructure for Climate Resilient Growth (ICRG) Programme is a technical assistance (TA) programme, being delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development [MoRD], Government of India [GoI], and supported by the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO). The programme focuses on enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change impacts. Amid the 2020 COVID-19 crisis, ICRG adapted its plans to assist vulnerable households, including women, socially excluded communities, and distressed migrant workers across Bihar, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh. Partnering with government and community, PHIA Foundation addressed health and economic challenges induced by the pandemic, facilitating the delivery of social protection schemes for rapid access to essential resources such as food, cash, and employment opportunities. Post-July 2021, ICRG shifted its focus to climate mitigation goals and resilience building among vulnerable communities, leveraging India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to enhance ecosystem services, particularly for agriculture, fishery, and forest-based livelihood activities.

One of the core mandates of PHIA's work in the ICRG intervention was to empower vulnerable and marginalized communities by actively involving them in the processes of establishing linkages to diverse social security schemes, rights, entitlements, and relief measures. The project successfully created awareness and linked communities with Social Protection (SP) schemes, demonstrating a tangible impact on 41,240 individuals.

This document captures glimpses of social protection linkages facilitated through establishing networks, raising awareness, and facilitating access to essential schemes. The project has made a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals, especially those belonging to marginalized and vulnerable groups, and has contributed to broader socio-economic development in the targeted areas.

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# 1 The Journey of Empowerment in MGNREGA Participation

COVID-19's impact on daily wage laborers from the Musahar community in Gorpa village of Agiaon block, Bhojpur district, Bihar, has been severe. With work opportunities declining sharply in the local areas, families were struggling to make ends meet.

Recognizing this, the ICRG team initiated community meetings and approached the Mukhiya for MGNREGA work. Despite lower wages compared to the local market, community members agreed to participate, given the distressing circumstances.

With the support of the Mukhiya and Panchayat Rozgar Sevak, a list of 20 people was prepared, and work commenced on May 20, 2021. The promise of weekly payments has been fulfilled, providing crucial support to marginalized families. Additionally, Mukhiya ensured dry ration support to each family so that children from the needy families do not have to sleep hungry.



***“We are poor and illiterate, and MGNREGA work seemed daunting. However, constant awareness efforts by the ICRG team gave us the confidence to demand work during this crisis. We are happy to receive the support in this extreme financial situation.”***  
***Munna Manjhi, Beneficiary and community member***



## 2 From Fear to Safety for Vulnerable Communities

Madhubani district in Bihar often faces floods due to three major rivers: Kamla, Balan, and Kosi. The situation becomes alarming due to the absence of safe drinking water, poor sanitation, and hygiene measures Dalit Tola in the Rahua Panchayat is inhabited by the Saday community and houses almost 900 people. The main road to the village has been a dirt road for many years, and water logging during the rainy season poses severe problems for the community. The road has remained unrepaired for several years, and soil erosion during past monsoons has washed away the roads at several points. The challenge increases manifold during emergencies in the monsoons as road connectivity to the village is completely cut off. There have also been incidents of children drowning in the waterlogged ditches, which are not visible and pose a significant hazard.

When the ICRG team started meeting the community in January 2021, realized that this issue needs a quick and permanent resolution as it was impacting the lives of several Dalit families in the area. In the past, the attitude of the Mukhiya has

been indifferent or lukewarm to the suggestion of getting a permanent Puliya (small bridge) constructed on the road to address the problem.

The ICRG team saw a chance during the upcoming Panchayat Elections in June 2021. They rallied the community to demand the construction of the Puliya under MGNREGA as part of their manifesto. The Mukhiya had to listen to the community's strong demands and, after negotiations, work on the Puliya began in April 2021 and completed.



*“Our hamlet becomes waterlogged during the monsoon in the absence of the Puliya, and children fear drowning in the water-filled pits. Now, children are protected, and the waterlogging problems will also be resolved” Vishnu Manjhi, resident of the Dalit tola*

# 3 MGNREGA as a lifeline for Migrants During the Pandemic

Returning migrants faced the challenge of re-establishing their livelihoods back home during the second wave of COVID-19. Many struggled with the meager wages offered by MGNREGS and the mismatch between available work and their skill set. In April 2021, 150 migrants returned to Nawada Panchayat in Madehpur block from cities like Haryana and Delhi. The ICRG team and PRI members arranged for their testing and quarantine upon arrival. Recognizing the unemployment crisis, a list of willing workers was prepared during a meeting with the CBOs.

The ICRG team, through its local presence, persuaded the gram panchayat secretary to initiate MGNREGA works to provide wages to these migrant families. Many members of these families were engaged in works such as road construction within the panchayat. The workers received guidance on personal hygiene and COVID-19 prevention measures from the ICRG team, and free masks were provided by both the village head and the Mukhiya. Water facilities were also made available at the construction site, benefiting a total of 350 families during this challenging time of the pandemic.

*“We were initially hesitant to engage the workers due to the risk of infection, considering their recent return from cities with high infection rates. However, consistent pressure and encouragement from the community and the ICRG team led us to involve them in the work. We are committed to ensuring that these families receive free ration as announced by the government over the next two months.”*

*Priyanka Pandey, Mukhiya*



# 4 Enhancing Agriculture and Income with MGNREGA

Jaigir Sangram Village is located in Rahua Sangram Gram Panchayat of Madehpur Block in Madhubani district. Primarily comprising of small and marginal farmers, 120 households mainly depend on the agriculture-based livelihood. In recent years, these farmers have faced huge losses due to low productivity, water logging, and lack of proper drainage channel in their agriculture lands. To address these issues raised by the community members, the ICRG Team selected and recommended the sites for re-excavation of pyne in Jaigir village.

ICRG field team along with MGNREGA functionaries discussed with the community members to identify the most pressing challenges and demands, where it was noted that the pyne was not conserving water after rainy season. The Gram Sabha proposed pyne de-siltation work, which would not only generate employment for wage seekers but would also help in improving irrigation in the area.

Identified climate resilient works were integrated into MGNREGA action plan through Gram Sabha. De-siltation was carried out on a total length of 2400 ft of the pyne; a 0-3% slope was maintained every 100 ft from bottom to side; the top width of the pyne was increased from 7ft to 10ft while the bottom width was increased by 3 ft. These interventions facilitated the smooth flow of floodwater and increased the capacity of the pyne to hold water. The total cost of the structure was INR 4.95 lakhs. About 60 -70 hectares of land are treated in the ICRG intervention.



*“Continuous community engagement, visits and technical support of MGNREGA along with ICRG team has helped us to identify the actual problems, its cause and solution which has benefitted our agriculture activities and income.”*

*Community members, Jagir Sangram village, Madhubani, Bihar*

# 5 Waterlogging mitigation towards enhanced resilience of vulnerable communities

Jagir Sangram village, situated in Rahua Sangram Panchayat of Madehpur Block in Madhubani district, Bihar, faces recurrent waterlogging issues due to floods. The village, home to nearly 120 scheduled caste families, experiences severe inundation for 5-6 months annually, compelling residents to migrate and leading to significant losses in livelihoods, crop production, and tragic drowning incidents.

The ICRG team identified this pressing issue during community meetings and devised a strategy to tackle it through MGNREGA. A resource map was developed under technical guidance to pinpoint the causes of waterlogging. It was discovered that an irrigation channel constructed 15 years ago from Belahi Dih to Gehuma River had silted, exacerbating the problem. Facilitated discussions and transect walks revealed that lack of silt removal and encroachment of canals by farmers were the primary culprits.

To mitigate the issue, the community integrated the identified irrigation channel into the MGNREGA action plan in 2021 through the Gram Sabha, and work commenced accordingly. 32 scheduled caste families accessed MGNREGA employment, generating 480 person-days of work and addressing the waterlogging menace.

*“Learning the development of action plan by the community is empowering and this pyne will benefit our agriculture and income.”*  
*Community members, Jagir Sangram village*





## 6 Collaborating for Change

Village Chakdah-Pachdahi in Rampur Mani Gram Panchayat is one of several villages in Sakra Block, Muzaffarpur district, where the ICRG program is being implemented. Over the years, changing rainfall patterns and increasing heat have affected agricultural productivity, particularly for small and marginal farmers. Migration has been a major coping mechanism due to limited employment opportunities, especially for landless and small farmers.

During village-level consultations for planning under MGNREGA, farm ponds were suggested as a mitigation measure for marginal farmers. Mr. Himanshu Kumar, a marginal farmer with only about 1.5 acres of land, embraced this solution for water retention and income generation. The ICRG team supported the community and the technical team of MGNREGA, in identifying an appropriate site for the farm pond and provided suggestions for making the structure more resilient and durable, including maintaining proper slope, inlet and outlet, and bund plantation for slope stabilization.

During the construction of the farm pond, about 70 people from the village were employed. The next step was to link beneficiaries with the fisheries department for capacity building and training in pisciculture. The ICRG team also facilitated access to correct fish eggs and provided precautionary measures for sustaining the seed. Additionally, the farmer is utilizing water from the pond for vegetable farming.

***“When I met the ICRG team at a Ward Sabha meeting and learned about the ICRG program, I shared my idea with them. They fully supported me and connected me with a fishery training center. Since then, I have also trained other youth from my village in fishery and allied activities.”***  
***Himanshu Kumar, beneficiary, sakra block, Muzaffarpur***



# 7 From Awareness to Action - Rejuvenating Traditional Sources of Water

Hariya village in Barachatti Block of Gaya district, Bihar, has been facing severe water stress, with the groundwater table declining annually due to rising temperatures, leading to drought-like conditions. Of the 100 households in the village, 70 belong to the Scheduled Caste (Manjhi) community, many of whom work as laborers or are marginal farmers. Situated close to a hillock and a forested area, during the monsoon season, water from higher elevations used to collect in the Gangti ghat.

About two decades ago, villagers constructed a pyne (small canal) spanning 2200 feet to connect Gangti ghat Ahar (pond) to Ahnautwa Ahar, aiming to alleviate water scarcity. However, due to lack of maintenance, the pyne became dysfunctional, causing water loss between the two Ahars. Recognizing this issue, the construction of the pyne was identified as a priority work under MGNREGA during community consultations for the village development plan. The ICRG team provided technical inputs to design the pyne, ensuring low maintenance and increased durability to withstand climate changes. This intervention not only aims to increase agricultural incomes for Hariya and adjacent villages but also generate employment for local MGNREGA job card holders.

***“We learned about climate-resilient structures, which encouraged us to raise the issue in our village assemblies. With their support, we registered this critical structure in the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, ensuring its reconstruction. This initiative will greatly benefit the Manjhi community, enhancing our resilience and livelihoods.”***

***Vikas Manjhi, active member of Manjhi community***



# 8 Bridging the Gap by Enhanced Access to Food Security

Prabha Kullu resides in Salgaposh Bazartoli, located in Koromiya Panchayat, That Haitangar block, Simdega. Despite having only elementary education and a small plot of land for rainfed farming, Prabha and her husband struggled to make ends meet. They relied on wage labor, but it wasn't sufficient, prompting them to consider migrating to another state for better opportunities.

Although eligible for ration through the Public Distribution System, Prabha found it challenging to navigate the process of obtaining a ration card due to lack of information and support. Learning about ICRG's work in the neighboring panchayat, she sought assistance from the ICRG team to access government assistance. Upon discovering Prabha's lack of a ration card, the Coordinator decided to help her start by applying for one. Prabha was guided through the application process, and with assistance in filling out the form, she gained confidence to approach the Mukhiya herself. The Mukhiya approved her application, and Prabha submitted it.

After a month, the ration dealer received the list of approved applicants, and Prabha's name was included. Overjoyed, she showed the ration card to the ICRG team, feeling like she had discovered a treasure.

*"After receiving the entitled ration, my plans to migrate have been postponed."*

*Prabha Kullu from village Salgaposh Bazartoli*



# 9 Hope Restored for Health Emergencies

Isahac Dang resides with his family in Bamblekera Panchayat, Rania Block, Khunti District. Their sole income source is daily wages from casual labor, leaving little for other expenses, especially medical emergencies. Consequently, they often had to borrow money or deplete their savings to cover healthcare costs.

During a community meeting organized under ICRG intervention on social security entitlements, Isahac shared his struggles and sought assistance. He was informed about the Ayushman Card, providing a health cover of Rs. 5,00,000 for him and his family, along with the required documentation.

Having the necessary documents, Isahac and his wife were eager to apply for the Ayushman Card but requested assistance. The Gram Panchayat Coordinator accompanied them to the nearest CSC Center, where they completed the registration process and paperwork. Within two days, they received their Ayushman Card. Now, Isahac's family has access to healthcare from the local hospital when needed, alleviating the burden of expensive private doctors and medicines.

***“Knowing the benefits and access to health card is big relief for my family in case of any health emergencies.”  
Savdhani Dang***





# 10 Reviving Rural Water Sources through Community Efforts

Jahangir village, located in Rohi Gram Panchayat, Barachatti Block, Gaya district, has been grappling with severe water scarcity issues, leading to a depletion of the groundwater table. The village relies on water collected from hills and nearby forests, channelled into ponds via pynes, for irrigation purposes. This water source benefits more than 50 farmers in Jahangir village and approximately 150 farmers across Mayapur, Darbar, and Ghat Bigha villages. However, over time, sedimentation has reduced the water holding capacity of the main pond, which spans 100 feet by 70 feet.

Community meetings with the ICRG team addressed the declining water table issue, emphasizing the importance of rejuvenating the pond to enhance irrigation and agricultural production. With proactive efforts by the community with Gram Panchayat members, the development and restoration of the pond were incorporated into the MGNREGA action plan.

With the guidance of the ICRG team, a detailed plan was developed collaboratively involving PRI members and villagers. The plan encompasses excavation, construction of water outlets linked to the ahar, and plantation surrounding the pond. Community members have pledged to engage in fishery activities once the pond restoration is finished. It's estimated that the pond could recharge around 1,500,000 kilolitres of water annually, benefiting roughly 15 hectares of land in the vicinity.

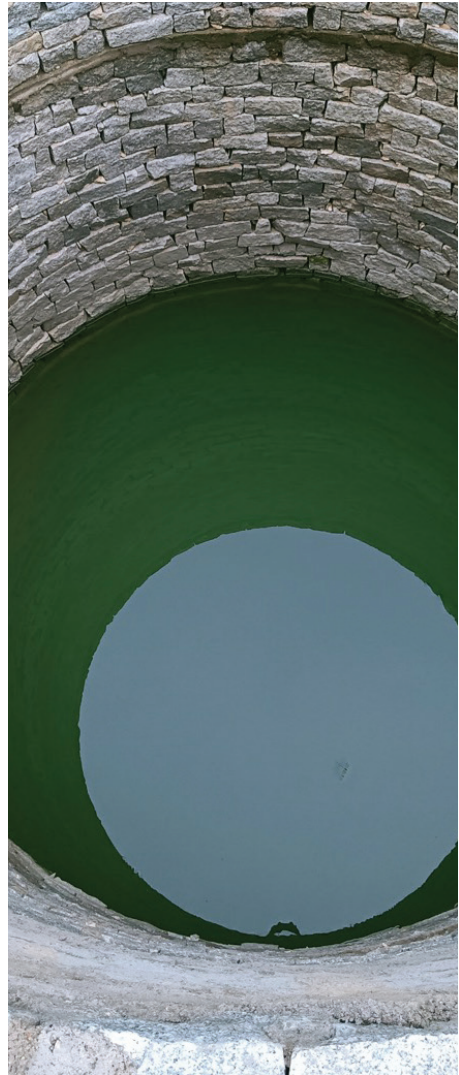
***"I am hopeful that cultivating vegetables on my land will significantly boost my family's income. The dug well will not only irrigate the fields but also contribute to groundwater storage and recharge."  
Manu Devi, President of the CBO in the village Jahangir Village.***



# 11 Addressing the Water Crisis Together

Ram Pratap Pradhan and his family reside in Khijurtand village, part of Joram Gram Panchayat in Tethaitanagar block, Simdega district, Jharkhand. Ram Pratap, along with his wife, relies on agriculture and forest produce for their livelihood. They supplement their income by selling kharif vegetables in the local market. Ram Pratap aspired to cultivate vegetables throughout the year but lacked irrigation facilities.

To address this, Ram Pratap was guided to apply for the construction of a well under the MGNREGA on his land, aiming to enhance his family's livelihood. Post application and approval, the scheme was sanctioned in the fiscal year 2021-22, with an allocated amount of INR 4.67 lakhs, covering both wages and materials. The ICRG team provided technical guidance for the project implementation. As part of the scheme, Ram Pratap constructed a 15' by 35' well with 900+ man-days of work in constructing the well. Ram Pratap expresses optimism about cultivating vegetables on his 1.5-acre land, anticipating a significant increase in family income.



***"I am hopeful that cultivating vegetables on my land will significantly boost my family's income. The dug well will not only irrigate the fields but also contribute to groundwater storage and recharge."***  
***Ram Pratap, Farmer, Khijurtand village***

# 12 Harnessing Potential through Mango Plantation

Susani Surin, a member of the tribal community residing in Siringbera village of Bambalkera gram panchayat, Thethaitangar block, Simdega, Jharkhand, is primarily engaged in agriculture, focusing on vegetable cultivation. Despite owning 3 acres of land, one acre remained fallow. During a village meeting on MGNREGA and related schemes, Susani expressed interest in developing her fallow land.

The ICRG team assisted Susani in applying for the development of this one-acre plot into a fruit orchard under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, in coordination with other schemes. The project was approved with funding of INR 3.77 lakh in September 2022.

A total of 112 saplings, including 80 mangoes and the remainder timber saplings, have been planted on the plot. Susani also continues to cultivate vegetables on some of her other land concurrently. Inspired by Susani's mango orchard, 12 other villagers have applied for the scheme, with 3 of them also receiving benefits.

*“This assistance enabled me to plant mango saplings in my field and continue vegetable cultivation until the fruit saplings mature. I envision a future where my asset becomes productive, contributing to an increase in my household income.”*  
*Susani Surin, Siringbera village*



# 13 Enhancing Livelihoods and Water Access

Udit Dungdung, a 45-year-old member of the Scheduled Tribe community residing in Baghchatta Gram Panchayat, Simdega district, supports a family of four through farming on his 5-acre land. However, due to water scarcity, he has been reliant solely on rainwater for irrigation.

Through multiple meetings organized by the ICRG team in collaboration with community leaders, attitudes towards MGNREGA began to shift among villagers. During one such awareness session, Udit was encouraged to apply for an irrigation well for his farmland. The team assured Udit in completing the application process, which was eventually approved in the Gram Sabha meetings.

Udit's application was sanctioned, receiving INR 4.67 lakh, inclusive of labor costs for 929 days. With the completion of the well, Udit now irrigate 2 acres of his land. He plans to utilize this water resource to cultivate vegetables for sale in the local market, thereby diversifying his income sources.

***"The well not only benefits me but also provides drinking water for myself and other farmers. Additionally, our cattle can now access water from the source without having to travel long distances."***  
**Udit Dungdung, Farmer,  
Baghchatta Gram Panchayat**





# 14 Pyne Di-siltation enhancing irrigation facilities benefitting 16 Villages

Dhanawa village, located in the Sarwan panchayat of the Barachatti block, faced severe water scarcity issues exacerbated by encroachment, water-logging, and silt accumulation, severely impacting farm productivity. In response, ICRG team, working through community-based organizations (CBOs), developed a plan for pyne desiltation from GT Road Mayapur to Jamunia Ahar. This plan was approved through the Gram Sabha in FY2021-22 and incorporated into the MGNREGA action plan, with work commencing in February 2022.

The completion of pyne desiltation and proposed bund plantation mitigating soil erosion and strengthen the structure, ensuring water availability for irrigation in approximately 200 acres of land. This initiative benefited 250-300 farmers from marginalized and other backward class communities across four villages. Additionally, 12 Musahar families gained employment opportunities during the desiltation process, working for 14 days. The total project cost amounted to INR 506,811, generating 2509 person-days of work.

*“The desiltation work will reduce excess water irrigation through borewells, positively impacting water resources management. The water collected in the Ahar will provide benefits to vulnerable communities in 16 villages.”*  
**Prema, Panchayat Samiti member, Sarwan panchayat, Gaya, Bihar**



# 15 Madi's Journey with the PVTG Pension Scheme

SidhaGhati, a secluded village nestled in the Littipara block of Pakur district, rests amidst the Rajmahal hills and is home to the Shauria Pahariyas, an ethnic tribal group of Jharkhand. With a total of 22 families comprising 50 men, 40 women, and children, the village presents a picture of remote isolation. The journey to reach the Panchayat headquarter in Karmatand requires traversing a challenging 6-kilometer path downhill.

Madi Paharin, a resident of SidhaGhati, resides with her husband and three children, relying primarily on forest produce and subsistence agriculture for livelihood. However, with the forests dwindling and climate stresses intensifying, including erratic rains, soil erosion, and rising temperatures, the family faces increasing challenges. To supplement their income, Sarja Pahariya, Madi's husband, often migrates to cities like Delhi and Chennai, leaving Madi to manage the household and children.



Recognizing the vulnerabilities of the Shauria Pahariyas, the Central government has designated them as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) and introduced the PVTG pension scheme to provide social security. Under this scheme, married women of the community, including Madi, are eligible for a monthly pension of Rs.1000. However, due to the community's low literacy rates and limited access to services, many are unaware of or unable to access these benefits.

Madi, a member of the Kathal Aajieevika Swayam Sahayata Samooh, a Self-Help Group (SHG) supported by the NRLM, was identified as a potential beneficiary during an awareness meeting facilitated by the PHIA program implementor in November 2022. Her application was duly filled, and she was assisted in submitting it along with the necessary documents at the Littipara block office. Since January 2023, Madi has been receiving the PVTG pension of Rs. 1000 per month, which has alleviated some of the family's financial burdens.

***“Now that I receive Rs. 1000, it has become easier to manage the needs of my family.”***  
**Madi Paharin**



## About us

### About Government of the UK, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

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### Partnering Hope Into Action Foundation (PHIA)

PHIA is a Charitable Trust registered in India in 2005. PHIA has a vision for a society free from poverty, exclusion and discrimination where all people live with justice, peace and dignity. PHIA works for the eradication of poverty among the poor, vulnerable, and marginalised communities in India and empowers them to be in charge of their own development. It works on the themes of - Access to Essential Services, Reducing Inequality and Bridging Gender Gap, Ensuring Sustainable Livelihoods and Humanitarian Response and Mitigating Climate Change responding to the calling of the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality crosscuts all of PHIA's work. PHIA's interventions and programs are focused in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi NCR and Leh District in Ladakh. It works on both short term and long-term development interventions and humanitarian responses.

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