

FROM ACTION TO IMPACT



PARTNERING HOPE INTO ACTION FOUNDATION
JOURNEY AND IMPACT

This report is co created by
Nimisha Mittal (Consultant), Shreya Singh, Avinav Kumar & Sunpreet Singh.
with inputs from PHIA team across states.

Year of Publishing 2025

Photographs by PHIA Foundation

All photographs in this document were converted into
hand-drawn-style sketches using AI-assisted image transformation tools.



Partnering Hope Into Action Foundation
Trust registered in 2005
Registered under 80G

www.phia.org.in

LinkedIn - [linkedin.com/company/phiafoundation/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/phiafoundation/)

Instagram - [instagram.com/foundationphia/](https://www.instagram.com/foundationphia/)

Reach us at

info@phia.org.in

+91-11-2625 8107

Registered Office

D25/D, First Floor, South Extension II, New Delhi -110049 India

FROM ACTION TO IMPACT

PHIA Foundation's Journey and Impact

2005-2025

PARTNERING HOPE INTO ACTION FOUNDATION

Introduction

Since its inception in 2005, Partnering Hope Into Action Foundation (PHIA), an Indian Charitable Trust, has been dedicated to transforming the lives of poor, vulnerable and marginalised communities. Initially focused on providing educational support to children from waste-picking families in the National Capital Region (NCR), PHIA Foundation has significantly broadened its scope over the years operating in multiple regions, addressing a wide range of development challenges to empower communities facing severe hardships.

With a mission to help build thriving communities, PHIA is committed to empowering poor, vulnerable and marginalised communities to take control of their own development, life and livelihoods. The organisation's work spans various thematic areas, including climate change adaptation, enhancing access to essential services such as education, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), health and nutrition, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and offering humanitarian response and disaster preparedness. This multifaceted approach ensures that PHIA can address the diverse needs of the communities it serves.

PHIA's collaborative ecosystem approach is at core of its strategy and all interventions. It partners with government agencies, private sector entities, philanthropic organisations, civil society groups, academic institutions, and community-based organisations to amplify its impact. Through these partnerships, the organisation leverages resources and expertise to drive sustainable development and resilience among marginalised populations.

As it continues to expand its reach and impact, it is committed to create equitable, inclusive and sustainable communities. By addressing both immediate needs and long-term development goals, PHIA Foundation is making significant strides toward a more just and thriving society in India.

DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE JOURNEY

Formative Decade: 2005-2015

PHIA Foundation's roots lie in the work carried out by Christian Aid India, which had been active since the 1950s in India, supporting grassroots civil society organisation and movements, disaster response, and social justice initiatives. During this formative decade, the focus was on enabling local leadership, building institutional partnerships, and supporting movements that addressed poverty, inequality, caste-based discrimination, and exclusion of tribal communities.

This period helped lay the foundation for PHIA's key working principles which include community-led development, dignity of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised communities, and barrier free access to rights and entitlements. PHIA was therefore registered as an independent Indian legal entity, as a Charitable Trust, with a vision to work on localised civil society action, network-building, and working towards the development of the historically marginalised Dalit and Adivasi communities and gender justice. With this ethos PHIA initiated its urban education intervention in NCR of Delhi in 2015 to work with children whose families are involved in rag-picking, an exploitative and undignified occupation resulting in loss of education and childhood for the children.

However, this formative decade did not see much expansion or deepening of PHIA's work. It however remained committed to organisation building with an unwavering focus to serve the most marginalised and historically deprived communities, staying compliant to all applicable legislations in India.



2016 to 2020 PACS Legacy till FCRA Amendment and COVID-19

PHIA was chosen to develop the legacy of the Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme which concluded in 2017. PACS was a large scale civil society programme of DFID – UK focusing on rights, entitlements and inclusion of marginalised communities in 100 poorest districts of India. With over 200 civil society partners it had created immense social capital and traction in the intervention areas and there was an agreed opportunity to build on the same and strengthen it.

PHIA also took upon the challenging task of generating local resources to fulfil this mandate and expand its work. Four states emerged as priority which included, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. However, with minimal track record of work as an organisation and financial turnover, it was a complex task to explain and convince resource support organisations about PHIA's abilities and intent. Fortunately, with the credibility of PHIA's Governing Board and operational leadership the organisation found trust from multiple donors to implement programmes aligned to its vision and mission.

This was a phase when PHIA significantly expanded its work through network-based models, collaborating with community-based organisations, CSO networks, and district administrations. Programmes were marked by a strong grassroots presence, community focus and capacity-building orientation.

PHIA also obtained its FCRA registration in 2018, enabling it to access foreign funding and thus expand its donor base. However, the FCRA Amendment Act of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic brought about major operational shifts. FCRA restrictions constrained network based work through international funding, while the pandemic demanded urgent reorientation of efforts to humanitarian response.

PHIA responded by pivoting quickly delivering COVID relief to over 3 million people across 13 states, working closely with state governments and civil society, and mobilising volunteers. This demonstrated PHIA's agility, trust within the development ecosystem, and the credibility it had built in high-risk, low-resource settings.

2021 Onwards Deepening Reach, Expanding Presence, and Strengthening State Partnerships

From 2021 onwards, PHIA Foundation entered a phase of strategic growth and direct implementation, responding to changing regulatory environments and the evolving needs of communities. Having built a strong foundation in partnership-based work, the organisation moved decisively into on-ground intervention, expanding its programme teams and strengthening internal systems to sustain high impact community engagement.

One of the most defining features of this period has been geographic expansion. PHIA extended its operations to newer regions such as Ladakh, Punjab, and Delhi NCR, while deepening its presence in core focus states like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. Across these geographies, the focus has remained on deprived pockets and historically excluded populations, including tribal groups, denotified communities, migrant workers, informal labourers, and gender minorities.

The transition to direct implementation has enabled more responsive and grounded programming, allowing PHIA to better align interventions with local needs and realities. Whether working with young people across states, tribal communities and local leaders in Jharkhand, Musahar communities in Bihar or the tribal communities in Ladakh, the emphasis has been on community-led change and an inclusive approach.

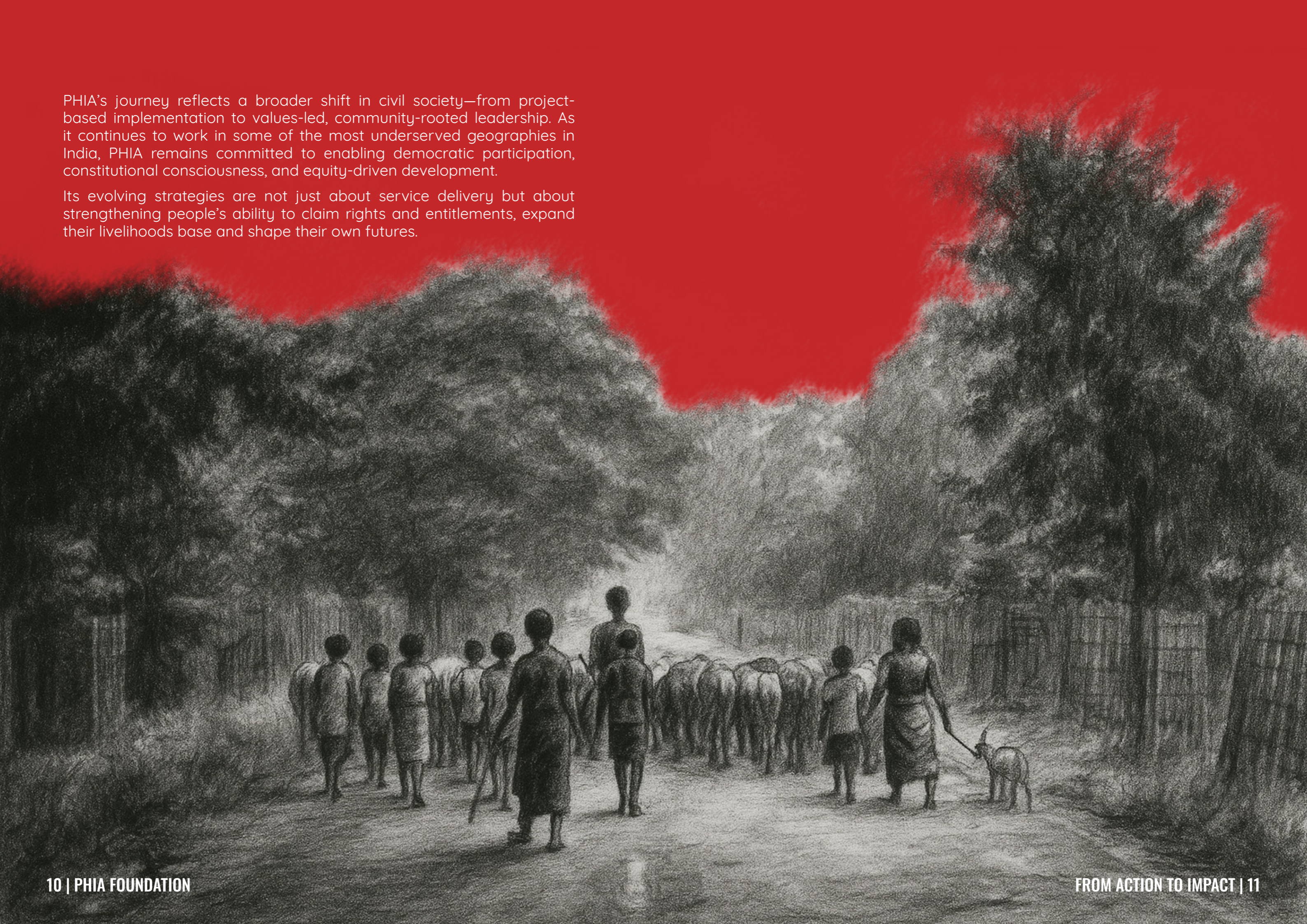
PHIA has also invested significantly in expanding its team, bringing in experienced human resources to work with young people, livelihoods, governance, constitutional values, gender, public health and communication. These additions have enhanced the organisation's ability to work across sectors while maintaining a strong equity and inclusion lens.

Another key development has been the strengthening of partnerships with state governments and local administrations. PHIA has collaborated on various initiatives—ranging from health system strengthening and COVID response, to constitutional literacy, education access, and youth engagement. These partnerships reflect a growing recognition of PHIA as a credible civil society actor that can bridge the gap between policy intent and grassroots realities.

This phase also reinforced PHIA's identity as a locally rooted, values-driven Indian organisation—resilient in the face of shifting civic space, and committed to building democratic voice from the ground up.

PHIA's journey reflects a broader shift in civil society—from project-based implementation to values-led, community-rooted leadership. As it continues to work in some of the most underserved geographies in India, PHIA remains committed to enabling democratic participation, constitutional consciousness, and equity-driven development.

Its evolving strategies are not just about service delivery but about strengthening people's ability to claim rights and entitlements, expand their livelihoods base and shape their own futures.



HOW DOES PHIA ARTICULATE IMPACT?

PHIA Foundation articulates impact not in terms of short-term outputs or numerical reach alone, but as a process of long-lasting social transformation grounded in equity, dignity, and justice. At the core of its work lies a simple but powerful belief that real change happens when the most marginalised gain voice, agency, and visibility in systems that have historically excluded them.

For PHIA, impact is articulated when dignity is restored for a discriminated Musahar community through engaging in gainful livelihoods, when a Tribal or Dalit girl can continue her education without fear of discrimination, when a community can take leadership in articulating their own development aspirations and prepare a village level plan, get it approved and implement and monitor it, when women can facilitate dialogue in a gram sabha, or when a denotified community organises to preserve its culture and claim constitutional rights. These changes, and many more such examples, are centric to PHIA's understanding of impact and are not unintended positive change of a development intervention. For PHIA these are central indicators of success.

PHIA's programmes intentionally focus on skewing existing power equations, be it around caste, gender, location, or identity. The organisation works in regions where inequality is most visible and opportunities most limited, and it strives to place power in the hands of those traditionally excluded from it. Through fellowships, leadership development, and community mobilisation, PHIA enables people not just to access services, rights and entitlements, but to question norms, challenge hierarchies, and demand accountability.

Gender justice and social transformation are woven into all areas of PHIA's work. Programmes aim to shift not only the conditions but also the attitudes that perpetuate discrimination. This includes supporting young women and girls to negotiate mobility, education, and leadership in deeply patriarchal contexts, and engaging men and boys to reflect on power, privilege, and equality. Impact is seen not just in changed behaviours, but in changed relationships within families, communities, and institutions.

PHIA views leadership as a critical pathway to sustained impact. Community members are not seen as project recipients, but as potential changemakers. When a fellow convenes a dialogue on the Constitution, when a youth group starts its own collective, when a gram sabha takes leadership in planning and implementing development programmes, or when local volunteers take ownership of relief work, these are signs that the community is beginning to drive its own development agenda.

The organisation also understands that many of the inequities it addresses including poverty, exclusion, gender discrimination, marginalisation, are intergenerational. Thus, PHIA's work is designed to break long-standing cycles of deprivation through investment in young people, community collectives, collective learning spaces, and sustained engagement.

Impact, for PHIA, means building systems of support, awareness, and leadership that can last beyond any single intervention. It is reflected in the confidence of a first-generation learner, in the self-organisation of women's groups, in the quiet assertion of constitutional values in rural spaces. It is about reshaping the terms on which people engage with society and with each other.

PHIA sees impact not only in improved indicators but in transformed power dynamics, expanded freedoms, and strengthened capacity for collective action. That is the foundation on which real equity and justice are built.

547,157

households connected
to meaningful livelihoods

more than **100** projects
implemented

584 community
institutions
created & strengthened

1,37,730

Individual to safe &
responsible migration

377
gram sabhas
empowered



20.8 million

lives impacted

4.6 million

reached through humanitarian support

4.8 million

bridged digital
gender divide

₹ 87.7

million invested in
the community

29,088

children & youth
transformed

ARTICULATION OF IMPACT THROUGH PHIA'S WORK

1. Impact created through investing in Communities' Capacity and Agency

Over the years, PHIA has worked with communities in some of the most remote and under-served areas, helping them come together, organise, and take charge of their own development. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) promoted and nurtured by PHIA have played a transformative role in empowering local communities by nurturing grassroots leadership, ensuring participation and inclusion, strengthening livelihoods base and influencing local governance systems to create impact at grassroots.

PHIA understands that impact is lasting and best created when communities take ownership and leadership in defining and shaping it. It therefore becomes imperative to nurture grassroots leadership and action.

CBOs created, promoted and nurtured by PHIA have a wide range of issue based character ranging from those focused on improving livelihoods and incomes, responding to humanitarian crisis, to those focused on creating a bridge between policy and programme intent of the state and their last mile delivery. The underlying principles however remains that of building local leadership which promotes inclusion, equity and equality. These CBOs have become the centre of PHIA's interventions, bringing people together, helping them understand their rights, take collective decisions, and move towards getting what they are rightfully owed.

These CBOs have been instrumental in mobilizing and organizing farmers' groups—particularly those led by women—ensuring they have a platform to voice their concerns, access government schemes, and make informed decisions regarding their livelihoods. Through consistent capacity-building efforts, PHIA has enabled these groups to engage more actively in Gram Sabha meetings, where they have successfully advocated for their rights related to land, livelihood, food security, and social protection.

Moreover, these community based organizations have enhanced transparency and accountability in local governance by facilitating dialogue between communities and Panchayati Raj Institutions. Women, who were traditionally excluded from decision-making spaces, are now emerging as leaders and active stakeholders in village development processes. Their involvement has led to tangible outcomes such as the inclusion of marginalized households in welfare programs, improved access to agricultural resources, and better planning and implementation of development initiatives. The collective strength and informed participation brought in by these CBOs have thus created a ripple effect ensuring not only improved service delivery but also a more equitable and participatory model of development.

The manifestation of PHIA's work with CBOs is best illustrated through examples like the response of these CBOs during the COVID-19 pandemic. In multiple districts of Jharkhand where PHIA has been working through multiple interventions communities didn't wait for help to arrive. Instead, the CBOs took leadership in initiating community COVID care centres, trained local youth and frontline workers, spread awareness, and made sure vaccines reached even the farthest of the hamlets. More than 7,000 people got tested, and over 7,700 were vaccinated—not in hospitals, but in village spaces run by the community itself.

In Sakra block of Muzaffarpur district of Bihar, a dried-up pond used to be just another forgotten corner. The village CBO promoted and strengthened by PHIA under its climate resilience programme saw immense potential. It took leadership in getting it cleaned and initiating fish farming through community participation and contribution. Fruit bearing and shade giving trees were planted along the banks and what was once a wasteland is now a source of food, income, and pride for 60 Dalit families in the village.

These stories are not exceptions—they are the new norm where CBOs are active. They've helped villagers participate more confidently in Gram Sabhas, understand how schemes work, and claim what is due to them—whether it is social security entitlements like ration cards, pensions, or housing support. In tribal areas, especially under the PESA Act, CBOs have revived traditional governance systems, set up Gram Sabha secretariats, and brought back the culture of people making decisions together.

PHIA's experience with CBOs have shown that real change doesn't always come from outside. Sometimes, all a community needs is a little handholding and space to organise. Once that happens, they find their own strength. They ask the right questions. They knock on the right doors. And more often than not they find the abilities and strength to open them.

2. Community-Led Climate Resilience

The climate crisis disproportionately affects poor, vulnerable, and marginalized communities—those least responsible for it—pushing them deeper into poverty and inequality. PHIA works closely with these groups to improve access to rights, food security, and local governance. Building on this, PHIA's climate change interventions reduce risks, enhance resilience, and promote sustainable, inclusive development. Their focus includes climate-resilient infrastructure, sustainable livelihoods, and long-term adaptation strategies.

PHIA's community led climate resilience efforts challenge dominant, one-size-fits-all development models by creating space for communities to lead. In the Infrastructure for Climate Resilient Growth (ICRG) programme across Bihar, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh, over 4.9 lakh individuals—including women and marginalised communities—have shaped climate-resilient planning under MGNREGA. Gram Sabhas emerged as the planning hubs, integrating climate risk tools and prioritizing works that respond to local vulnerabilities like flood control, soil regeneration, water harvesting, and livelihood diversification.

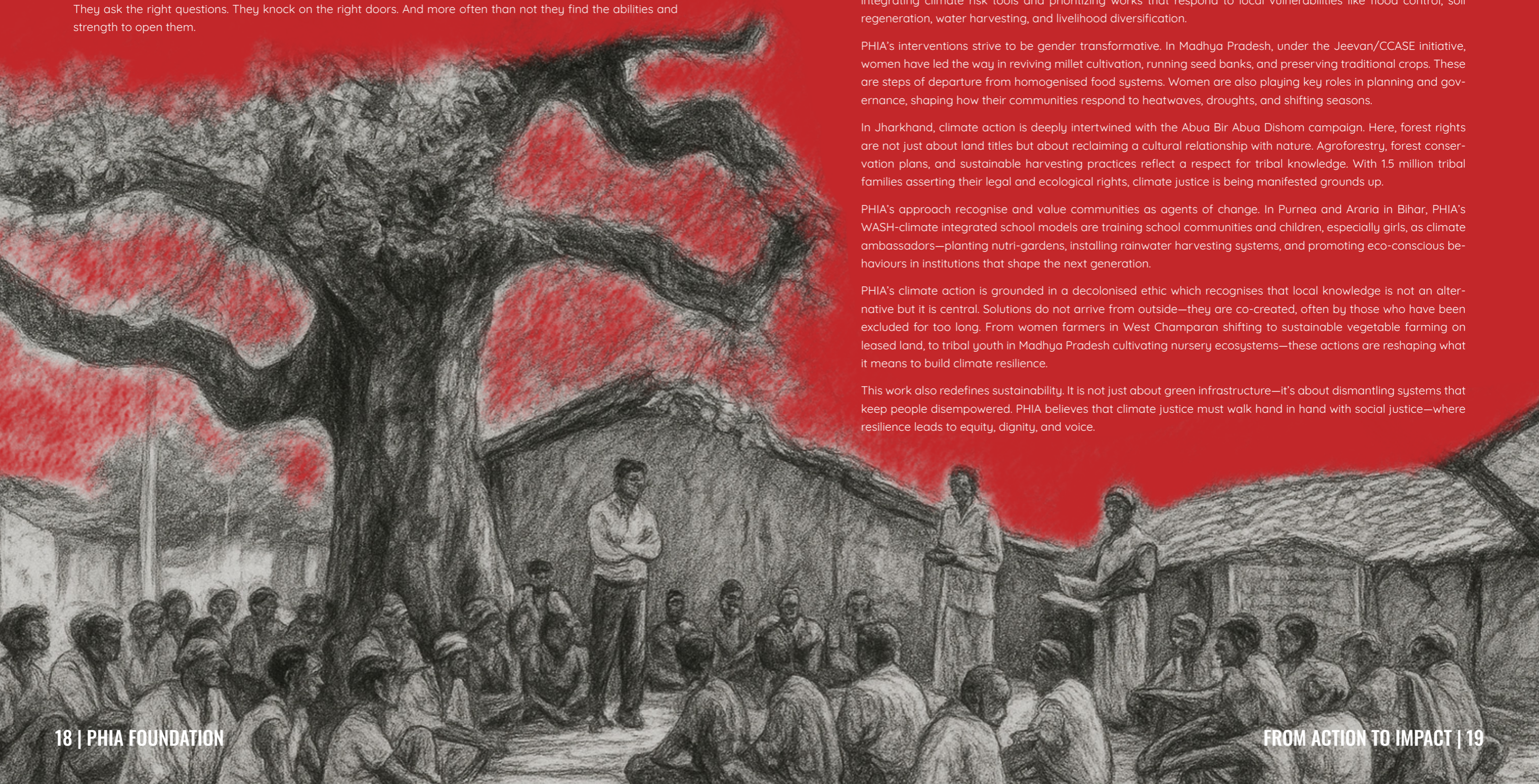
PHIA's interventions strive to be gender transformative. In Madhya Pradesh, under the Jeevan/CCASE initiative, women have led the way in reviving millet cultivation, running seed banks, and preserving traditional crops. These are steps of departure from homogenised food systems. Women are also playing key roles in planning and governance, shaping how their communities respond to heatwaves, droughts, and shifting seasons.

In Jharkhand, climate action is deeply intertwined with the Abua Bir Abua Dishom campaign. Here, forest rights are not just about land titles but about reclaiming a cultural relationship with nature. Agroforestry, forest conservation plans, and sustainable harvesting practices reflect a respect for tribal knowledge. With 1.5 million tribal families asserting their legal and ecological rights, climate justice is being manifested grounds up.

PHIA's approach recognise and value communities as agents of change. In Purnea and Araria in Bihar, PHIA's WASH-climate integrated school models are training school communities and children, especially girls, as climate ambassadors—planting nutri-gardens, installing rainwater harvesting systems, and promoting eco-conscious behaviours in institutions that shape the next generation.

PHIA's climate action is grounded in a decolonised ethic which recognises that local knowledge is not an alternative but it is central. Solutions do not arrive from outside—they are co-created, often by those who have been excluded for too long. From women farmers in West Champaran shifting to sustainable vegetable farming on leased land, to tribal youth in Madhya Pradesh cultivating nursery ecosystems—these actions are reshaping what it means to build climate resilience.

This work also redefines sustainability. It is not just about green infrastructure—it's about dismantling systems that keep people disempowered. PHIA believes that climate justice must walk hand in hand with social justice—where resilience leads to equity, dignity, and voice.



3. Empowering Rural Women Through Digital Literacy: The Impact of the Internet Saathi Programme

The Internet Saathi Programme, implemented by PHIA Foundation with support from FRENED, set out on a transformative journey from 2016 to 2020 across five Indian states—Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Designed to bridge the gender digital divide, the initiative empowered over 20,000 rural women as “Internet Saathis,” who in turn reached out to nearly 13 million other women across 80,000 villages. Through hands-on digital training and continuous engagement, these women became not just tech facilitators but agents of social change in their communities.

At its core, the programme sought to do more than just teach smartphone usage—it aimed to foster self-reliance, leadership, and confidence among rural women. The recent impact survey conducted across Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand reaffirms this vision. Findings from 726 respondents reveal that the majority of Internet Saathis experienced significant personal growth and enabled change in others. Over 90% reported increased ability to search for information, conduct financial transactions online, and educate others about COVID-19 safety measures and social security schemes. A remarkable 97% felt more aware of their rights and more than 80% claimed increased income or began income-generating activities due to their newfound skills.

Beyond digital literacy, the programme catalyzed broader social transformation. Many Saathis began participating in Gram Sabha meetings, raised their voices against discrimination, and inspired girls to continue their education. Over two-thirds reported newfound self-confidence and the ability to navigate public spaces without fear—tangible signs of empowerment in deeply patriarchal settings.

The Internet Saathi Programme stands as a testament to the idea that with the right support, rural women can not only bridge the digital divide but also reshape their futures and communities. It affirms PHIA’s belief in the power of community-led change and its commitment to advancing justice, inclusion, and dignity for all.



“My name is Santoshi Tidar. I belong to an Adivasi community, and at present I live in Madhya Pradesh, where I work as a Block-level Community Facilitator with PHIA Foundation under the Jeevan Pariyojana.

I became associated with PHIA Foundation in February 2018 through a Digital Literacy programme. At that time, I had never used the internet or a smartphone. When I first held a smartphone in my hands, I felt both fear and curiosity. Gradually, through the training programmes organised by PHIA, I learned how to use digital tools—not just to operate a mobile phone, but also to understand how technology can support learning, communication, and awareness.

PHIA’s training programmes were not limited to technical knowledge alone; they also helped me understand myself better. Through these trainings, I gained the confidence to speak, to ask questions, and to participate actively in discussions. I learned how to engage with women in my community, understand their challenges, and work collectively to address issues related to water, sanitation, health, and livelihoods.

Later, PHIA gave me the opportunity to work in the Women + Water Alliance (W+W) project, where I supported community-level implementation of water-related initiatives. This experience deepened my understanding of water governance and women’s leadership. In 2022, I formally began working with PHIA, which further strengthened my role as a community mobiliser.

As part of my work, I have supported activities across 17 villages in 8 Gram Panchayats under the ICRG project. My responsibilities included mobilising women, supporting Panchayat-level planning, facilitating community meetings, and strengthening women’s participation in local decision-making processes. I have worked closely with Adivasi women, helping them articulate their issues and collectively find solutions related to livelihoods, natural resource management, and access to government schemes.

Over the past four years, my journey with PHIA has transformed my life. I have learned how to work with confidence, how to engage with government systems, and how to stand up for my rights and the rights of others. My family has also supported me throughout this journey, and today I feel proud to be contributing meaningfully to my community.

PHIA has not only given me employment, but also helped me recognise my own potential. I now move forward with self-belief, determination, and a clear sense of purpose—working alongside women in my community to build a more just, aware, and empowered society.”



4. Building Economic Resilience Through Livelihood Interventions in Bihar, Punjab, and Ladakh

PHIA Foundation has been working with some of India's most marginalized communities to help them build better and more stable livelihoods. In Bihar, Punjab, and Ladakh, the focus has been on creating opportunities that are practical, sustainable, and suited to local conditions—especially for communities like the Musahars, Doms, small farmers, and those in remote, climate-vulnerable areas.

In West Champaran, Bihar, PHIA worked with 120 Musahar and Dom families in Nautan and Lauriya blocks to support vegetable farming and bamboo-based livelihoods. These communities have long faced exclusion and have very limited land or resources. PHIA provided good quality seeds, technical training, and regular handholding to help families improve their farm yields and incomes. More than 1,100 kg of vegetable seeds were distributed, and over 50 training sessions were held, mostly attended by women. The results were visible—communities produced over 136 metric tonnes of vegetables, earning around ₹29 lakh in total. This not only brought income into homes but also helped improve nutrition and food security.

In Punjab's Pathankot district, PHIA set up a Common Facility Centre for processing fruits and millets under the "Jeevan Saanjh" project. This centre includes units for pulp extraction, packaging, and storage. It supports farmers who often faced losses due to the lack of local processing facilities. Now, with this infrastructure in place, fruits like amla and mango are being turned into pulp and other value-added products. Local women and young people have been trained to run the facility, giving them opportunities for income and skill development close to home.

In Ladakh, where harsh weather and limited farming seasons make livelihoods difficult, PHIA supported communities with training on climate-resilient agriculture and ways to diversify income. The focus was on building knowledge, using local resources better, and helping people find stable alternatives that can work even in extreme conditions. This included improving water use, exploring small-scale enterprises, and connecting people to government schemes.

Across all three locations, PHIA's work is helping people move from daily struggle to more secure and planned livelihoods. The efforts are community-led, and most activities are designed with direct involvement of local people. Importantly, women have taken leadership roles, whether it is in farming, training others, or managing new enterprises. The goal is not just to increase income but to help people take control of their futures.

These livelihood value chain interventions show that with the right support—training, tools, infrastructure, and trust—marginalized communities can improve their lives in meaningful and lasting ways.



*Kaa kayil jao. Kaam milte nahikhe
ta kayil kaa jao. Hamni ke jaat ke
majdoori karke khaye ke Bhagya
me likhal baa."*

- Balister Manjhi

*"What to do? What can we do when
there is no work available? Our caste
is destined to fill our stomach through
wage labour only."*

These are Balister Manjhi's initial thoughts expressed in the local dialect of Bhojpuri. He belongs to the Musahar community with limited job prospects and dependent on government handouts. He is among the others from his community who saw their life changing when they partnered with PHIA Foundation's initiative aimed at promoting sustainable livelihoods.

PHIA facilitated the leasing of 500 square meter of land on sharecropping for Balister as he did not have any land along with essential resources, including seeds and tools. He was also enrolled in a comprehensive training program that taught him the intricacies of vegetable cultivation. Under the guidance of experienced farmers and government experts, Balister learned about soil preparation, planting techniques, pest control, and harvesting.

In his first season, Balister successfully cultivated peas and ridge gourd, crops that thrived in his local climate. He invested a small amount of money in fencing to protect his crops from wild animals, demonstrating his commitment to his farming venture. When his harvest was ready, Balister took his produce to the district market, approximately 25 Kms from his village, where he sold it at a profitable price.

Inspired by his success, Balister is now determined to expand his farming operations and become a self-sufficient farmer. His story is a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives and the potential for individuals to overcome adversity.

"Pahile koi kaam naa karat rahni, kabho kabho majdoori ke kaam mil jaat rahal jese 150 rupya din ke mil jaat rahal. Jab khete shuru karinhi tose kam samay kharcha kar ke ghar ke kharcha chala le tani. Dekhi na, apne log ke kahlaa par 1 acre khet leni aa aapan log ke taraf se milal genhu ke beej aur zero tillage se karwa ke genhu bhi khoob achchha bhayil ha. Apne log ke dhanyavaad ba, aa Sabji par bhid jay eke baa"

"I did not use to work regularly as the wage labour opportunities were sparse providing a maximum of Rs.150 in a day. Sine I have started farming I am able to provide for the household spending less time and energy. Your support has encouraged me lease one acre of land for farming and seeds and zero tillage technique which I learnt from you has resulted in a bountiful crop of wheat. Thanks to you and now I am prepared take a plunge into vegetable cultivation."



5. Supporting the State in Managing Migration: PHIA's Role in Jharkhand and Beyond

Migration for work is a long-standing reality for many families in Jharkhand. Every year, thousands of people—mostly from poor and tribal communities—leave their villages in search of work in other states. While this offers short-term income, it often comes with high risks: lack of job security, poor living conditions, no social protection, and, in extreme cases, trafficking and exploitation.

PHIA Foundation has worked closely with the Government of Jharkhand to understand and respond to this complex issue. The organization played a key role during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the sudden lockdowns led to a mass return of migrant workers. PHIA supported the state government in setting up the Jharkhand Migrant Control Room, which received and responded to thousands of distress calls. The team helped trace stranded workers, coordinate transport back home, and assist with food and cash relief.

This immediate response evolved into a larger, long-term initiative. PHIA supported the state in building digital platforms like the Mukhyamantri Shramik Yojana and the Migrant Tracking System, which record migration patterns and help provide support services. With accurate data, the state is now better prepared to link workers with welfare schemes, skill development programs, and employment opportunities closer to home.

PHIA also helped set up district-level Migration Resource Centres and supported community outreach to inform workers about safe migration practices, their rights, and available government schemes. This effort was rooted in fieldwork and local partnerships, especially with CSOs and community leaders. Special attention was given to young women and vulnerable groups, who face added risks when migrating.

PHIA is now sharing its learnings and systems with state governments to build safer, more informed migration pathways. These efforts include setting up helplines, improving inter-state coordination, and ensuring that migrant workers are not left invisible in policy and practice.

PHIA has shown how civil society can support governments in making migration safer and more dignified. By focusing on systems, community outreach, and partnerships, the organization has helped move from crisis response to long-term solutions. For migrant workers and their families, this means better information, safer travel, and a stronger link to home—whether they choose to stay or leave.

6. Responding to Humanitarian Needs: Relief that Builds Resilience

When crises hit, vulnerable communities are often left to cope on their own. But in some of India's most challenging emergencies, PHIA Foundation has stood by the side of those most affected with timely relief, connecting people to systems, and helping rebuild lives with dignity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PHIA played a frontline role in Jharkhand's statewide response. Working closely with the Labour Department, PHIA helped establish and manage the State Migration Control Room (SMCR)—a critical nerve centre that operated around the clock. Over the course of the pandemic, the SMCR handled more than a million distress calls, registered 1.5 million migrant workers, and supported the safe return of over 800,000 individuals, including workers stranded abroad. PHIA helped recover unpaid wages, ensured emergency transport, and supported families with essentials during lockdowns. This wasn't just emergency response it became the backbone of a state-level migration support system that continues to function today.

The Foundation also responded swiftly in urban and rural pockets, reaching over 15,000 people with awareness campaigns, distributing food and hygiene kits to more than 500 homeless families, and supporting multiple COVID care centres in underserved areas. Relief work was carried out not only in Jharkhand but also in Delhi NCR and Bihar, often reaching people that mainstream systems missed.

During Bihar floods in 2020, PHIA again moved quickly. In several districts of Bihar, it supported 484 vulnerable families primarily landless labourers and informal workers with direct cash transfers, allowing them to meet urgent needs with dignity. Beyond immediate aid, the Foundation helped over 2,000 people access government welfare schemes such as rations and social security, ensuring that support continued even after the waters receded.

PHIA's work in Kerala following the 2018 floods also left a deep impact. As waters receded in Idukki, Pathanamthitta, and Alleppey, PHIA provided hygiene kits, water filters, and unconditional cash support to over 1,200 families, including Dalit and tribal communities. But it didn't stop there. The focus remained on helping people rebuild their livelihoods with strength and independence.

What sets PHIA's humanitarian response apart is its integrated approach. Relief is never seen as a standalone act. From migration support systems and digital grievance redress to rebuilding health and sanitation infrastructure, PHIA's interventions are designed to connect short-term relief with long-term resilience.

Across emergencies, PHIA's guiding principle remains the same to protect dignity, empower communities, and ensure that recovery is inclusive and lasting. Whether responding to a pandemic, a flood, or a livelihood crisis, PHIA has consistently demonstrated that with the right partnerships and people-first planning, relief work can do more than just help people survive it can help them start again.



7. Creating Lasting Change: Strengthening WASH Systems and Climate Resilience in Bihar

PHIA Foundation, in partnership with UNICEF, has delivered a measurable and systemic shift in how WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services are planned, delivered, and sustained in Bihar's public institutions. The project, implemented across two high-need districts—Purnia and Araria—has directly strengthened over 1,250 schools, 240 Anganwadi Centres, and 23 healthcare facilities, reaching thousands of children, frontline workers, and communities.

The most significant achievement of the initiative was the institutionalisation of Climate-Sensitive Swachhta Action Plans (SAPs) in schools. Before this intervention, WASH planning was fragmented and reactive. Today, schools in Purnia and Araria are actively assessing their infrastructure, identifying gaps, and using SAPs to guide improvements in toilets, handwashing stations, rainwater harvesting, waste segregation, and menstrual hygiene. Over 1,000 SAPs were developed and uploaded onto the state's planning portal—creating a permanent link between local needs and government planning systems.

As a result, 10% of previously low-ranked schools (1- or 2-star) were upgraded to 3-star WASH compliance, directly improving access to hygiene facilities for thousands of students. Meanwhile, PHIA's focused training for 280 teachers and 100 district education officials has created a strong cadre of leaders capable of sustaining WASH improvements across institutions.

The intervention also directly tackled key challenges in menstrual hygiene, a major barrier to girls' education. Through the creation of Pad Banks, Saheli Kakshas, and the training of 250 nodal teachers, girls now have access to safe spaces, sanitary products, and reliable information—resulting in improved attendance and reduced stigma in schools.

Impact in Anganwadi Centres was equally strong. More than 550 Anganwadi Workers and ICDS officials were trained in WASH standards and climate-smart practices, leading to cleaner, safer, and more inclusive environments for children and caregivers. With 200 centres conducting structured WASH assessments and 50% developing gender-responsive SAPs, early childhood education spaces have significantly improved.

In healthcare facilities, PHIA played a key role in helping 23 public hospitals adopt the Government's Kayakalp standards, leading to better waste management, infection control, and hygiene practices. Several facilities progressed from non-compliance to qualifying for state recognition, creating cleaner and safer environments for patients and staff alike.

Importantly, the programme went beyond infrastructure. Through school-based child leadership, including 100 Climate Change Ambassadors and active Bal Sansads and Meena Manch groups, children were trained to lead sustainability efforts. These students led plantation drives, water audits, food waste reduction campaigns, and environmental observance events, instilling long-term climate responsibility at the grassroots.

This intervention did not just improve facilities, it embedded a culture of hygiene, nutrition, and climate-consciousness within Bihar's public systems. It empowered institutions to take ownership of their needs, mobilized government systems to respond more effectively, and created a replicable model that can be scaled across India.

PHIA's WASH and climate-smart initiative has laid the foundation for stronger, healthier, and more resilient schools, AWCs, and health centres with children, teachers, and frontline workers now leading the way forward.

8. Promoting Gender Equality Through Youth Engagement: The It's Possible Initiative

PHIA Foundation's It's Possible initiative is grounded in a simple but powerful belief: that gender equality is not just a conversation for women and girls—it is equally about boys and young men, and the roles they choose to play in shaping a more just society.

Implemented across states like Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi NCR, the initiative engages adolescent boys and young men through structured workshops that explore ideas of gender roles, power, identity, and relationships. Each two-day workshop uses a mix of interactive sessions, group discussions, and real-life scenarios to unpack harmful gender stereotypes and introduce the concept of positive masculinity—one based on empathy, respect, and shared responsibility rather than dominance and control.

The program has had a noticeable impact on participant attitudes. Many young men described it as their first opportunity to question traditional views of masculinity, reflect on how they treat others, and see themselves as part of the solution. Over 80% of participants reported that the sessions helped them think differently and would recommend them to peers.

In addition to workshops, the initiative has nurtured a group of youth leaders under the Change Maker cohort. These young people are now leading gender-equality conversations in their own communities—facilitating peer sessions, promoting healthy relationships, and supporting efforts to end gender-based violence and discrimination.

The strength of It's Possible lies in its approach, it does not preach - it invites reflection. It does not isolate gender as a women's issue - it frames it as a shared societal concern. And it does not stop at awareness - it builds leadership, confidence, and a deeper commitment to change among youth.

This initiative is helping shape a generation of young people, particularly boys, who are more self-aware, more inclusive, and more willing to stand for equality. In doing so, PHIA is not only addressing gender inequality at its roots but also building long-term social change that begins with mindset and grows through action.



9. Interpreting Diverse Approaches to Strengthen Human and Constitutional Values – Impact Through Work Around Constitutions

PHIA Foundation's work under the Meri Pehchan Samvidhan fellowship is designed to make constitutional values relevant and accessible at the community level. The programme engages over 50 fellows from more than 20 districts in Madhya Pradesh, many of whom come from Dalit, tribal, DNT, and transgender communities. These individuals use their lived experiences to connect constitutional principles like equality, dignity, and justice with the realities faced by marginalized groups.

The fellowship supports a diverse cohort, with more than 40% of fellows being first-generation learners. Many are already involved in local social action, and the programme strengthens their ability to understand, communicate, and apply constitutional values in their communities. Through regular mentorship, group learning spaces, and support from PHIA, fellows are encouraged to explore how the Constitution applies in areas such as education access, gender rights, and local governance.

A key feature of the programme is its focus on fellows interpreting the Constitution in their own social and cultural context. This is seen in initiatives like the Pardhi Sanskriti Mela, led by a youth collective from the Pardhi community, and the growing number of fellows, at least five during this period, who have launched awareness campaigns or formed collectives to address local issues using constitutional frameworks.

The fellowship also helps build leadership and ownership. Fellows plan and lead discussions, organize local events, and contribute to regular online platforms such as Samvidhan Jamghat which holds two learning sessions each month. These spaces allow them to improve their communication skills, build networks, and share strategies.

By working directly with local leaders, PHIA's approach strengthens understanding of the Constitution beyond formal education. It helps fellows see themselves not just as recipients of rights, but as active participants in promoting constitutional values in everyday life. Over time, this contributes to more informed and engaged communities.

Born as Abdul Rahim, she knew she was a woman from the age of six. She lost her mother just a couple year later, the only person who embraced her with love, and stepped into a world that mocked her for her identity. Ridiculed at home, bullied at school, they called her 'different' yet she knew she was not.

Despite the hardships, Chanda completed her Master's in Commerce, holding on to dreams of a dignified career, but faced rejection every time. Sad with everything life was throwing at her, she was sitting in the park where she met a group of Kinnars. She developed a friendship with them and eventually joined the 'Kinnar Community'. For the first time, she felt seen and heard for the human being she identified herself.

With strength, clarity and mission, Chanda leads gender sensitization workshops across different groups, including government departments, lawyers, and youth. Her sessions spark awareness, shift attitudes, and build empathy, helping participants understand the difference between biological sex and gender, explore the LGBTQI+ spectrum, and connect with the lived realities of gender-diverse individuals.

Her initiatives led to the formation of the Transgender Welfare Board in Jabalpur, and she helped 22 individuals obtain legal identity certificates. In 2011, she founded the Armaan Foundation in Jabalpur to create space for others like her. Armaan Foundation, via its ongoing program Bandhutva, meaning "brotherhood", offers health counselling, legal aid, and support for gender-affirming surgeries, working with authorities to uphold rights. She is recognized for her impactful work, as well as the strength and compassion she brings to it.



9 Strengthening Local Governance: Putting People at the Heart of Democracy

PHIA Foundation has consistently worked to deepen democracy at the grassroots by strengthening local governance structures and empowering communities, especially the most marginalized, to claim their rights and shape the systems that serve them. From ensuring food security to accessing forest rights, PHIA's approach is grounded in one principle that people must not be passive recipients of governance, they must be active participants.

In Jharkhand PHIA has supported the establishment and strengthening of Nagrik Sahayata Kendras (Citizen Support Centres), which serve as local helpdesks where people can access entitlements under schemes like the Public Distribution System, MGNREGA, pensions, and housing. These centres have helped thousands of individuals navigate complex systems, resolve documentation issues, and secure their rightful benefits, building transparency and accountability at the local level.

Through its work on the Right to Food and social audits, PHIA has enabled village communities to monitor the quality and delivery of government welfare schemes. In collaboration with Gram Sabhas and civil society groups, PHIA facilitated public hearings and entitlement tracking, leading to improved ration distribution, reduced corruption, and responsive grievance redressal mechanisms. These actions have restored faith in systems and created platforms where poor households can hold service providers accountable.

In tribal areas, PHIA has played a catalytic role in advancing the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA). By organizing community-based mapping, supporting the formation of Forest Rights Committees, and guiding claim submissions, PHIA helped hundreds of tribal families secure individual and community forest rights. These efforts not only protect livelihoods but also give indigenous communities legal recognition over their traditional lands, an essential step toward dignity and autonomy.

PHIA has also invested in strengthening local democratic processes through civic education and leadership development. In several blocks, the organization has trained Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members—particularly women and marginalized caste representatives, to better understand their roles, access resources, and participate in local planning. Through platforms like Local Democracy Dialogues, communities are now more aware of their rights and better equipped to engage with governance systems.

PHIA's local governance work has created a ripple effect by building more informed citizens, responsive institutions, and inclusive development processes. By putting people at the centre of governance, PHIA is not just supporting better service delivery - it is building a more just, accountable, and participatory democracy from the ground up.

Kating Ambatoli is a small hamlet of Kating revenue village under Kating Panchayat in Chainpur Block, comprising 29 households and an approximate population of 260 people. Situated about 14 kilometers east of the block headquarters and close to the main road near Semla Ghati Road, the village remains well connected while maintaining a traditional rural lifestyle. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for all families, with crops such as paddy, maize, jowar, bajra, pigeon pea (arhar), and vegetables forming the backbone of the local economy. Income from farming supports basic household needs including food security, education, and health. The village is rich in natural resources, and the people follow a simple life rooted in cooperation and mutual support.

A defining feature of Kating Ambatoli is its strong culture of community participation. All major activities are carried out collectively, and a Gram Sabha is held every month where villagers openly discuss issues and take decisions together. This participatory system has strengthened unity, transparency, and local governance. However, despite this strong social foundation, the village faces several challenges. Agriculture is largely rain-fed, making livelihoods uncertain during poor rainfall years, and farmers often struggle with low market prices and lack of storage or value addition facilities. The literacy rate of around 60% also limits awareness about government schemes and legal entitlements.

Before the intervention, farming in Kating Ambatoli was largely dependent on conventional practices. Farmers relied on chemical fertilizers and pesticides whenever they could access them, often through local traders on credit. Over time, villagers began noticing declining soil fertility, rising input costs, and stagnant or falling yields. Crops became more vulnerable to pests and erratic rainfall, increasing uncertainty and indebtedness. Many elders also recalled that earlier generations practiced farming with local seeds and natural methods, which were more in harmony with the land and forests. These experiences created a growing concern that existing practices were neither economically viable nor environmentally sustainable.

The decision to move towards organic farming did not happen overnight, nor was there unanimous agreement at the outset. When the idea of organic farming was first discussed in Gram Sabha meetings, several farmers expressed doubts. Some feared yield losses, while others worried about the additional labour involved or the risk of experimenting with new methods when livelihoods were already fragile. However, through repeated discussions, exposure visits, and sharing of experiences from neighbouring areas, a gradual consensus began to emerge. Small groups of farmers agreed to try organic practices on a portion of their land as a pilot, while others chose to observe. As these early adopters began to see improvements in soil health, reduced input costs, and healthier crops, confidence slowly built within the community. Over time, collective discussions helped address fears and misconceptions, and the Gram Sabha played a key role in ensuring that decisions were based on shared learning rather than pressure. While not everyone agreed at the first instance, the transition gained acceptance through dialogue, evidence, and mutual trust.

The recognition of Community Forest Rights (CFR) has brought a deep sense of security, confidence, and collective strength to the people of Ambatoli. Through a participatory Gram Sabha-led process, the community collectively identified and claimed forest areas that they had traditionally depended on for firewood, grazing, minor forest produce, and cultural practices. The claim was prepared through community mapping, elders' testimonies, and documentation of customary use, followed by verification by concerned departments. The CFR title is closely tied to the community's aspirations for long-term livelihood security, sustainable forest management, and self-governance. Villagers view the CFR not merely as a legal document, but as recognition of their relationship with the forest—"jungle aur zameen hi hamara jeevan hai." Since recognition, people feel more confident in protecting forests from illegal felling, regulating extraction collectively, and planning sustainable use of resources. Access to minor forest produce has become more organized, reducing exploitation and improving supplementary income. Most importantly, the CFR has strengthened the Gram Sabha as a decision-making institution, instilling a sense of dignity and ownership among the people of Ambatoli, and ensuring that their future remains rooted in secure rights over the forests they have conserved for generations.



JOURNEY OVER THE YEARS

2005

PHIA Foundation
registered as Indian
Non Profit Organisation



2009

PACS Programme
Initiated



2015

PHIA entrusted with
the responsibility to
build on the legacy of
PACS programme

PHIA's 1st Project
- Bridge schooling
for underprivileged
children initiated in
DELHI NCR Urban Slum



2017

Strategic and long
term intervention on
local Governance in
Jharkhand initiated

Internet Saathi - a
multi state initiative on
bridging the gendered
digital divide



2016

PHIA initiates 'IT's
POSSIBLE' campaign on
gender equality around
reimagining masculinity

First multilateral
partnership on
improving WASH
across government
schools in BIHAR

2018

Initiatives on sustainable livelihood and climate resilience



2019

From internet saathi to digital entrepreneurs

Fellowship on strengthening constitutional value

Improving community health and public health systems



2021

Large scale community outreach on covid 19 immunization

Promoting safe and responsible migration - extending support till Ladakh

Deepening and upscaling initiatives on wash, gender quality, local governance, food security and climate resilience



2020

Large scale COVID 19 response

Work on migration deepens work with state migrant control room in jharkhand

Strategic Partnership on enhancing climate resilience for communities

Addressing food insecurity and aiming for zero hunger



2022

Initiated PHIA's first large sustainable livelihood project on Organic Farming in Bihar

Community outreach and immunization on COVID 19 continued

Team Workforce Expansion led to Strengthening Internal Systems



2023

Project HIMALAYA laid the foundation for work in LADAKH.

Led 'Abua Bir, Abua Dishom' Campaign

Land & Water Mgf. Structure model developed



JOURNEY CONTINUES...



2025

PHIA convened the SAARTHI network of 30 CSOs in Jharkhand

Hosted National Consultation of CSOs for VNR 2025 on Adivasi

Strengthened Guidance - Onboarded 5 member Advisory Committee

Global Recognition in UN RBHRF & WHS

Certified as Great Place to Work



2024

Leadership & Strategic Growth Expansion

Started work in Skill based Livelihood development in Punjab around Fruit and Millet and in Bihar with Madhubani and Sikki Art.

Partnership with Blockchain for Impact through India Health and Climate Resilience Fellowship (IHCRF)

Piloted Gender Transformative Approach in Programmes

REACH US AT

New Delhi

D -25/D, First Floor, South Extension
Part II, New Delhi 110049

Jharkhand

House No. 428/B, Gate No. 6
Ashok Nagar, Ranchi, 834002

Bihar

House No. 317/B, Patliputra
Colony, Patna, Bihar 800013

Madhya Pradesh

E8/104, Basant Kunj, Bhopal,
Madhya Pradesh 462016

Ladakh

IInd Floor, Ismail Complex,
Leh, Ladakh 194101

Karnataka

House No. 262, 1st Main, RMV 2nd
Stage, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560092

Punjab

Anmol Colony, Dhaki Road,
Pathankot, Punjab - 145001



[Learn More About Our Work](#)

[Linkedin](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)

www.phia.org.in