PI Industries, Naseemben

In the village of Jantran in Gujarat, Naseemben Askhab Khilji used to feel trapped in a life of financial struggle and domestic duties. However, when the Self-help Group (SHG) initiative was introduced by CARE India’s MAILC project, everything changed for her. After learning about the project from fellow villagers Ranjanben, Naseemben overcame her husband’s reservations and joined the SHG “Ya gaush paak” as the group’s president. She attended training sessions on financial literacy, leadership, and market literacy, and with the group’s help, received a loan from Banka Gujarat Gramin Bank which she used to improve her shop and expand their business. As a result, their income increased, and they began receiving orders from other villages. Her husband also became more supportive and broke social boundaries to allow Naseemben to manage the shop and serve customers. Naseemben’s confidence grew, and she realized that she could support her family. The goal of the MAILC project is to empower women smallholders and landless workers and help them sustain their livelihoods through improved practices and institutional support.

“I’ve always wanted to support my family, and now I know I can.” - Naseemben

IndusInd Bank, Pragati

The Pragati team, in collaboration with the government primary school and the community, aims to provide children in the Umarda taluka with access to education and learning materials. Umarda is a sub-district in the Suret District of Gujarat, India, with a population of about 83,372 people and a literacy rate of 58.56%. In the rural tribal areas of Umarda taluka, children between the ages of 5-8 years old in grades 1-3 do not have access to adequate learning materials and environment. Additionally, parents are often engaged in their livelihood activities, leaving children without sufficient support for early childhood education and numeracy skills. The intervention of the Pragati-G project, a partnership between IndusInd Bank and CARE India, has provided a learning environment for 1,024 children across 24 schools and 14 communities. The Pragati team participates in morning assemblies, classroom processes, and school management committee meetings, building capacity on foundational learning and numeracy skill approaches. Four school mentors provide support in classrooms with lower teacher-student ratios. Additionally, the project has established 16 community libraries where children can access reading materials. The Pragati team mobilises communities and stakeholders with the message that it is important to ensure children have access to learning materials, a child-friendly environment, and supportive facilitation for the development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills, particularly for children in grades 1-3.

Nutrition International, Elevating Quality Nutrition Services

CARE and Nutrition International have collaborated on a project to improve the quality and integration of nutrition services across the first 1,000 days of a child’s life in four districts in India. The project will be implemented in Mathura and Saharanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh, and Kheda and Tapri districts of Gujarat, and will use implementation research to identify challenges preventing effective implementation of nutrition interventions, such as interpersonal nutrition counselling (INPC). Strategies to address these issues will be developed and tested, including enhancing INPC and behaviour change intervention strategies, strengthening the supply chain for nutrition commodities, enhancing supervision and monitoring for frontline service providers, and strengthening monitoring and reporting mechanisms. To improve INPC skills of staff in the health and ICDS departments of Mathura district, India, the project organised a three-day training-of-trainers session. The training aims to increase the skills of trainers on improved nutritional counselling, which will have a cascading effect on the skills of frontline health workers like ASHAs, ANMs, and ANWs, so that they can deliver culturally resonant, evidence-based, individually tailored nutrition counselling to pregnant and lactating mothers and parents of children up to two years of age.

Bihar Project Visit by BMGF

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation representatives recently visited Bihar to observe and gain an understanding of the state’s health programmes. During their visit, they visited the districts of Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, and Patna to see the RMNCH+ and MDG-related programmes in action. The team visited various healthcare facilities such as DH, CHC, HWCs, and WIND sites, where they observed the weak intervention for newborns at the ground level. Additionally, they participated in a community meeting organized by the Jivika Team, which demonstrated the collective efforts made to improve health-related indicators.

The visit lasted three days, during which the team met with district-level government officials on the first day to share their views and understand the challenges of health and community participation. On the second day, they mainly visited WIND sites, conducted home visits, attended community meetings, and observed service delivery points such as HWCs and community health centres. On the third day, they focused on urban centres and interventions taken to address the health needs of the urban population. Overall, the visit provided valuable insights into the challenges and successes of Bihar’s health programmes.