



Best Practices Foundation

Annual Report
2013-2014

Letter from the Director

In the financial year 2013-14, Best Practices Foundation (BPF) saw a deepening and widening of its MOVE innovation to ensure its applicability to new contexts, participants, and geographical areas. We experimented with livelihoods for a typically marginalised sexual minority community in Dharwad, Karnataka. To our delight, the project showed a higher impact than any other before in the form of improved incomes and a diversity of businesses. Another important development in the past year has been the initiation of a partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which will enable BPF to pilot 4 different models of replication for MOVE in 10 districts in Karnataka. MOVE for youth won second place for youth entrepreneurship globally in the ILO's Global Market Place Competition run by the UN ILO and the World Bank.

As part of a capacity building project for FCN, BPF will pilot an experimental version of MOVE tailored to farmer producer organizations. In this case, instead of helping the landless poor start businesses, MOVE will be employed to help farmers reap the returns of their produce by adding value to their crops that are being grown using low-carbon farming techniques, as well as penetrate markets collectively.

Our evaluation work continued to expand internationally in the past year. A timely and critical study documenting the challenges faced by grassroots communities in the arena of disaster risk reduction, resilience, and climate change, was conducted in collaboration with grassroots women's groups. The findings and the report were then presented at UNISDR's Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, in May 2013.

BPF continued its impact assessment work by documenting the outcomes of the Mumidipudi Venkatarangaiah Foundation's (MVF) project entitled "Quality Improvement in Primary Education in Nalgonda District", covering 226 schools in Nalgonda district in Telangana. Funded by the Axis Bank Foundation (ABF), Axis Bank's CSR wing, this project is an important facet of MVF's on-going efforts to eradicate child labour, improve both student and teacher school attendance rates, facilitate community-ownership of the government school system, and enhance the quality of education. The organisation's successful efforts to bring 1,050,134 children back into the education system, is both inspirational and worthy of replication across communities nationwide.

BPF created a new set of indicators to help grassroots women gauge the outcomes of last year's anti-corruption initiative, which was conducted across five countries, and resulted in the seminal work "Seeing Beyond the State: Grassroots Women and Anti-Corruption". Also, BPF is creating a course to engender the anti-corruption work of all UNDP offices globally.

As a result of last year's decision to establish a CSR vertical and provide CSR related services to corporates, BPF conducted a participatory appraisal of Axis Bank Foundation's programme workflows and operations. We look forward in the new year to collaborating not only on our own, but also on our partners' innovations as well and working with government agencies to mainstream best practices.



BPF Bangalore Report of Activities

Over the course of the past year, BPF was involved in a number of projects across a range of sectors. BPF also conducted impact assessments of two programs in the public education sector:

1. Impact Assessment of Science Education Eco system: Agastya Foundation (Oct 2013-Jan 2014)

Agastya International Foundation is a Bangalore-based education trust which works to transform the thinking of children and teachers through science education in India. Agastya carries out numerous innovative activities through its science centres and mobile labs to engage children in a participative and experiential learning science education model, which sparks curiosity and creativity. Its science centres and mobile labs use low-cost teaching materials and experiments, which are designed to encourage widespread replication and dissemination. Since its inception in 1999, Agastya has reached over four million children and 150,000 teachers in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Agastya appointed the Best Practices Foundation to



Om Shiva whose case study illustrates Agastya's work on science education with children in its Kuppam campus

conduct an impact assessment of its ecosystem (science centres and mobile labs) on participating students, teachers, government, and the larger community. Through its hub and spoke model, Agastya aims to raise awareness and spark curiosity among students who have been exposed to its interventions. While awareness was observed across all students, even among those with few exposures, only students exposed more than three times to Agastya demonstrated higher skills and behavioural changes such as curiosity, creativity, problem-solving skills, and leadership.

2. Huairou Commission: Grassroots Women and Anti-Corruption Initiatives (Ongoing)

This project began with a global study on corruption and grassroots women to understand the issues faced by grassroots women. The study led by BPF entitled *Seeing Beyond the State: Grassroots Women and Anti-Corruption Initiatives* was presented by BPF in New York (2012), Brazil (2012), Geneva (2013), Indonesia (2013), Naples, Italy and Bahrain (2013).

The continuation of this project required that BPF design the global monitoring and evaluation system to help assess progress for six groups in five countries. BPF created indicators and trained participating organizations on the instruments to design and implement the M&E system.

Dr. Sangeetha Purushothaman was one of eight panel members on the first



Sangeetha Purushothaman presenting the findings of the study on women and anti-corruption at the World Urban Forum, Naples



Priya Pillai presenting the findings of the study on women and anti-corruption in Brazil



Sangeetha Purushothaman presenting the findings of the study on women and anti-corruption at the Commission for the Status of Women, United Nations, New York



Sudha Menon conducting research in Phillipines on women and resilience

ever panel discussion held on 13th March 2013 on Negative Impacts of Corruption on Human Rights at the 22nd session of the UN Human Rights Council. This project continues with several pilot experiments being conducted by the HC and BPF monitoring the impact of these pilots.

3. Grassroots Women and Resilience (Apr - Sep 2013), Huairou Commission

The Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience is a networking and advocacy space for locally focused community based organizations to aggregate and scale up their resilience efforts in partnership with institutional champions; and to collectively advocate for policies and programs that will address community resilience priorities. This Platform is officially recognized as a key stakeholder group by UNISDR; and it has been influential in advancing the local priorities of communities living with the adverse impacts of disasters and climate change in emerging policy and program

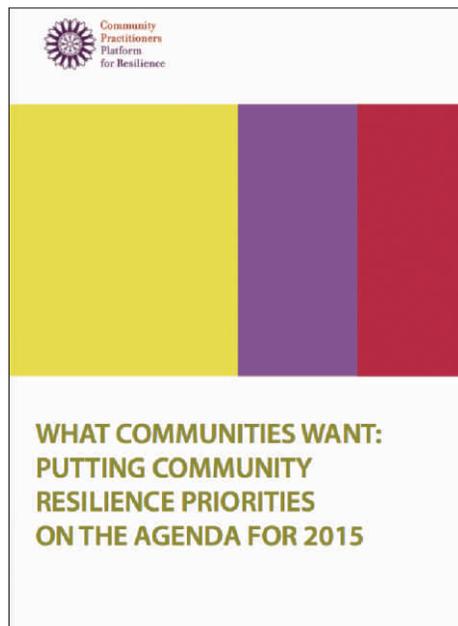
frameworks. Members in 5 countries – Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Philippines agreed to participate in the action-research on community resilience in the context of climate change and disaster management. BPF

used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and aggregate the priorities of local communities and local authorities for building resilient communities. BPF conducted qualitative research in Philippines and Nepal to supplement the quantitative findings.

At the regional/global level, the findings from this research was particularly relevant to the discussions on how the Post-HFA framework for 2015 and beyond should be framed. The study was launched in May 2013 at the

UNISDR meeting in Geneva (2013) entitled *What Communities Want: Putting Community Resilience Priorities On The Agenda For 2015*.

Findings show that while disasters and climate change have multiple short



and long-term impacts on the lives of the poor, grassroots communities surveyed reported a higher impact on livelihoods, basic needs—such as housing, water and sanitation, and food security—and health. These areas require sustained efforts embedded in long-term development processes. Communities have demonstrated capacities, expertise and leadership in advancing their resilience priorities. Communities' views on resilience as well as documented evidence from their practices clearly show that their local resilience priorities are effectively addressed when they:

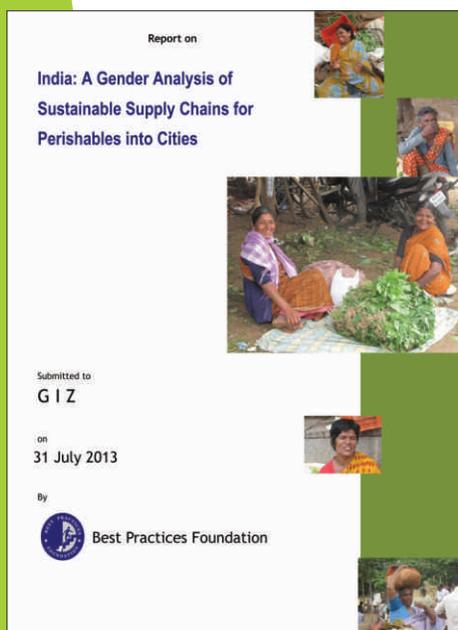
- a) Are organized, mobilized and can take collective action;
- b) Have adequate knowledge, skills and practices and when they have the support;
- c) Are able to collaborate with government.

4. A Gender Analysis of the Food Supply Chain: GIZ (July 2013)

The project entitled *Needs Assessment And Gender Analysis For The Rural-Urban Food Supply Chain In Bangalore Karnataka* was conducted for GIZ in July 2013. The report, *India: A Gender Analysis of Sustainable Supply Chains for Perishables into Cities*, submitted to GIZ will feed into the project design of a larger programme to create a market in Bangalore which serves the needs of all actors on the supply chain: farmers, vendors and consumers. BPF conducted a multi-stakeholder analysis across four

districts of Karnataka as well as in the Bangalore markets to understand the needs of women and the disabled in the food supply chain and made recommendations on how to address these needs.

Findings show that women are disenfranchised and marginalised at each stage of the rural-urban food supply chain. At the production end, being landless labourers or the wives of cultivators, their lack of land ownership automatically deprives them of access to credit and other agricultural inputs, specifically from government. Women tend to be concentrated at the production and retail ends, and are largely absent from wholesale trading. Whereas women constitute the majority of the labour engaged in cleaning, packing, and post-harvest processing, they vanish from the point at which goods are loaded onto trucks, and unloaded at markets and traded. Women reappear once more at the retail end of the chain as flower





Woman vendors in KR Puram market, Bangalore



Woman vendor in Mysore

and leafy-vegetable vendors. They often sell their wares on pavements and at the periphery of markets, rather than inside in the sheds and roofed stalls, since these prime vending spaces have been usurped by men. The main issues women vendors tabled were the lack of safety and amenities like toilets, at the markets. Harassment, extortion and fear of eviction shape the experience of women vendors, most of who do not have a sense of their rights and thus lack the requisite agency and representation.

Recommendations: Addressing women's lack of access and control over resources, (such as land and markets), at every stage of the chain requires their mobilisation into farmer, trader, and vendor groups. In a parallel effort, women's groups must be made aware of their rights and entitlements even as their capacities are being enhanced through training; provision of agricultural inputs and services; market information; and women friendly tools and technologies. Decision

making bodies mandated by the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors, 2009, such as the Town Vending Committees, should have representation of women vendors from these micro level bodies. Measures must be taken to counter the monopolization of prime vending spaces. Participatory planning of markets should include mobilized groups of women vendors who are aware of, and can voice, their entitlements

5. Small Millets Marketing Analysis: MSSRF (January- May 2013)

The main focus of the project funded by MSSRF and IDRC is to enable small millet producers to enhance their livelihoods through better market understanding of small millets. In this context, the objective of the study was:

1. To understand the marketing problems faced by the small millet producers
2. To address these issues by devising short- and long-term marketing solutions



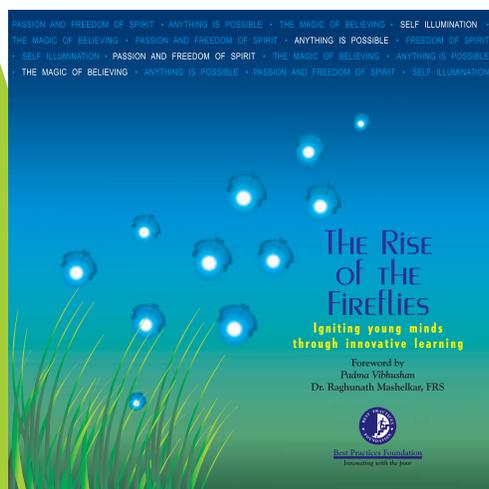
BPF conducted a study with the producers, distributor and retailers in Salem to assess the current marketing strategies and suggest new ones to expand the scale of production and distribution across Tamilnadu and in neighbouring states. The study report entitled *A*

Marketing Analysis of Small Millet Products: Kolli Hills was completed in September 2013.

Findings show that retailers and customers felt there was room for

improvement in the following areas: quality of packaging, awareness of the product, product availability, and price. There is a lack of awareness among farmers of the benefits of millet cultivation. Those farmers who do produce millets were concerned about the lack of demand, which would justify increasing production. Millets are more expensive to process than ragi or wheat. Unlike ragi and wheat which can be pulverised, millets have to be dehusked, a process that uses up a lot of more fuel and generates a higher proportion of waste. With just one distributor, the distributive capacity of the Kolli Hills enterprise is limited; preventing the expansion of the retail network. As a result existing retailers complain of irregular supply. Lack of credit prevents the cultivation of relationships with retailers who will not pay for Kolli Hills stock upfront.

Strategies recommended include MOVE training to establish customer relationships, better understand markets, taste and demand, and expansion of the retail base through MOVE trainees. Additionally the creation of storage facilities and more attractive packaging that increases awareness through provision of nutrition benefits and recipes on how to use millets are also important. Other strategies that increase awareness of the benefits were recommended through use of social media and other promotional methods. Linkages to mechanisms for farmers to reap carbon credits were also seen as important ways to build sustainability.



6. Agastya Caselets (Sep - Jan 2014)

Agastya commissioned BPF to produce a visual booklet that showcased the achievements of 50 children from Hubli, Bijapur, and Bangalore who have excelled due to Agastya's interventions. The purpose of the booklet is to draw the attention of government, funders, and experts in the field of education to Agastya's success stories. The project began in September 2013 and was completed in November 2013.

7. Axis Bank Foundation: Impact Assessment of MV Foundation's work (Dec 2013-Jan 2014)

This impact assessment studied the effects of an education programme that is funded by the Axis Bank Foundation (ABF), and implemented by the Mumidipudi Venkatarangaiah Foundation (MVF) in Nalgonda district, Telangana. MVF has worked for the 'right to education of all children' since 1991 and has been implementing the Quality Improvement in Primary Education Programme in Nalgonda, Andhra Pradesh, with the support of the Axis Bank Foundation (ABF) since August 2007. So far MVF has implemented three projects sanctioned by ABF in the periods 2007-10, 2010-12, and 2012-13. This report focused, in particular, on the grant period 2012-13. However, as the 2012-13 programme was a continuation of previous projects in the area, the findings in this report were not confined to



Surashree Shome conducting an impact evaluation in MVF Foundation, Andhra Pradesh

activities undertaken in 2012-13 alone but discussed as a continuation of previous projects. The project currently covers 156 gram panchayats (GPs) in nine mandals of Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh.

Findings show that as a result of MVF's intervention, there was a marked improvement in student attendance rates (from 79 per cent in September 2010 to 84 per cent in August 2013), and a corresponding decrease in absenteeism across all nine project mandals. Field visits revealed that student committees — a feature of the community-ownership-of-

education approach — were actively helping to create a more child friendly environment. Evidence shows that interventions such as the subject forums for teachers have strengthened teachers' pedagogical capacities, as well as parents' confidence in the public school system. Activities to drive community participation in monitoring and evaluating schools have increased awareness among key stakeholders about the Right to Education (RTE) Act and their role and responsibilities in its implementation. Schools now display an improved capacity to address the learning needs of their students, especially with the incorporation of on-going evaluation mechanisms such as the CC.

Recommendations to upscale and ensure the sustainability of MVF's community-owned, participatory education model include a) building sustainability strategies such as a strong fundraising strategy that ABF could help design and build with corporate social responsibility mandates in the private sector, b) building networks and alliances at national levels to create a platform for advocacy that no single organisation can easily achieve alone. Such alliances also facilitate cross learning and the transfer of best practices, c) gender sensitisation of staff so as to foster an inclusive environment for women in different forums at the community level as well as within MVF.

8. Axis Bank Foundation: Instructional Manual to Systematise Axis Bank Foundation's Processes (Jan - Mar 2014)

ABF wanted its CSR processes and procedures comprehensively charted out in a systematic, user friendly manner. BPF and ABF staff created a manual that could serve as a reference point for issues, rules and questions while also acting as a guide for replication. The benefits are as follows:

- a) Eliminate redundant tasks and set consistent work methods.
- b) Define ABF's business philosophy, and articulate its principles and goals.
- c) Measure staffs' understanding of policies; develop expertise among staff,

as well as continuity of thought and process in the CSR programme.

- d) Increase efficiency as well as help staff to keep time lines, stick to guidelines, and ensure efficient delivery.
- e) Provide a clear understanding of operational structure and enhance the reputation of ABF by demonstrating its commitment to quality and productivity.
- f) Provide a structured communication platform, add benchmark parameters and also help senior personnel in planning future expansion
- g) To help future staff come up to speed with far less training and in less time. In the event of attrition, transfers or promotion, hand over to new staff will be smoother.

9. UNDP: Develop an E-Learning Course on Gender and Anti-Corruption (Feb - Mar 2014)

BPF, along with the Huairou Commission, was invited by the UNDP to design an online course for UNDP staff, on the impact of corruption on grassroots women. The purpose of the course is to familiarise staff with grassroots women's articulations of corruption, many of which exceed or deviate from mainstream conceptions of the term. It is meant to introduce staff to pioneering anti-corruption work that is being conducted by women at the grassroots level, in order to create synergies between grassroots movements and UNDP anti-corruption programming. The goal of the course is to prepare UNDP staff to begin a process of co-creating and designing anti-corruption initiatives with grassroots women's groups.

New Initiatives for BPF Bangalore

- Agastya Foundation Kuppam
- Axis Bank
- SHARE, VHS
- GIZ Gender and Sanitation
- Anti-corruption and gender – continuation of projects through HC and UNDP
- FCN continuation of the project till December 2015 and possible leveraging of new projects targeting IRMA and SFAC to continue work

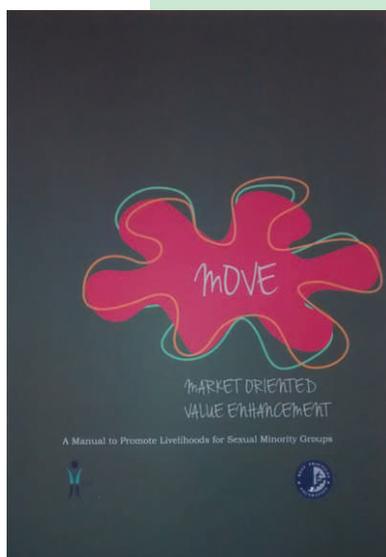
New initiatives: BPF Dharwad

- CII Upscaling MOVE to 20000 businesses
- KHPT MOVE for FSWs:
- NABARD-MCI
- Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana
- KSRLM in partnership with KHPT
- NMFP is coordination with Rapid

Publications

- **The Impact of the Agastya Ecosystem in Karnataka**, a report assessing the impact of Agastya's work with schools, May 2013

- **What Communities Want: Putting Community Resilience Priorities On The Agenda For 2015**, Report Commissioned by Huairou Commission and UNISDR, May 2013



- **India: Sustainable Supply Chains for Perishables into Cities, Consulting Support for Gender Analysis**, Report written for GIZ, July 2013

- **MOVE Manual for Sexual Minorities**, for KHPT, August 2013

- **A Marketing Analysis of Small Millet Products, Kolli Hills**, Report submitted to MSSRF for the IDRC funded project on small millets, September 2013

- **Impact Assessment of the Quality Improvement in the Primary Education Programme in Nalgonda District**, a report assessing the impact of MVF's work with schools using the RTE, March 2014

Upcoming Publications

- **The Rise of the Fireflies**, stories of children who have been impacted by Agastya's eco-system, 2014

- **The Impact of the Agastya Ecosystem in Karnataka**, publication of the updated edition of the 2013 report assessing the impact of Agastya's work with schools, November 2014

- **Axis Bank Foundation's Instructional Manual**, a manual providing guidelines for the CSR operations of ABF, August 2014

- **Blazing Fireflies** stories of children who have been impacted by Agastya's campus in Kuppum, 2014

BPF Dharwad

- Building Sustainability and Empowering Communities through Carbon Offsetting: Fair Climate Network (Feb 2014-Dec 2015): As part of an internal capacity building initiative of the Fair Climate Network (FCN), BPF has been hired to teach staff of its partner NGOs, four courses on Carbon Credits and English, IT, communication and adapting MOVE to meet FCN's needs. BPF's involvement includes conducting needs assessment workshops with NGOs to gauge organisation-specific training requirements; course design based on feedback; two rounds of pilots during which the courses will be field-tested and modified; and the final roll-out during which BPF will train master trainers in how to build organisational capacities in the four course/subject areas. NGOs from Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, will participate in the capacity-building process.
- On going follow up of MOVE enterprises: MOVE enterprises that were initiated under KHPT and UAS Dharwad were tracked and any necessary support required was extended.
- KHPT: The MOVE manual for Sexual Minority Groups was finalised and submitted to KHPT for printing in August 2013.
- M.Sc. Dissertation (Aug - Sep 2013): Neha Bansod from University College, London wrote her M.Sc. dissertation evaluating the Agro Forestry Project implemented in 2010-2011 in Mandihal and Daddikamalapur. BPF's Dharwad team provided the necessary support.
- MOVE Impact: Data collection for an internal evaluation of all MOVE enterprises was conducted in September 2013.
- GIZ: The BPF Dharwad team also participated in the study examining gender gaps within the food supply chain and the factors that influence them in Bangalore in June 2013.
- RAPID: A one-day orientation on MOVE was conducted for members of RAPID in Dharwad in November 2013.
- Deshpande Foundation: MOVE Training was conducted for DF Fellows on 5th and 6th December 2013 at Hubli.
- Data collection for CII Proposal: Information was collected from 10 districts to prepare a proposal for CII (December 2013).
- Bhagirath NGO: Conducted training in Naragund Taluk (Tadahal, Gudisagar and Belavatagi) on the Water and Sanitation programme for Gram Panchayat president and members, PDO, Asha workers, Primary school teachers, and SHG members in March 2014

Other Events - Dharwad

- Participated in HIV/AIDS Training programme at KUD Dharwad, organized by District Health Office in January 2014

- Application submitted for Empanelment under Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana to DIC Dharwad in January 2014.
- MOVE Training conducted for MSW Students from KCD at Dharwad office on 7th January 2014.
- Attended Development Dialogues at Deshpande Foundation, Hubli on 20th and 21st January 2014.
- The Dharwad team attended a conference-call with KHPT on 24th January 2014 to discuss the FSW proposal.
- The team attended the Udyogamela at Examba with DIC Dharwad on 31st January 2014.
- The team attended NABARD Training at Mysore on Rural Livelihood from 10th to 14th February 2014.
- The team attended a needs assessment workshop at Bagepalli on 6th and 7th March 2014.



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