

MORE SECURE AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS FOR SMALLHOLDERS

UMARPADA AND HAZIRA- SURAT, GUJARAT

Background: ‘Secure and Resilient Livelihoods for Smallholders (SRL)’ is a project implemented by CARE India in the Umarpada and Hazira regions of Surat district in Gujarat with funding support from SHELL. Agriculture and cattle rearing are the major sources of livelihood for the forest fringe smallholder community of Umarpada block. Where Hazira is a heavily industrialized area with a large industrial activity. Agriculture and livestock rearing are the major sources of livelihood for the smallholder community of Hazira. The Umarpada region is mainly dependent on rainfed agriculture, and forest fringe smallholders face a range of challenges like access to water, lack of irrigation facilities, and difficult access to extension services for livestock. In Hazira availability of inputs through private market channels is significantly high. But access to the required knowledge, advisory, extension services, exposure, demonstration, and training improved agricultural practices to facilitate the informed application and usage of external inputs is negligible. In both Smallholder women farmers play a significant role in agriculture production and livestock rearing, however, their contributions are hardly recognized and paid any attention. Additionally, their access to extension services is almost negligible. Against this background, CARE India is implementing a project called ‘Secure and Resilient Livelihoods for Smallholders’ to promote more secure and resilient livelihoods for 5750 smallholder households in Umarpada and Hazira’s Olpad and Choryasi blocks since December 2019.

Umarpada is a remote area with a tribal population. Government extension services their awareness, linkages, and benefits have been quite limited. With farm-based livelihood and cattle rearing the main occupation with limited opportunities for other employment, the focus of interventions on agriculture, and animal husbandry income-generating activities becomes quite relevant and has been well accepted and appreciated by forest fringe smallholders. Various components of the projective capacity building, demonstration, input support and market linkages have been planned website the needs communities.

Where Hazira is an industrial hub and port, there are a lot of economic opportunities. But this brings along various adverse effects such as degradation of natural resources and air/water/land pollution, stress on local resources and services due to in-migration, eroding support for farm-based livelihoods and others. Thus, the focus on farm-based livelihood, cattle rearing and income-generating activities in the project have been in sync with the needs of smallholders in the region. Various components of the project like capacity building, demonstration, input support and market linkages have been planned well by the specific need of communities.

The project idea presents a three-pronged strategy for agriculture and livestock interventions by emphasizing the demonstration of scientific practices, b) provision of inputs for better crop and livestock productivity, and c) Farmers’ Field Business School (FFBS) for training and capacity building.

Gujarat state, situated in the western part of India, is spread over an area of 196,024 sq. km which is approximately 6.4% of the total geographical area of the country (Census 2011). In Gujarat, rainfall is unevenly distributed spatially. The southern region of the state receives average rainfall ranging from 76 to 152 cm, while the northern region receives average rainfall ranging from 51 to 102 cm. Some parts of Saurashtra receive rainfall of less than 63 cm. Further, the state receives rainfall only during the monsoon season (July–September) (Agricultural Statistics briefly, 2014). Uneven rainfall has led to water scarcity in Kutch and some parts of Saurashtra. While Northern Gujarat and Saurashtra are drought-prone, other parts of the state consisting of the lower river basins are prone to floods (Ahmedabad, Surat, and Bharuch). Heavy rainfall in the areas of small river basins causes flash floods.

Objective: To promote more secure and resilient livelihoods for 3250 poor smallholder households and ensure their productive and equitable participation in a sustainable agriculture-livestock production system in the Hazira location & To Promote more secure and resilient livelihoods for 2500 forest-fringe smallholder households leading to forest conservation

Geography: 13 Villages of Choryasi and Olpad taluka of Hazira location, Surat District, Gujarat.
08 villages from the Umarpada Taluka, Vadpada range from Surat District

Target Population: 3250 poor smallholder households of Hazira location
2500 smallholder households from forest-fringe communities of Umarpada

To Enhance skills and capacities of smallholder farmers for adopting sustainable agriculture/livestock-based production practices

- We have reached to 4531 plus women small & tribal farmers and total 6782 project participants.
- Package of Practices for organic manure and pesticide with complete organic cultivation process adopted a scale through FFBS

To promote inclusive & effective collectives of smallholder farmers for catering to their needs

- We form 20 Social Monitoring Committees (SMC)
- In the SMC more than 50% of women are committee members.
- 1703 women trained on financial literacy. 98 women trained in market literacy.
- 26% of target collectives have been trained on gender-inclusive governance in the second year.

To strengthen linkages of impact groups with relevant Services, Schemes, Market, and Value Chains

- A total of 70% of HH capacitate through government institutes, NGOs, Local leader training, and workshop.
- 1485 HH applied to the I Khedut portal for agriculture, livestock activities, and social security benefits.
- 75% HHs have availed the benefit of various schemes in the last year.

To create positive and enabling attitudes of panchayat raj institutions (PRIs), service providers, and market institutions, toward the smallholders, especially women

- 79% representatives from Agri/vet/irrigation/Horticulture department, KVK experts, Navsari agriculture university professor, and Kamdhenu university experts were sensitized to support smallholder farmers for timely services in these 2 years.
- 8-15% of women can currently take independent decision decisions and have control over resources.
- 40% HHs, either men (spouse) or other family members have control over resources and do not involve women.

The overall progress of the project is as follows:

- During this year, a total of 578 FFBS sessions were attended by 6782 project participants of which 2251 were male and 4531 female. In agriculture 411 FFBS sessions on agriculture were attended by 4679 project participants of which 1351 were male and 3328 female. A total of 167 FFBS sessions were held in both the project locations – 900 males and 1203 females participated, and a total of 2103 participants were present in these sessions.
- 376 Demonstration plots across 21 villages the interventions demonstrated to smallholders like line sowing of seed, seed treatment and use of organic pesticides & fertilizers have resulted in a reduction in the overall cost of crop cultivation and an increase in crop productivity. In Umarpada there has been notable improvement (in the range of 11-35%) in the productivity of crops in both rabi and Kharif seasons due to the adoption of better farming and crop management practices. However, in Hazira adoption of improved POP resulted in a 20 % to 45% increase in crop productivity of vegetable crops.
- A solar-based group irrigation system is an example of community/village level input support initiated in Pinjrat village in November 2021. This has benefitted 85 HHs by making water available for irrigation in both rabi and Kharif seasons and reducing irrigation costs. Earlier these HHs used diesel pumps for the extraction of water for irrigation.
- In Hazira, 88% of cattle owners reported an increase in fat levels in milk and 84% stated to have an increase in income through milk sales. In Umarpada 63% of cattle, have an increase in fat levels in milk and 62% are stated

to have an increase in income through Milk. The use of alternative fodder was introduced by 90% of cattle rearers (mainly improved variety of Mayu Grass). In Hazira, 61% and Umarapada 40% of cattle rearers reported a reduction in fodder wastage due to the use of chaff cutter. About 44% stated that green fodder availability has increased by 2 months on average after project intervention.

- SMCs were formed in all project villages with 10-15 members consisting of 30-70% women members. The formation of SMC (Social Monitoring Committee) was for mobilizing people in project villages and ensuring smooth project operations.
- Due to various capacity-building sessions focusing on women empowerment, the active decision-making of women members in collectives has increased significantly. In the midterm review, 94.5% of respondents stated having active participation in decision-making.
- As part of promoting women-based enterprises, till now the project has promoted 4 women-based collective enterprises. These are the bakery unit (2 numbers), jewellery unit, and stitching unit. In this unit, 99% of entrepreneurs have been promoted. New 55 Individual women members have started entrepreneurship.
- There has also been a change in the perception of men who are now more helpful in livelihood chores mainly related to agriculture and animal husbandry. It is evident that there have been positive and enabling attitudes towards women smallholders with the rise in 18.5% HHs in sharing farm workload (from 65.2% in baseline to 83% in midterm) and 56% rise in increased household-level decision-making in consultation with women (from 0% during baseline). In Umarpada, a rise of 22.8% HHs in sharing farm workload (from 42.2% in baseline to 65% in midterm) and a 28% rise in increased household-level decision-making in consultation with women (from 0% during baseline).

Smallholder farmers changing lives through improved PoPs.

Name: Harshaben Naginbhai Patel Next: Tena, Ta: Olpad G: Surat Hajura

Harshaben Naginbhai Patel is a progressive woman farmer from her village in Olpad taluka of Surat district who was supporting her family with farming business. She cultivated green beans, long beans, and okra in her 5 ghutra of land on the creeper system by traditional farming and she achieved economic success. But she needs to cultivate varieties of vegetable crops like ivy gourd, bitter gourd, papadi, ridged gourd, etc, in her field and wanted to get income. While doing farming those who did not pay attention to the good quality seeds, fertilizers, and medicines, earlier in the field, therefore the cost of farming, fertilizer cost, pest control drugs, water management, labour cost, etc. increased and got less production.



Harshaben Naginbhai with CRP discussion on farmer diary

Farmer Harshaben Naginbhai Patel joined the SRL project last year and attended the training program on the improved farming method where she received various information related to improving methods of agriculture and organic farming. After getting the knowledge, she took part in a creeper vegetable demonstration and installed the creeper on her land. First, she cultivated bitter melon, papadi and ridged gourd vegetables as per the guidelines and planted them with the POP guidelines including the distance between 2 furrows and 2 plants as well as by bringing high-quality seeds and Yellow Stick, Pheromone Trap Lantern, etc and organic manure, medicine and pest control are provided by the organization and followed the instruction for irrigation methods according to the condition of the crop. By weeding and intercropping promptly and by cultivating very neatly, they are getting more income due to more production.

In Harshaben voice: ***“We are now doing more than one crop in less land area with less effort and in less time. We have earned over Rs. 20,000, so on behalf of my family we are very thankful to the Care India organization.”***