

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

YEAR: 2020-2021



175, Jalaram Society, B/h Vishwamangal Apartment, Vijaynagar,
Bhuj 370001. Kachchh, Gujarat

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1. VISION

Sahjeevan, believes in co-existing and thus contribute to the creation of a society which conserves the natural habitat and ecosystem which integrates culture, tradition, humanity and gender equality.

2. MISSION

We exist to help the community to prepare demonstrations at grass root which helps in strengthening their traditional occupation by conserving the natural habitat and ecosystem which comprises gender equality, humanity, traditional knowledge and the use of simple techniques.

3. VALUES

Collective

To work with a person or a community in such a way that natural habitat and ecosystem sustain, and which affects a major part of the community.

We believe in building a new strength at organizational level by comprehending the potential of supporting organizations.

Decentralization

We believe that instead of single authority of power, ownership, responsibility, decision making and leadership, it should be at community level.

Sustainability

We do sustainable work with the leadership of community which balances natural habitat and ecosystem.

Gender equality

We believe in equal power of decision making between men and women to conserve the lifestyle based on natural habitat and settlement.

Value the indigenous traditional knowledge

We believe in promotion of indigenous knowledge based on community's intellection, experience and culture which is balancing the natural habitat and settlement. We also believe in this to be recognized and valued worldwide.

Humanity

We believe in promoting the lifestyle which is based on the values which maintain the harmony between nature and humankind, such values are equality between each class and cast, sensitivity, honesty and supporting nature.

4. ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

As pointed out in our BUILD proposal last year, agro-pastoralism constitutes a major presence within India's rain-fed landscape, about both numbers of households, but also on account of the contributions to household livelihoods, regional economies, climate resilience and mainstream culture (via crafts and music). Despite these contributions, pastoral communities have tended to occupy a marginal space within mainstream imagination, an outcome of unsupportive policy frameworks and societal misgivings related to pastoral mobility. Very broadly, we seek to improve the market and policy environment within which these communities operate, in the expectation that such changes will enable pastoralists to make more informed life choices about staying on in, or moving out from, pastoralism.

Sahjeevan has worked at the community-environment interface for over three decades, with work on water, agriculture, solid waste management, biodiversity and pastoralism. Sahjeevan is increasingly focusing its work on biodiversity, grasslands and pastoralism, reflected in a consolidation of staff and in the establishment of an institutional ecosystem geared towards servicing this increasingly narrow focus.

This ecosystem includes four closely linked institutions: Sahjeevan's core team continues to work closely with pastoralist communities in the state of Gujarat; the Centre for Pastoralism networks with civil society, government, academia and the private sector outside Gujarat with the objective of taking Sahjeevan learning to other parts of the country; *Living Lightly* is the much acclaimed travelling exhibition that serves as Sahjeevan's principal mode of reaching out to policy makers, civil society, academics, media and students; and RABMLE is a multi-institutional collaborative effort aimed at facilitating research and thereby our understanding of pastoralism, grasslands and their associated biological diversity.

Using these various platforms, we hope to deepen and expand on our past work that has sought to (i) improve revenues from pastoral livelihoods; (ii) improve tenure security to traditional grazing grounds; and (iii) obtain mainstream recognition of intellectual property inherent in animal breeds developed by pastoral communities. This body of work is complimented by wide-ranging collaborative research, curricula development and teaching, and by outreach on the range of issues that affect pastoral communities.

As pointed out in our BUILD proposal last year, we have had several successes on each of these counts, in large part linked to the long-term, sustained advocacy we have undertaken with government bodies and because of the partnerships we have forged with civil society, the private sector and academia. These include the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Research, the Agriculture Ministry and the Gujarat Animal Husbandry Department (on breeds), the Tribal Development Affairs Department (on securing herder access to grazing), and the National Dairy Development Board (on the procurement of pastoral milk), Amul and Aadvik Foods Pvt. Ltd. (on the marketing of pastoral milk products), University of Leeds, IDS, Sussex, ATREE, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Kutch University and Shiv Nadar University (academic networking) and Khamir, Hunnarshala Foundation, Avni, WASSAN, Anthra, URMUL and others in civil society. We now partner with 35 organizations across 11 states in the country.

We identify two key factors as to why strengthening Sahjeevan as an institution is critical at this particular point in time. We are just over three years into a major institutional overhaul, one that has belied expectations from the delivery standpoint. Sahjeevan's work with pastoral communities has expanded from Kutch into Saurashtra, including the establishment of two new regional offices; *Living Lightly* has carved an identity of its own, as a vibrant showcasing of pastoral livelihoods, ecologies and cultures; Center for Pastoralism has raised significant financial resources and has therefore been able to initiate work across all major pastoral regions of the country; and RAMBLE inhabits a vastly more dynamic space than just a few years ago. But these developments have also pointed to capacity gaps that have led to a governance deficit, challenges in utilizing funds, in identifying and hiring new staff and in the quality and effectiveness of our communications. The relative speed of these developments has also had an impact on internal cohesion --- with staff articulation, recently, that suggests that not all staff have felt equally involved in the process, with internal tensions beginning to surface in various ways.

There is, however, a second factor that makes it even more imperative for Sahjeevan to strengthen its institutional systems. Recent policy changes will necessitate our raising a growing proportion of our financial resources from domestic sources. We already raise close to 60% of our annual budget domestically, but this will need to increase further. This can be challenging and will require us to be far more strategic in how we tell our story. We are having to do an abrupt about turn from our original idea of our various institutions flourishing as individual institutions and coming together opportunistically, to being far more strategic and instrumental in our functioning as an integrated set of platforms and institutions. This will require integration at many levels, including with respect to our vision, operations, programs, networking and advocacy.

Ford Foundation's first year of BUILD support has been instrumental in supporting a range of discussions internally and with civil society partners, and these consultations have helped crystalize our own thinking with regard to the direction we need to move forward in. We should point out that in our proposal to the Ford Foundation last year, we anticipated that our energies would be principally focused on building our capacities to operationalize the institutional separation that we had embarked upon. This revolved around setting up a Centre for Pastoralism and a Centre for People and Biodiversity. Within this formulation, *Living Lightly* and RAMBLE were seen as part of the Sahjeevan ecosystem, but as platforms that might be used, as and when the opportunity presented itself. Consultations over this past year have convinced us of (i) the need to shelve the idea of establishing a new centre focused on People and Biodiversity, and (ii) to focus on ways to integrate our functioning as an ecosystem of institutions, rather than to function as independent and loosely connected institutions. We see this as critical in advancing our capacities to move our various agendas forward. Continued support will be critical to taking this process to its logical conclusion.

5. GENERATING LIVELIHOOD

Milk-based Economy

Camel milk continues to be procured by Aadvik Foods Pvt. Ltd. and Amul, now reaching in the range of 4,500 litres per day. This has benefited over 80% of the camel herding population in Kutch. It has helped camel pastoralists with 30-40 animals to have an income of about 30,000 per month. Camel herding is now seen as sufficiently remunerative and has encouraged young herders to return to their traditional occupation of herding. There have been not less than 22 such cases where herders have returned to herding camels.

There has been a 17% increase in the camel population managed by herders, likely the only instance of increasing rather than decreasing camel populations. We continue to work with URMUL Trust in Rajasthan to explore ways by which our success in Kutch might be replicated in the state that has close to 85% of India's camel population.

Sahjeevan's next big move on pastoralist livelihoods is emerging amongst goat herders of Surendranagar. Following year long advocacy and engagement with Amul, the state Animal Husbandry Department and District Milk Unions, the Surendranagar District Milk Union Ltd. (Sursagar) has agreed to initiate the process for the procurement of goat milk with marketing of goat milk or its by-products to be undertaken by Amul. Sursagar is currently undertaking an assessment of surplus milk across all the blocks of the districts to identify appropriate milk sheds, procurement routes and the locations in which BMCs will be established. Sursagar will process milk in its processing facility before transferring to Amul. Sarhad, the Kutch District Milk Union, has indicated that once the Sursagar operation is underway, they will be willing to start procurement of milk from goat herders in Kutch, on the expectation that they will merely procure milk and transport it to Sursagar for processing.

Processing goat milk into cheese

Efforts are now on to set-up small-scale pastoral community enterprises that will focus on the creation of a range of goat milk related products, including cheese, yogurt, and flavoured milk. This is being undertaken in collaboration with larger market players such as Kase, an artisanal cheese manufacturer in Chennai. The expectation is that the development and marketing of such products, across local and distant markets, will help towards the creation of a distinct identity for goat milk.

Desi Oon Initiative (the indigenous wool initiative)

As mentioned in our proposal, there is limited demand for indigenous wool, owing to it being a shorter staple, more coarse wool, compared with the imported wools that industry is tuned to. For this reason, indigenous wool and its various value chains was to have been a major focus of our Living Lightly Exhibition in Bangalore (October 2019). Owing to Covid 19, the exhibition was postponed, first to end 2020 and now, early 2021. Accordingly, in November 2020, our *Desi Oon* Initiative worked with a number of partners (Rangasutra, Avni, Khamir, Dakhini Diaries, Shepherds of the Himalaya, Kullvi Whims and Aana Janaa) to host an online *Desi Oon* exhibition cum sale. While this was not as successful, from a turnover standpoint, as our *Desi Oon* exhibition in Delhi (2019), it did enable a range of designers and

small labels to showcase their work, generate modest sales, and, most importantly, enable a loose network of organizations to initiate dialogue relating to indigenous wool. We are now in the midst of weekly sharing by these partners to try and understand their perspective and plans, and then jointly explore funding opportunities that will enable our collaborative work to go to greater scale.

Separately, we are in discussions with Hunnarshala Foundation and with Kutch University to take to explore potential routes for the marketing of the two products each of these organizations was working on – felt based home insulation and wool-based bio-fertilizers, respectively. We are particularly optimistic about the former, owing to enquiries we are receiving from distributors of insulation material that is currently produced using glass wool. This is highly inflammable, but cheap. Hunnarshala has been experimenting with prototypes that can be used in buildings both hot (Kutch) and cold (Ladakh) climates and exploring mechanisms by which the costing on these prototypes might be brought down to better compete with existing alternatives. A major distributor in Ahmedabad has expressed interest in working with us on the production and marketing of such a product.

Kutch University has completed its work to understand processes of decomposition of wool, for potential use as a bio-fertilizer. This work has been undertaken in a variety of heat and moisture regimes. Kutch University hopes now to partner with organizations such as WASSAN to better understand the mix of factors likely to shape farmer adoption of wool-based compost. There are issues relating to cost, labour and overall effort that is needed, availability of wool and so on.

We anticipate building a networked wool programme over the next year, with the ultimate objective of showcasing potential value chains in wool (around apparels, automobile and home insulation and bio-fertilizers) and undertaking advocacy aimed at enhancing market uptake of indigenous wool.

6. PASTORAL BREEDS

Sahjeevan- Centre for pastoralism has recently published a book named “Pastoral Breeds of India”. The book is first ever guide to pastoral breeds, in which, 40% of all indigenous breeds have been developed by pastoral communities. It is a significant move for pastoralist as a narrative about the traditional pastoral systems is portrayed. It is responsible for sustaining this level of domesticated animal diversity.

Sahjeevan has advocated for many years with state and central governments on the need to provide mainstream recognition to animal breeds developed by pastoral communities. These efforts culminated in 2017 in a national workshop in the recognition, registration and conservation of pastoral breeds, followed in end 2019 in a consultation on the same subject at the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, which was attended by the Secretary of the Department of Animal Husbandry. At the latter meeting a decision was taken to move this agenda into a mission mode. The presence of an interim head of NBAGR ensured minimal progress on this. However, with the recent appointment of Dr. Mishra as the Director of NBAGR, a professional that Sahjeevan has worked with for many years, Mission Zero ND has now been announced by NBAGR. Its stated objective is to reduce “non-descript”, or not described animals in the next national animal census to zero. The announcement of Mission Zero ND by NBAGR is aimed at having all states recognize and register unique breeds. This is very much in response to Sahjeevan’s efforts to mainstream such recognition particularly amongst breeds developed by pastoral communities. Following our successes with the mainstream recognition of pastoral breeds in Gujarat (Banni buffalo, Kharai and Kutchi camels, Halari Donkey, Panchali sheep, Kutchi-Sindhi Horse) the following were given mainstream recognition in 2020 (Nari Cattle, Kutchi Donkey, Poda Thurupu cattle and Dagri cattle). Breed descriptors have been submitted to NBAGR for the Sanchori cattle and Vandhera cattle. And documentation is underway for the Bhagri goat.

7. RESTORATION OF GRASSLAND AND BIODIVERSITY, BANNI

Under the Forest Right Act (FRA) of 2006, a total of 23 Community Forest Management Committees (CFMCs) are formed and re-constituted in Banni. All the CFMCs are developed their participatory action plans on conservation and restoration of native grasslands and water

source.



Banni Breeders Association (BPUMS) along with village panchayats and selected CFMCs are doing conservation related activities for their native breeds with restoration of natural resources for sustainable utilization of traditional grazing resources. The implementations of proposed action plans by selected CFMCs are possible with support from various funding partners including ABF, Agrocel, Sahjeevan and more. SETU team and resource persons are training all the CFMCs on various sections of Forest Rights Act, required legal necessary documentation and resolutions from concern CFMC. In addition, various resolutions are also shared with concern Govt. departments for further necessary process.

As also shared in earlier quarter reports, participatory resource mapping exercise is important tool for development of site-specific action plans on restoration and development of grasslands and waterscapes of respective CFMC. Hence, during this quarter also, selected CFMCs are developed their various action plans and same also resolved in respective Gramsabhas for further necessary implementation. In addition, developed action plans by each CFMC is also shared the various information like- traditional ecological knowledge on grazing resources, available water sources, Prosopis cover, wildlife status etc. required for implementation.

With various action plans developed by CFMCs, most of the CFMCs are started the implementation on restoration and development of their traditional grazing resources and waterscape since last two years. In addition, with help of researchers from RAMBLE and Sahjeevan, each CFMC is being monitored their restored landscape with collecting various data like grass composition, biomass, diversity, percentage cover of each herbaceous species, woody vegetation, and status etc. To maintain restored grassland sites selected CFMCs are started the second-year removal of *Prosopis* saplings from their landscape and completed a *aabhat* (traditional sharing activities by communities for beneficiaries to all villagers) as part of people's contribution to restore their natural resources. As also mentioned in last quarter report, we offered a total of four research funds in Banni on monitoring the selected wildlife species including, Chinkara (Haran), Haoubara Bustard (Tilor), and Cranes (Kunj). With these species-specific monitoring, CFMCs along with BPUMS, RAMBLE and Sahjeevan team also published several IEC materials for awareness and education with selected CFMCs, youth, schools etc.

8. RESEARCH

Herding Project

In 2019, University of Leeds, UK partnered with Centre of Pastoralism for an academic study called the 'herding project'. The research was designed to study the complex transformations of pastoralist women's lives.

This research made an attempt to build understanding of human and cultural contexts to inform discussion of sustainable development for some of the world's most 'left behind' people: women in mobile pastoralist communities in India. For these women, heritage and dignity are historically intertwined aspects of social identity, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods. Five pastoral groups, Dhangar (Maharashtra), Fakirani Jat and Rabari (Gujarat), Gaddi and Muslim Gujjar (Himachal Pradesh) were selected. Researchers along with local NGO's partners from the 3 states: Anthara, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), SETU and Himachal Van Adhikari Sangh carried out the research to understand the situation of migratory pastoralism in the three states.



An investigate led to study the role of their beliefs and practices in constructing a sense of shared heritage that links them to the land and their animals; and how this heritage is changing. It also provides an opportunity for pastoralist women, to speak about the roles and importance to them of religion, gender, culture, and nature. It asks: ‘How do pastoralist women in India live, perceive and mobilise aspects of their religo-cultural heritage to lay claim to sustaining livelihoods of dignity within and outside mobile pastoralism?’

As an end result of the research, workshops were to be held in all the 3 states to discuss the situation of pastoralism and the situation of migratory pastoral women within. These workshops would have looked at the advocacy initiatives which were needed and those which were already in place in the three states to ensure pastoral women would not be “left behind ‘in the future. However due to Covid-19 lockdown and restrains it was not possible.

Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 added another layer to the study. Migratory women pastoralists were interviewed to understand the impact of the lock down in the 3 states. Several of these interviews were conducted via telephone due to the travel restrictions

imposed by the pandemic. Nonetheless, it emerged that the lockdown affected different groups differently and the impact in the three states was different too.

Two research papers on the land regime in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra were written as background material to assist in contextualising the project's investigation of pastoralist livelihoods as well bring in a state-level perspective to situate pastoralist transhumance. The papers looked at the rapid change in the two states and their implications for sedentarising pastoralist populations.

9. EDUCATION

Salim Node Certificate Course on Pastoral Ecology



In March 2021 commenced the second batch of 'Salim Node Certificate course on Pastoral Ecology'. The course is designed to help youth of pastoral community to understand the connections between pastoralism and ecosystem and develop skills so that they feel equipped to contribute towards the regeneration of grassland ecologies. Recognition of traditional skills of local community and their connection with modern education. The course is steered by Sahjeevan in association with the Earth Science Department, Kachchh University (KU) and supported by Banni Breeders Association (BPUMS) and Research and Monitoring in Banni Landscape (RAMBLE). 20 students

graduated from the first batch whereas about 15 students are registered for the second batch.

The sessions taught in the course include, Banni Grassland Ecosystem and Ecology (Grassland Ecology, History of Banni, Soils of Banni, Vegetation of Banni, Invasive Species and Prosopis Juliflora in Banni, Fauna and Avifauna of Banni, Climate Change and Banni, Climate Change and Banni, Environmental crisis and toxicology), Pastoralism (Pastoral History, Pastoral Communities, Pastoral Economies, Pastoral Breeds, Animal Health), Political Science of Pastoralism (Customary Laws and Legislation in pastoral landscapes, Political Economy), Pastoral Cultures (Cultural Expressions of Banni), Skill Training (Management, Resource Mapping, Photography, Computers), reflecting the fact that pastoral lives and livelihoods fall at the interface of each of these thematises.

Subject experts from various reputed institutions have conducted sessions along with staff of Sahjeevan, Pastoral Bhagyas (knowledge bearers on breeding) and Faculty of Earth Science Department. Collecting indigenous traditional knowledge forms an important part of the training sessions.

by-products as well as looking into livestock's health and building community-based organisation for the *maldharis*.

One of the major aims of the national seminar is to ponder upon the conservation strategy with the help of experts, scientists from the field, facilitating the state and national governments to formulate a sustainable plan.

Apart from this, deliberations around the comprehensive development of Saurashtra's pastoralists, putting forward the need for definition of pastoralism and the census of the community will be *prima facie* objectives of the national seminar. The event would also hold discussions around the role and strategies of the government for the *maldhari* community.

11. SUPPORTERS

The work that we have reported in annual report would have not have been possible without support that has been made possible by a wide range of institutions. We are grateful for this support.

- Ford Foundation
- Axis Bank foundation
- Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies
- Friends of Women's World Banking: FWWB
- Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)
- Azim Premji Foundation
- Institute of development Studies – UK
- University of LEEDS
- Bharat Rural livelihood program- BRLF
- Rights and Resource Initiative - RRI
- Institute research pours in Development – IRD
- Adnai Foundation
- Bajat Auto limited
- Agrocel Industries Ltd

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175- Jalaram Society,

B/h. Vishwamangal Apartment,

Vijyanagar, Bhuj 370001

Kutch, Gujarat-INDIA