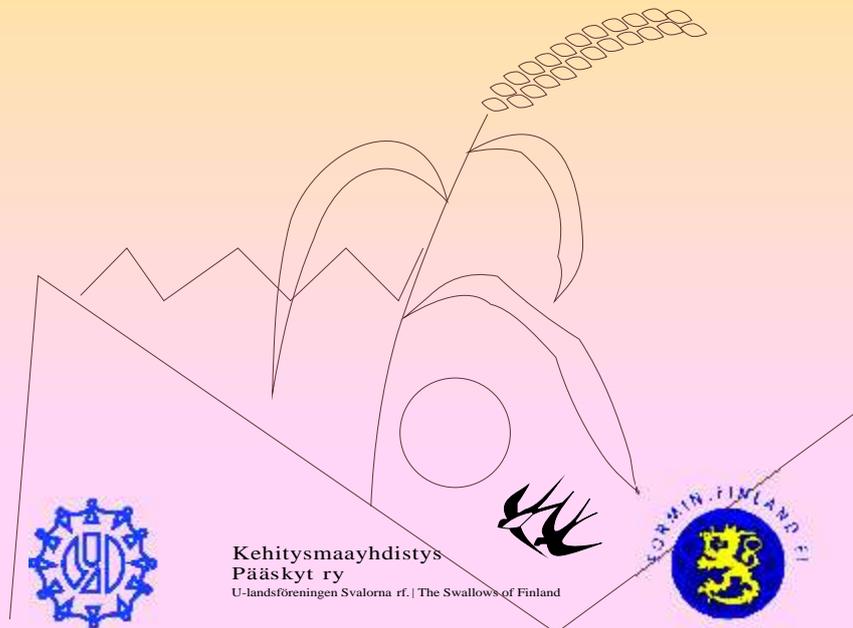




# Improving Food Security through Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Strengthening Local Biodiversity Management



## Background

Udaipur district of Rajasthan exhibits extremely hilly terrain dominated by semiarid agroclimatic environment. The district is marked by diverse castes and ethnic groups with tribes in majority. Salumber, located around 65 kilometres from the district, is one of the blocks (tehsil) dominated by the tribal population. The project villages are remotely located, forming the disperse tracks of settlements within Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest.

The project titled “Improving Food Security through Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Strengthening Local Biodiversity Management”, being implemented by Prayatna Samiti with the support of Kehitysmaayhdistys Pääskyt and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, addresses vulnerable ecosystem by fostering minor millets and vegetable cultivation with the set of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and good governance for better management of natural resources in 10 villages of Salumber. The villages covered are Sarwani, Ven, Panninal, Samarjhap, Baran, Pavati, Ghagri, Dhaikheda, Khajoori and Kalipol.

The project addresses women as primary beneficiaries with the objective to increase food security, improve livelihoods, and conservation of biodiversity and strengthened participation of local communities, including women through bio-resource management.



## Baseline

A baseline survey was conducted to ascertain living standards and their repercussion on accessing food crops and scenario of livelihoods, economy, education, family size, and land hold and understanding on the dynamics among these components which affects the living standards. The findings showed that per day per capita food availability comes to be 0.8 kg, whereas the need is 1.8 kg. Nutrition still remains a burning issue!



## Promotion of Grain Seed Banks

Through reintroduction of minor millets the seed banks maintained grain and seed availability. 9 women promoted seed banks of finger, foxtail and proso millet. Average of 4.5 kg production recorded with 1 kg sown in 2 ha land area. Dry land farming was addressed through practicing slope coverage and row sowing. With the harvest women preserved grains for food and next year sowing. They have also planned for large area sowing and shown willingness to sale them.

## Promotion of Self Help Groups

To promote project activities 5 SHGs were formed. This has strengthened local institutions, brought empowerment and developed leadership among women. Through SHGs 68 women have been addressed on food security issues through continuous inputs of GAPs and benefits of SHGs.



## Trainings organised

Trainings reintroduce traditional agricultural practices as a set of GAP through promoting ex-situ conservation of traditional crops and skill enhancement. 3 trainings were provided to 99 women and 62 men from 5 villages. As a result people practiced row sowing of millets; learned cultivation of millets; nursery raising of vegetables; weeding and ploughing; promotion of organic farming and got familiarized with nutritional values of crops.

## Development of Educational material

IEC disseminated GAP on vegetable cultivation; organic manure preparation methods and nutritional values of minor millets. Following the contents people started row sowing of seeds, covering of nursery with green net and FYM; supporters promoted for fruit growth; nursery and bed preparation; and preparation of cow dung water and five leaf extract.



## Development of Nutrition Gardens

Nutrition Garden introduced vegetable cultivation practices as the set of GAP and maintained food and seed availability. 35 women promoted nutrition gardens of Bhindi, Brinjal, Chilli, Spinach, Bottle gourd, ridge gourd, cluster bean, radish, carrot, pea, cabbage, cauliflower, onion, tomato. With the average of 40 kg production recorded per household average of ₹ 43 saved per day was saved. Through the practice women utilized slopped surface, nursery raising, row sowing of seeds, bed cultivation, and plant supporting techniques. In this way traditional agriculture was promoted to add nutritious vegetables in the diet.

## Awareness spread

2 Awareness camps in the form of folk theatre organised in 2 villages. Through the camps people became aware on importance of minor millets and vegetable farming and understood importance of savings.



## Biodiversity Management Committees

Managing bio resources remains a critical aspect of vulnerable ecosystem. 3 BMCs were constituted to revive floral diversity for strengthening ecosystem which later on will become advocacy forums for promoting traditional and sustainable agriculture. To promote the use of biodiversity people collected traditional seeds and understood their value and 6 compost pits prepared. The key features of the BMCs include promotion of traditional crop seeds, develop compost pits; listing of traditional crops and preparing PoP; documentation of traditional agricultural practices and Community Knowledge Registers and establish linkage with gram panchayats for accessing welfare schemes.



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