

# WHAT GROWS IN A BROKEN CLIMATE?

WE ALL DO.

*Discover our community-driven environmental sustainability achievements,  
innovative resilience strategies, and transformative co-evolution initiatives that  
turn imperfections into impactful growth.*

2024-2025

The Annual Report

A Macro View



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*"Although the world is full  
of suffering, it is also full of  
the overcoming of it" –  
Helen Keller*

# IT IS IMPERFECTION THAT BREATHES LIFE.

*It is imbalance that moves rivers and creates winds. It is chaos that drives evolution and births creativity.*

*And if nature were to ever reach a perfect equilibrium it would rot like an ugly bed sore.*

*In the jagged contours of this planet's surface there lies the story of survival, of life as we know it. Life doesn't flourish in perfect systems, it flourishes in the cracks. It is the thirst of a parched field that calls forth the ingenuity of rain water harvesting. It is the barren, rocky hill that becomes the birthplace of man-made forests. And it is the frailty of human life that drives empathy amongst communities, to rise, to adapt, and to protect this imperfect system.*

*Our Foundation is based on this philosophy. We do not aspire to reach equilibrium, we do not work to solve imperfections. Instead, we seek movement, between human hands and nature's will, between what is and what could be. We exist in the space between despair and hope, in the messy yet beautiful process of meditating on imperfections. This year's annual report is just that, a deeper look into the imperfections that fuel our journey as an NGO.*

*This is the story of how imbalance saves us. This is the story of how Raah Foundations progress was NOT born out of perfect conditions but rather out of persistence and an unyielding belief of better "oops !" than "what if?"*

# MUDDY BOOTS: OUR JOURNEY THROUGH 2024

Dear Readers,

Looking back, it's clear the we spent this year doing what we do best: running before we could walk. We are pleased (and frankly a little astonished ourselves) to report that this has been a year of bold expansions, deeper impact, and a fair amount of "building the plane while flying it." With a 50% growth in scale, we've managed to reach more communities, revive more ecosystems, and juggle more moving parts than ever before (often simultaneously).

A particular highlight this year was the expansion of our Skill Training Program into Rajasthan, adding a third state to our portfolio and 3,000 more young individuals to our growing alumni. Recognising that this beast needed its own stable, we launched the Raah Next Skills Foundation — a dedicated Section 8 company to handle the complexities of skilling, employability, and corporate partnerships.

Internally, we tackled a long-overdue "spring cleaning." Less org chart navel-gazing, more actual conversations. The result? Programs are rolling out faster, and mercifully, there are fewer email threads titled "Following up on the follow-up."

Of course, beyond the numbers, our real impact is measured in lives — farmers who stay rooted, women who gain time and agency, youth who choose opportunity over migration. This is what drives us, even as the climate continues to remind us that nature has no patience for our five-year plans.

None of this progress would have been possible without your belief in our mission, and your continued support as we navigate the unpredictable terrain of mortality. As we step into another year of high ambition and guaranteed surprises, we do so with humility — and the full awareness that we are always one missed monsoon away from rewriting our plans.



- Dr. Sarika and Girish Kulkarni



A photograph of a narrow dirt path winding through a dense, misty forest. The path is covered with fallen leaves and branches. The trees are tall and thin, with thick foliage. The overall atmosphere is serene and mysterious. The word "follow" is written in a large, glowing, serif font across the middle of the image.

follow

*in our footsteps*



# UNDERSTANDING A CONFLICT

Conflicts don't always come running over the horizon waving a red flag. Sometimes it whispers through cracked soil and speaks in missed monsoons. Sometimes, it arrives in the form of two families fighting over a broken borewell. Other times, it's two goats grazing over a dead millet field.

For some small communities living in villages invisible to satellites, a conflict went ignored for so long, that it materialised; from theories and speculations. While its resident farmers ignored it as "bad luck", the globe acknowledged it as Climate Change.

It materialised into who draws water first at dawn & into how much shade a banyan tree offers and whose cattle gets to rest beneath it.

For their women, a conflict is carried on their heads in pots. The pain travels through their spine and down to their heels. Ask these women about Climate Change and they will not respond in terms of carbon but rather in terms of a physical strain in their necks and shoulders from carrying water back and forth all day.

When a girl stops school to haul water, conflict is intergenerational. When a mother skips meals during the lean season, conflict is nutritional.

But calling the Climate Crisis a conflict seems a little demeaning so let's refer to it with the magnitude it's earned. A crisis.





*How To:*  
Better Ignore...

# The Climate Crisis

A conflict grows with time and grows over space. (Nature is no Zen garden, stop romanticising it). The trees and the fungi are locked in a chemical conversation of cooperation and competition. Trees suffocate each other for nutrition and parasitic plants invade and kill like rabies. Wind pollinates, then topples the very tree it once caressed. We cannot resolve the Climate Crisis. Not in the way we resolve a Rubik's cube or a customer complaint.

All conflicts, whether over oil or ideology, eventually boil down to one thing, resource allocation. Who gets what? When? And at whose expense? These are trade-offs. Inevitable ones. The tragedy is not that these trade offs exist but rather that we act like they do not.

So at what point are we allowed to intervene?

Now, some might say, "Let's avoid the conflict altogether. Let's be 'neutral'." But neutrality in the face of competing needs is just passive allegiance to the status quo. And here's a little nuance in the method of ignorance to humour you; every climate solution is a trade-off. It's the price of choosing something over doing nothing. Right? But when we refuse to make a trade-off, we just delay the cost. The impact festers and swells and eventually bursts into a golden shower of acid rain.





## THE COMPOUNDING EFFECT OF IGNORANCE

Ostrich behaviour, a blind spot born out of comfort and a stubborn loyalty to industrial myths.

We dismiss slow variables (like soil degradation), focus on visible symptoms (like hurricanes), and misattribute causality (blaming weather, not warming). We've built economic systems that reward extractive immediacy and penalize ecological patience. That's ignorance.

There are quite a few ways to calculate the compounding effect of this ignorance but here are the ones made visible to us this year:

- The climate system operates on a lag.
- Misdiagnosis leads to misdirection.
- Technological fixation promises salvation while entrenching the same anthropocentric logic that birthed the crisis.

Carbon emitted today continues to warm for decades. If we're unaware of today's cause, we'll misinterpret tomorrow's effect.

When consequences hit we respond symptomatically. Build bigger levees. Import more grain. Issue ecological painkillers.

Every failed techno fix deepens mistrust, fuelling apathy and denial. People check out. Ignorance, once passive, becomes defensive.

The formulas are that simple.

## RELATED READS;



### Climate, Economics and Finance

Stabilizing the global climate is the great challenge of the 21st century. Temperatures have exceeded global averages for 37 consecutive years.

[WHO India](#)



### Desertification: 'Droughts reduced India's GDP by up to 5% in 20 years'

The frequency and duration of drought is increasing at an alarming rate across the world since the onset of the 21st century, according to the Drought in Number

[Science To People, May 12, 2022](#)



### Preparing India for Extreme Climate Events

Suggested citation: Mohanty, Abinash. 2020. Preparing India for Extreme Climate Events: Mapping Hotspots and Response...

[COWI.CO](#)





PLANET  
V/S  
PEOPLE

3789

Acres  
Rejuvenated

ECONOMY  
V/S  
ECOLOGY

₹2,39,06,981

The Economy  
we created  
together

ASPIRATION  
V/S  
ACCESS

4600

Opportunities  
created for  
Women & Youth

# Planet v/s People

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## Conserve

Majority of us step into this conflict with the pre conceived notion that everything is already lost. The air has already turned into smoke and the rain, acid. So what's left to save?

Well, here's everything we could save:

- Native plant species by the removal of invasive ones.
- Countless seeds that turned into saplings.
- Acres of recovering forests through the digging of fire lines to control forest fires.
- A few million litres of rain water.
- Surface nutrient run-offs.

## Mitigate

When you can't win, you negotiate. No, this does not involve yelling at tress or pointing fingers at clouds. It's much simpler than all that acting.

The negotiations that took place this year:

- Between farmer and leopard territories
- Between communities and the different roles of water
- Between farmers and stubborn crop species
- Between inflation and the availability of resources.



## Adapt

And when you can't negotiate with the weather man, it's time to try new things. When mitigation and conservation fall short, climate adaptation becomes the last line of defence. Where survival methods trump ideology. We'll go deeper into these methods over the next two pages.

# Economy v/s Ecology

## Forest Based Economies



The Agroforestry Project by Raah Foundation, aimed at forest-based non-timber products (NTFPs) like fruits and , is an ecological and economic counterpunch to the wreckage left behind by climate change, deforestation, and a development model that has persistently ignored forest-dependent communities.

Here's how to replicate it:

- Prioritise native species with ecological roles —carbon sequesters, nitrogen fixers, biodiversity enhancers.
- Then income generating, fruit-bearing, medicinal and pollinator-attracting species.
- Mix canopy layers to simulate forest stratification and increase resilience.
- Secure the perimeter, pitch fences, dig fire lines, divert grazing
- Build micro catchments to manage moisture.
- Create village-level bylaws to establish accountability.

## Circular Economies

We're still learning what it really takes to build a circular economy for women in tribal zones hit hard by patriarchy, water scarcity, and digital exclusion. But here's what we've cooked up so far:

We have freed up women's time by reducing the hours lost to daily water collection. This has opened space for paid work. In doing so, we have ensured access to cash flow in the present.

We have established resilient micro-factories through Associations of Persons. These ensure production continues when individual women are unavailable.

We have secured stable market access, lowering dependence on dealers who constantly chase cheaper rates.

But here's the hard truth we keep returning to: you can design the most elegant economic loop on paper, but a woman's role in her household is still linear, shaped by relentless schedules and societal expectations. Yet we don't ask them to step away from their realities to participate.





# Aspiration v/s Access

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## Adaptive Agriculture

In a battle for survival, trade-offs have to be made. Would you rather lose an arm or a leg?

A similar question stood in front of countless farmers. When faced with the trade-off, they believed it safer to migrate to cities and work as daily wage labourers. But we found loopholes we could stick our fingers in. And so we did.

- The Food Forest Model - Intercropped orchards of layered canopies of fruiting trees.



- A WATER FIRST farm design to prevent irrigation shortfalls.
- Crop diversification - short-cycle vegetables/flowers + medium-duration grains + long-term tree crops.
- Locally produced bio fertilisers over expensive chemical fertilisers for better soil health.
- Direct market linkages to keep up with inflation.

## Skill Training

The market demands plug-and-play labour. The kind of student who graduates college with 3+ years of work experience.

We do have a method to navigate this madness. We identify regional industry clusters and align its curriculum to match ours. That means skills like:

- Retail operations
- Data entry and digital tools
- CNC machine operation

There's no rigid syllabus, no bureaucratic lag.

Now inflation hits the poor the hardest. Skills that are required today may not hold a future. Our duty towards the youth is to identify what sticks. Train them in areas that hold up under real inflationary pressure. We encourage them to peruse an education even post-placement, with 8% of them actually giving in to our persuasion. Our explorations have taken us deeper into the market of Green Skills and we hope to crack this open this easter egg within the coming year.





# WHAT WAS ATTEMPTED; **WHAT BROKE DOWN.**

Every step we took was measured, experimental, sometimes chaotic—but never aimless. We wanted to know: Can this hold under pressure? Can this grow without breaking? Can this serve without bleeding us dry?

Failure assumes collapse. And nothing collapsed. Well at least nothing too important.

We can explain:

What we saw were steady transitions from the experimental to the instinctual. The intent of the observations was to test existing models, identify operational friction, and iterate without destabilising core systems. Several pilots from previous years, particularly in regenerative agriculture, have transitioned into independent self-sustaining economies.

However, certain interventions, especially in the younger job markets market linkage ecosystems and women's product based market linkages did not stabilise organically. These are now being reassessed through structured frameworks involving outcome mapping and controlled implementation cycles. The method driving us targets efficiency gains in already functional models as well as restructuring underperforming ones through rigorous system design.

Pilots that collapsed:

- Spine Guard - inadequate research on sexes
- Strawberry - government support beat us on this one
- Bush Pepper - the community refused to adopt it.

# WHAT EMERGED;

EST. 2024

## THEORY OF EVERYTHING

### THE NEED

#### PROBLEM

Socio-environmental challenges causing poverty, insecurity, and displacement.

#### PEOPLE

Indigenous and underserved communities in the Northern Western Ghats, Maharashtra

#### REASON

A singular objective of the Family Office to create abundance by funding the search for the problem.

### THE WORK

#### PARTNERS

Third-party audits, data collection tools, funders, thought leaders.

#### INTERVENTION

Building resilient landscapes through water security, biodiversity conservation, agroecology, and circular livelihoods.

#### INPUT

Community insights, tech expertise, implementation methods, skilled manpower, and funding

#### BEHAVIORS

Accountability, Transparency, Participatory

#### THE IDEA

Climate change - mitigation, adaptation and conservation by taking a landscape approach.

#### MISSION

Creating Prosperity for People in Harmony with the Environment.

#### SHORT TERM

Deploy integrated water, agriculture, climate, and livelihood interventions across our target villages.

#### OUTPUTS

Village-level water access, rejuvenated barren farmland, reforestation of degraded forests & comprehensive livelihood training to empower women & youth

#### PATHWAYS

Landscape Approach from the macro lens.  
ESA Village Approach from the micro lens.

### THE RESULT

#### LONG TERM

Transform marginalized ecosystems into self-sustaining socio-ecological ones that break poverty cycles, and achieve intergenerational environmental and economic stability.

#### 10 YEAR GOAL

1 Million Acres; 1 Million People.

#### VISION

To establish or Western Ghats as a global model for biodiversity conservation, climate-smart livelihoods, and ecosystem restoration through local stewardship.





**AND HERE'S WHAT  
THAT EVERYTHING  
LOOKS LIKE;**

**PLANET V/S PEOPLE**

Water Security  
Climate Action  
Climate Smart Farming

**ECONOMY V/S ECOLOGY**

Market Predictive Farming  
Women's Livelihoods  
Youth Skill Training

**ASPIRATION V/S ACCESS**

Water Security  
Women's Livelihoods  
Youth Skill Training

**CONFLICTS ADRESSED**

**Human survival pressures environmental limits.**

Water accessibility enables immediate survival but risks altering natural hydrology if unmanaged. Human survival pressures environmental limits.

**Capitalist farming models versus regeneration.**

Creating profitable farm-based economies without unleashing a new wave of ecological destruction. Capitalist farming models versus regeneration.

**Basic needs, once secured frees up space for creative productivity.**

Closing basic needs gaps to enable higher-order aspirations like education and leadership.

**Communities must restrain traditional land uses for long-term ecological gain.**

Balancing ecological restoration with the need for human use of land. Communities must restrain traditional land uses for long-term ecological gain.

**Economies, but not at the expense of a gender or climate bias.**

Providing entrepreneurial pathways for women that increase disposable income while seeding sustainability mindsets.

**Transforming Traditional Gender Dynamics in Agriculture.**

Democratising access to financial tools for women, allowing them to navigate and rise in economic systems traditionally rigged against them.

**Farming models need to be climate-smart, not extractive.**

Meeting farmers' immediate need for income without degrading soil, water and biodiversity. Farming models need to be climate-smart, not extractive.

**Risk of rural abandonment and loss of traditional knowledge.**

Building rural economies through skilling that pulls youth away from labour into urban-centric sectors.

**Aspiration should not have to be born out of desperation and displacement.**

Creating independent and dignified income streams for rural youth without forcing them into exploitative city labor markets, enabling local prosperity.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR

PLANET V/S PEOPLE

ECONOMY V/S ECOLOGY

ASPIRATION V/S ACCESS

135

Million litres of Water  
Harvesting capacity  
created

3913

Farmers practicing  
regenerative  
agriculture

500

Women completed  
Financial Literacy  
training

1100

Hours saved per year  
by women impacted  
by water access.

500

Agroforestry plots

2

Active, income  
generating women  
producer companies

55

Active Water  
Governance  
committees

600

Kilos of cloth waste  
recycled and  
repurposed

2416

Youth placed in jobs &  
enrolled in college

614

Acres reforested

13,00,000

Rupees of income  
generated for women

3100

Certificates issued and  
job offers received

55245

Saplings planted



## BETWEEN PEOPLE & PLANET

We began with the obvious — measuring water tables, soil moisture, and vegetation cover. These cold indicators gave us numbers but real change demanded a deeper understanding. As restoration efforts like check dam repairs and agroforestry matured, we realised survival required a human touch to sustain. So we forced the system to evolve. We built the Gram Vikas Samitis, village committees. Their stewardship turned passive beneficiaries into active custodians, capturing real-time, ground-level data.

**The Shift:** Expanded focus on adaptive capacity of communities to manage ecosystems autonomously.

**The Impact:** Real-time engagement metrics allowed Raah to refine intervention strategies, integrating community behavior as a variable to calculate efficiency and sustainability.

## BETWEEN ECOLOGY & ECONOMY

Our conservation efforts reflect seamlessly in the recorded metrics of our planet focused interventions. Too seamlessly. Planting trees was the easy part, keeping them alive however, massive pain in the behind. Now for this to sustain, we had to take a closer look at the stakeholders involved in the actual “doing” of our efforts. We realised soon; without an incentive, these communities have no business conserving ecology when their basic needs aren't being met because of the economy.

The conflict only grew for us when 5 acres of reforested common land was cleared out by anonymous, OVERNIGHT, for the installation of solar panels.

**The Shift:** Combining water usage efficiency, land availability and income levels to measure synergy.

**The Impact:** Livelihood improvements directly informed the effectiveness of ecological interventions.

## WHY IS DATA CAPTURE MORE FOCUSED IN CITIES THAN IN RURAL AREAS ?



### Why science needs indigenous data collectors

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) have proven to be more effective than scientists in collecting data on the impact of climate change on biodiversity. A study by the Autonomous University of...

Source: The Earth, April 23



### A values-centered relational science model: supporting indigenous rights and reconciliation in research

Addressing complex social-ecological issues requires all relevant sources of knowledge and data, especially those held by communities who remain close to the land. Centuries of oppression, extractive research practices...

Ecology & Society, May 30, 2024



### Digital transformation, well-being and shrinking communities: Narrowing the divides between urban and...

The ongoing digital transformation and the digitalisation of services profoundly affect the everyday lives of citizens. Digital transformation's impact is complex and may have both positive and negative...

Published: Central (PMU)

## BETWEEN ASPIRATION & ACCESS

Access remains shaped by infrastructural asymmetry, institutional inertia, and gatekeeping mechanisms embedded in policy and economy. You peel open the conflict and realise how development paradigms often conflate provision with participation, overlooking the agency embedded in aspiration itself. This disconnect stems from a critical mismatch between the education system and labour market demands. Formal education continues to prioritise rote learning over the development of market-relevant skills, leaving graduates ill-equipped for the dynamic requirements of modern industries. What is left at the end is just aspiration and hope. But aspirations reveal where current access mechanisms fail to meet evolving human potential.



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## RELATIONAL VALUES

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In a policy landscape dominated by technocratic solutions and efficiency metrics, relational values go under-examined despite their critical role in sustainable development. It refers to the non-instrumental, often intangible, meanings individuals and communities assign to their interactions with people, place, and ecological systems.

Recent research in ecological economics and human geography, particularly from the IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), has underscored that relational values (unlike instrumental or intrinsic values) anchor conservation and development efforts in the lived realities of communities.



# How can you empathise with numbers?

The development sector has adopted a language of certainty: outcomes are quantified, success is charted, and accountability is monetised. But what if this precision is only half the truth? What if the most telling metric is not a number but a posture?

Humility refuses to assume, insists on listening, and recognises that every intervention sits inside a context older, wiser, and far more complex than any spreadsheet can capture.

Humility, in this framing, is not a passive stance. It is a strategic and epistemological one. It acknowledges that the communities we work with are archives—of ecological wisdom, historical adaptation, and social intelligence. When an external actor approaches a community with a pre-ordained solution, they overwrite this archive.

In Raah's fieldwork, this principle manifests in baselines conversations. In how farmers are not "beneficiaries," but partners in experimentation. It is reflected in our refusal to retrofit solutions across villages, opting instead for tailored interventions that adapt to the nuances of terrain, responsive history, and preference.



Academic literature increasingly validates this shift. Participatory Action Research (PAR), feminist geography, and indigenous epistemologies all point to humility as a critical lens for validity. As Chilisa (2012) notes, "research that does not begin with listening is extractive." Moreover, humility improves data fidelity. When people trust that they are being heard without judgment or agenda, the information they offer is richer, more accurate, and more actionable.

*To the men & women in suits: humility is not anti-intellectual. It is pre-analytical. It is what allows your data to mean something beyond itself. It is what makes your cost-benefit analysis less extractive and more humane. It forces you to ask not just "Did it work?" but "Who decided it should?" It is a call to complicate the graph, to situate the indicator in lived time, and to accept that every number is nested in a narrative you did not write.*





*And it was all Yellow....*

# Pandurang Chaudhari

In the small hamlet of Tulyachapada, Pandurang Chaudhari and a collective of ten farmers are redefining what resilience looks like in rural agriculture. Backed by Raah Foundation's targeted support—input supplies, crop guidance, and technical know-how—they've made a decisive shift from traditional, labour-intensive farming to calculated turmeric cultivation.

Traditional crops here were exhausting to manage and wildly vulnerable to climate disruptions. In 2023, rains swept through the region, disrupting yields. But Chaudhari's turmeric survived, unbothered by cattle, resilient against pests, and unattractive to thieves from the animal kingdom. He harvested 1,300 kilograms with barely any effort—primarily just watering—and pocketed ₹20,000 in three months. The profit had turned into power and it came with less physical strain, less unpredictability, and more control.

The model wasn't just about crop choice. The strength came from the collective: pooling resources, joint processing, and bulk marketing gave the group leverage. Transport costs dropped. Market rates improved. Stress reduced.

What's emerging in Tulyachapada combines climate awareness, economic pragmatism, and community solidarity. It's a system designed to outlast the storm, literally and economically.







*A New Work Force*

# Kashish Tiwari

Kashish Tiwari, a 21-year-old resident of Nerul in Navi Mumbai, represents a growing cohort of urban youth navigating the volatile intersection of economic precarity and educational limitations. Raised in a low-income household—her father employed as a daily-wage labourer and her mother as an unpaid caregiver—Kashish faced the dual burden of limited formal education and entrenched structural barriers. With only a 12th-grade qualification and no prior work experience, her entry into the workforce was marked by uncertainty and constrained opportunity.

Her enrolment in the Samarth Employment Guarantee Program in July 2024 signaled a critical inflection point. Designed as a skilling and placement initiative, the program provided Kashish with structured training in both technical and behavioural domains. These interventions were paired with mentorship and regular assessments via the Sixer App, which tracked her development in adaptability, confidence, and workplace readiness.

Her eventual placement at New Oxford Academy, with a starting salary of ₹12,000, was not merely a financial milestone but a symbolic rupture from the low-mobility trap experienced by many urban youth.





*It takes a village.*

# Wild cats & motherhood

In the once-barren ridge lines of Dari, Nashik's tribal belts, a quiet, feral miracle is unfolding.

Our reforestation program has re-scripted the ecology and ethics of the land. What began as a climate resilience project, driven by concerns over deforestation, soil erosion and disappearing water tables, has metamorphosed into something far more radical: a biome revival, which even apex predators are welcome to call home.

The first signs of regeneration were biological: antelopes, hares, peafowls, and wild boars returned. As prey density increased, so did the predators. Most notably, leopards. And more critically, they are reproducing.

Our conservation protocols; minimal human intervention, fire lines to prevent habitat loss, and localised water storage, have ensured that these leopards find sanctuary. Several reports from our local forest watchers have confirmed sightings of mother leopards nursing cubs within the reforested zones. But this isn't just a story about animals. It's about a recalibration of co-existence. Communities that once feared leopards now subconsciously protect them. Just as humans can learn to live with predators, predators too adapt to cues of safety. Cubs born in these forests grow up not associating humans with threat, and humans grow up learning that their survival is linked with the survival of those cubs.





# THE MYTH OF **LINEAR PROGRESS**

The development sector is structured around assumptions of predictability, scalability, and sequence. It operates under the premise that impact unfolds in stages—input, output, outcome, and impact. This model imposes a linearity that does not exist in the field. It oversimplifies complex socio-ecological realities. Progress in our context is iterative. It involves continuous calibration. Models that succeeded last year are reassessed, adapted, and sometimes discarded. Linear frameworks reward speed and output. They penalise resistance, hesitation, and adaptation. But these are exactly the processes through which real transformation occurs.

The expectation of linearity devalues the legitimacy of time-bound, community-led learning and response. It leads to premature judgments of failure or success.

Our work challenges this illusion daily. In the same village, a check dam might restore water for three seasons, then collapse under altered rainfall patterns. A jasmine farmer may increase her yield but still migrate due to debt or market volatility.

So why does the sector cling to linearity? Because it comforts funders, justifies bureaucracy, and mirrors the logic of markets. But it fails to accommodate emergent systems thinking, intersectionality, or chaos theory — all of which argue that development is dynamic, adaptive, and riddled with feedback loops. It ignores psychological models like the Transtheoretical Model of Change, which emphasises relapse as part of growth, not its antithesis.



If linear progress is a myth, then what should take its place?

The answer is not chaos, relax.

The development sector must reorient itself around systems thinking frameworks that treat development as an emergent, recursive, and deeply human process. Start with systems thinking, as articulated by Donella Meadows in *Thinking in Systems* (2008). This framework encourages us to see development not as a chain of events, but as an interdependent web of feedback loops, delays, thresholds, and tipping points. Our cluster-based, hydrogeologically informed interventions already nod toward this — mapping water, land, and livelihood holistically rather than in isolation.

This model recognizes that systems undergo four phases: growth, conservation, release, and reorganization. Applied to development, it allows for collapse, recalibration, and regeneration.

This means:

- Abandoning five-year plans with fixed targets in favour of iterative roadmaps.
- Funding process, not just product — supporting what happens between milestones.
- Valuing relational metrics: trust, local ownership, ecological coherence.

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## OUTCOME HARVESTING

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Traditional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks ask: Did we achieve our intended outcomes? Outcome Harvesting, as developed by Ricardo Wilson-Grau and promoted by the ODI and UNDP, flips the script: it asks What changed, and how did we contribute to it? It enables organisations to identify emergent outcomes, both intended and unintended, and then map their contribution retrospectively.

In practice, this means capturing nuanced transformations like a Malhar Samitee (Water Governance Committee) independently lobbying a panchayat for repair funds which a logframe would ignore.







## THE LANDSCAPE APPROACH.

Our pivot toward a landscape approach marks a decisive departure from the outdated, siloed method of tackling “problems in parts.” Instead of addressing water, agriculture, and ecology as separate verticals, this strategy frames development as an interconnected biophysical and socio-economic system, shaped by terrain, community, climate, and culture. By dividing intervention areas into hydrologically and ecologically coherent clusters, we can now map water availability, land use, biodiversity potential, and livelihood patterns together, revealing what was previously invisible and passively ignored. It aligns with the FAO’s Guidelines for a Landscape Approach to Sustainable Development, which stress that true resilience emerges only when interventions are made across ecological boundaries, not administrative ones. The technical advantage? It prevents downstream collapse caused by upstream ignorance, something traditional village-by-village models repeatedly failed to account for.

This would result in better aquifer recharge planning, more strategic crop suitability analysis, and ecosystem-wide monitoring that captures both human and non-human outcomes.

Sustainability demands this scale of thinking because climate collapse doesn’t respect village boundaries.



## THE EFFECT OF THIS ADAPTATION:

- 3,800+ acres of land now fall under an integrated agroecological strategy, driven by climate-resilient and terrain-informed planning.
- 17 new landscape-based clusters were formed across 8 blocks (Jawhar, Mokhada, Vikramgad, Wada, Dahanu, Raigad, Nashik & Ahilya Nagar), serving 125 villages and reaching 12 lakh people.
- 486 hectares of water and land systems rejuvenated using data-backed watershed design.
- 1.4 billion litres of water storage capacity created — directly linked to our terrain-informed watershed mapping.
- 2,126 acres of food forests planted — integrating saplings, water structures, and soil health into a single ecological unit.

The landscape approach collapses the artificial boundaries that used to separate “water projects,” “agriculture projects,” and “biodiversity projects.” It acknowledges, correctly, that a dry well in one hamlet often starts with degraded land two hills away. By shifting from reactive service delivery to hydrological-unit-based planning, Raah now operates at the scale of actual ecosystems. This increases the efficiency of recharge, resilience of crops, and permanence of impact.

### The New Dimensions:

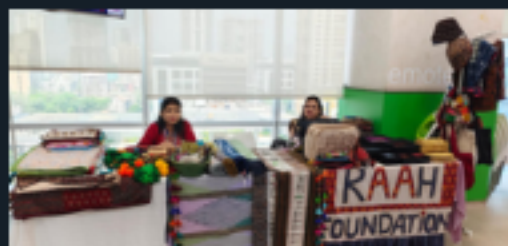
- Groundwater table rise across a watershed,
- Biodiversity recovery (species count and seed bank activation),
- Reduction in seasonal migration across an entire corridor

# WHERE ₹13,00,000 CAME FROM

Sell. Sell. Sell. Sell.



- HDFC Bank Kanjurmarg, Prabhadevi and Lower Parel branch
- SP Main office Colaba
- Yes Bank, Santacruz
- Nomura Powai
- Tata Power, Lower Parel
- SP Jain Institute of Management studies Andheri
- Jaihind collage
- NATCON, Nashik
- The American Club for International Women





We offer a range of training and leadership development programs across location designed to strengthen the capabilities of our employees and senior leaders. These initiatives aim to enhance skills, improve performance, and foster professional growth across all levels of the organization. Key programs conducted include:

- PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) Training Program
- Basic Community Engagement Training – Palghar Team
- Basic Communication Skills Training – Palghar and Nashik Teams
- Effective Training and Coaching Skills
- Enhanced KRA Sheet Walkthrough Sessions
- Effective Performance Management Skills
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Guidelines for Managers



STANDING  
WITH A  
TEAM OF  
**166**  
STRONG



Raah Foundation's Centre for Policy Research and Action is a newly seeded but ambitious initiative aimed at shaping climate and development policy through grounded research, field insights, and evidence-based advocacy. As a civil society think-tank rooted in the landscapes of the Northern Western Ghats, our mission is to translate community knowledge and ecological understanding into informed, actionable, and just policy solutions.

Over the past year, we have laid the groundwork for this Centre through key strategic outputs and programming. A bi-monthly series of thematic-cum-position papers has been conceptualised to build a steady stream of policy-relevant knowledge anchored in our field experience. These papers aim to influence both discourse and decision-making across climate adaptation, water security, regenerative agriculture, and gender equity. Parallely, two major research outputs - one journal publication, and another based on survey-led research with youth - demonstrated our capability to produce rigorous and credible work. Though developed before the Centre's formal launch, these outputs reflect the hybrid research-practice approach we now seek to institutionalise.

The Centre also serves as a thought leadership hub, hosting curated webinars that bring together policymakers, practitioners, and academics. These forums serve not only to disseminate our work but also to surface new policy questions, strengthen cross-sectoral engagement and build relationships.

At its core, the GRT Research Fellowship builds a pipeline of young researchers trained in both academic rigor and field sensitivity -contributing to a growing body of interdisciplinary, community-anchored policy research. Over time, the fellowship aims to evolve into a bridge between civil society and academia, creating pathways for collaborative research, co-authored publications, and long-term institutional partnerships with universities and research centres.

Looking ahead, the Centre is positioned to engage more directly with government systems, offering research-backed inputs, co-designing pilot models, and participating in consultative forums. Our evolving logic model and theory of change reflect a commitment to credible, collaborative, and well-communicated knowledge that informs public policy in the Northern Western Ghats.

The right side of the page features a vertical illustration. At the top, a tiger's head and shoulders are visible, looking towards the left. Below it, a leopard is shown in a walking pose, also facing left. The background is a dark, muted green with stylized leaves and branches. The text 'CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH AND ACTION' is overlaid on the tiger's head in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

# CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH AND ACTION



## GRT FELLOWSHIP

*In honor of the visionary spirit of Late Shri G. R. Thengdi, whose enduring commitment to progress and sustainability continues to inspire, we are proud to launch the G. R. Thengdi Research Fellowship—dedicated to pioneering inquiry in the development and environmental sectors, a reflection of the future he tirelessly envisioned.*

The GRT Research Fellowship is a unique, future-facing research initiative by Raah Foundation's Centre for Policy Research and Action that places young researchers at the heart of one of the most urgent and under-explored intersections in climate discourse.

The first edition focuses on the lived experiences of indigenous women in the face of climate change. Designed as an 8-week immersive programme, the fellowship provides a dynamic platform for learning, reflection, and action that combines academic inquiry with community engagement.

The first cohort brings together four bright, committed women with strong academic grounding in the social and natural sciences. Their shared interest in climate justice, tribal resilience, and gender equity sets a powerful foundation for thoughtful, nuanced research. With sensitivity, curiosity, and integrity, these fellows will explore the dual role of indigenous women as both vulnerable to climate impacts and as knowledge-holders leading conservation efforts.

The fellowship unfolds in three phases:

- Orientation: Ethical, community-centered research methods
- Literature Review: Global and local climate-gender dynamics
- Fieldwork & Reporting: Two weeks in the Northern Western Ghats interviewing indigenous women, followed by analysis and a comprehensive report



## Contact Us



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“Saving the world sounds  
exhausting no doubt. But let your  
attention become an offering.”