

Facilitating ICT-enabled Improvements in Food Security and Health Outcomes in India



About Us

Digital Green is a not for profit international development organization that uses an innovative digital platform for community engagement to improve lives of rural communities across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. We partner with local public, private and civil society organizations to share knowledge on improved agricultural practices, livelihoods, health, and nutrition, using locally produced videos and human mediated dissemination. In a controlled evaluation, the approach was found to be 10 times more cost-effective and uptake of new practices seven times higher compared to traditional extension services.¹

Till date, we have produced over 2,800 videos in more than 20 languages, reached 3,000 villages and over 330,000 farmers. We currently implement projects in seven states in India and in select areas in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania in Africa in partnership with over 20 partners.

Our Approach

We engage with and empower rural communities to produce participatory localized videos, leveraging pre-existing group structures to disseminate these videos through human mediation. These videos are of the community, by the community and for the community. The approach includes: (1) a participatory process for video production on improved livelihood practices, (2) a human-mediated learning model for video dissemination and training, (3) a hardware and software technology platform for data management customized to limited or intermittent Internet and electrical grid connectivity, and (4) an iterative model to progressively address the needs and interests of the community with analytical tools.

Our data management software called Connect Online | Connect Offline (COCO) and Analytics dashboard suite customized to low resource settings are used to collect and analyse near real-time data on dissemination, adoption, and community interest.

¹ Gandhi, R., R. Veeraraghavan, K. Toyama and V. Ramprasad (2009). "Digital Green: Participatory Video for Agricultural Extension", Information Technologies for International Development, MIT Press. <http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/322/145>

The Learning Initiative

We are demonstrating the efficacy of our innovative, cost-effective and replicable approach in improving food security and health outcomes of rural poor households through information communications technology (ICT). With support from Department for International Development (DFiD), we are testing our approach within India with public sector partners and civil society organizations, and in two low income countries in Africa, namely, Ethiopia and Ghana.

In India, we are currently implementing agriculture and health focused projects spread across four states: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. The agriculture-based projects are being implemented in partnership with government programs, while the health-centered projects are implemented with organizations that have a strong field presence and existing health communication interventions.

AGRICULTURE

We are collaborating with non-National Rural Livelihoods Mission public sector agriculture extension partners in improving the efficiency of their extension efforts by training these agencies to adapt its approach in a context-specific manner across a range of organizations and geographies. The objective is to improve the efficacy of agriculture and livelihoods interventions by promoting relevant best practices.

ICT in Traditional Agricultural Extension

Partner: Madhya Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project (MP-DPIP)
Geography: 100 villages, Rajgarh and Raisen districts, Madhya Pradesh

We partnered with Madhya Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project (MP-DPIP), a rural livelihood project under the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development, to improve the efficacy of their agricultural extension work by introducing participatory videos through mediated instruction to promote a set

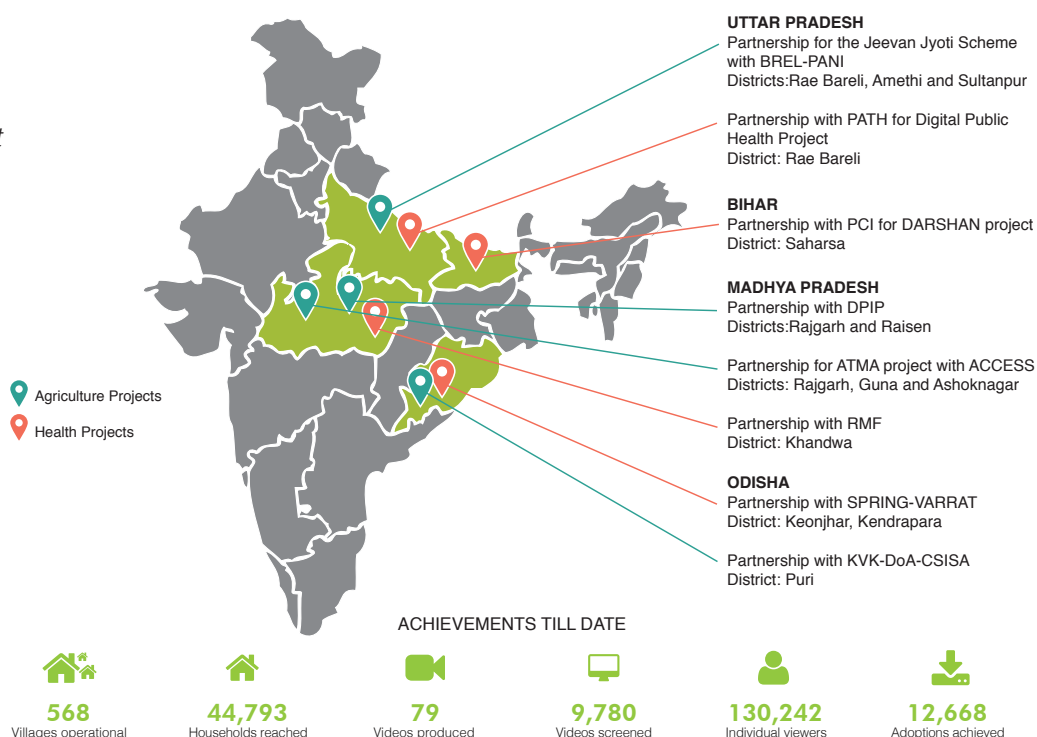
of agricultural practices targeted at boosting the income of smallholder farmers. MP-DPIP is implementing the project through its team of domain experts and community intermediaries by making use of our standard operating procedures, technology, trainings and supportive supervision. Based on the positive results of the pilot in 50 villages of Rajgarh district, the project will be extended in the district for another year and scaled up to 50 more villages in Raisen district in 2014.

Leveraging ICT based Extension to Augment Productivity (LEAP)

Partner: ACCESS Development Services in collaboration with ATMA, NABARD and SFAC
Geography: 430 villages, Rajgarh, Guna and Ashoknagar districts, Madhya Pradesh

We have partnered with ACCESS Development Services to apply our approach to amplify the efforts of various government schemes focused on improving the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers through agriculture extension, institution building and inclusive value chain development. Through the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA), we are working on a Farm Field School program to demonstrate new practices; with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), ACCESS is implementing a Farmers' Club Program to organise self-help groups to promote saving and credit; and with the Small

DIGITAL GREEN'S LEARNING INITIATIVE IN INDIA



Farmers' Agri-business Consortium (SFAC), ACCESS is working with farmers on developing pulses and vegetable clusters through Farm Producer Organisations. ACCESS uses the Digital Green approach to reach out to farmer groups and link them with these schemes.

Jeevan Jyoti

*Partner: People's Action for National Integration (PANI) and Bharat Renewable Energy Limited (BREL)
Geography: 38 villages, Rae Bareli, Amethi and Sultanpur districts, Uttar Pradesh*

We work with the Jeevan Jyoti Scheme through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to diversify the livelihood of smallholder farmers. The Jeevan Jyoti scheme promotes plantation on unproductive and degraded wastelands, generating sustainable employment. The project plans to produce videos on demand-based agricultural topics to reach out to 7,600 households registered within MGNREGA. We are working with PANI and BREL to facilitate this project.

ICT in Improving Access to Crop Production Technologies

*Partner: Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Department of Agriculture - Government of Odisha, Cereal Systems Initiative in South Asia (CSISA)
Geography: 20 villages, Puri district, Odisha*

We are partnering with the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and the Department of Agriculture (DoA), Government of Odisha and the Cereal Systems Initiative in South Asia (CSISA) on a pilot project to strengthen the existing government extension system to increase access to improved crop production technologies. The project will be implemented on the ground through KVK and DoA's cadre of village agriculture workers. Ten videos will be produced as part of the pilot and screened to 40 groups across the 20 villages.

HEALTH

The success of our video-enabled approach in improving the efficacy of extension work in agriculture and livelihoods has led us to explore its integration in other domains as well so as to provide a more holistic development package targeting all individuals of the family. As a step forward, we are testing our approach in the health and sanitation domains, collaborating with organizations implementing programs with health communication interventions targeting adoption of behaviors and practices that could reduce mortality and morbidity in mothers, newborns and infants or in improving nutritional status or immunization coverage.

Digital Public Health (DPH)

*Partners: PATH, Gramin Vikas Sansthan (GVS) and Nehru Yuwa Sangathan-Tisi (NYST)
Geography: 84 villages, Rae Bareli district, Uttar Pradesh*

This project adapts our approach to extend PATH's health interventions initiated under a project called Sure Start. Under the project, we have provided training on video production and dissemination to over a 100 government-appointed Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). Videos are produced and shared with two existing social networks: (i) Mothers' Groups comprising pregnant and lactating mothers, (ii) Village Health and Nutrition Days (VHNDs) which engage members of mothers' groups as well as mothers-in-law and husbands. The project engages other household members as they are viewed as key decision-makers. The project has also set up three Community Advisory Boards (CABs) comprising village leaders, block medical officers, select ASHAs and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) in each block. These localized institutions provide suggestions and advice, ensuring that the project remains demand-driven and community-sourced.



Making Innovative Linkages between Agriculture and Nutrition (MILAN)

Partners: Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) consortium and Voluntary Association for Rural Reconstruction and Appropriate Technology (VARRAT)
Geography: 80 villages, Keonjhar and Kendrapara districts, Odisha

We collaborated with SPRING on a pilot project to leverage our video-enabled approach to test the feasibility of integrating maternal, infant, and young child nutrition messages into an existing agriculture model that was successfully being implemented with VARRAT. The pilot tested the efficacy of the approach linking the nutrition messages with agriculture messages to form a convergence and to help us understand what is feasible, and what is not, in scaling up messages on agriculture-nutrition linkages. Videos on 'The First Thousand Days' were developed and disseminated by community based individuals to self-help groups (SHGs) to test if exposure to these human-mediated videos could trigger social and behavior change among pregnant and lactating women. Based on learnings from the pilot and to further explore the benefits of agriculture-nutrition convergence messages, we are collaborating with VARRAT to continue the project in 30 villages in Keonjhar district and extend it to 50 new villages in Kendrapara district.

Advancing Nutrition through Community Engagement (ADVANCE)

Partners: Real Medicine Foundation (RMF)

Geography: 100 villages, Khandwa district, Madhya Pradesh

This project addresses the gap between available resources and knowledge on addressing malnutrition and the people who need this vital information by leveraging our video-enabled method of messaging with RMF's existing cadre of Community Nutrition Advisors to increase awareness about malnutrition, improve health literacy, access to care and treatment services, and build local capacity to address all forms of malnutrition. Video modules on issues such as moderate acute malnutrition, severe acute malnutrition, breastfeeding, and hygiene and sanitation have been produced and screened to target groups.

Digital Approach to Rural Sanitation, Health and Nutrition (DARSHAN)

Partners: Project Concern International (PCI)
Geography: 40 villages, Saharsa district, Bihar

This project plans to apply our approach to accelerate behavior change related to maternal newborn and child health and sanitation (MNCHS) by promoting local practical solutions around these issues. The partnership specifically aims to leverage informal knowledge on issues related to MNCHS that often gets generated at grassroots, in terms of local or practical solutions, but do not get shared. By engaging communities with this knowledge, the intervention aims to promote community-to-community knowledge exchange and create knowledge repositories within communities that can be further disseminated to larger public health groups.

