

Partnership with India's National Rural Livelihoods Mission



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.

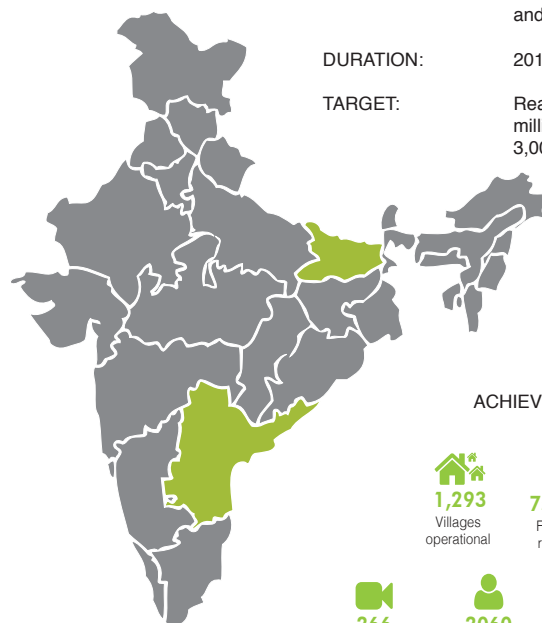
¹ Gandhi, R., R. Veeraraghavan, K. Toyama and V. Ramprasad (2009). "Digital Green: Participatory Video for Agricultural Extension", Information Technologies for International Development, MIT Press. <http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/322/145>

Partnership with NRLM

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) launched by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, is one of the world's largest poverty alleviation initiatives, with a budgetary outlay of over \$6.1 billion. NRLM's mission is "to reduce poverty by enabling the poor households to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities resulting in appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong and sustainable grassroots institutions of the poor." NRLM proposes to cover 70 million rural poor households in 600,000 villages across 600 districts in India through self-help groups (SHGs) and federated institutions and support them for livelihoods collectives over a period of eight to 10 years.

In 2012, we initiated our scale-up work with NRLM to integrate our approach with the existing extension systems. The mandate is to reach over 10,000 villages and one million farmers through about 3,000 participatory community videos, primarily in the two states of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The focus of the project is to improve the efficiency of agriculture and livelihoods interventions by promoting relevant best practices around agriculture and livelihood, non-farm practices, financial inclusion, and institution building.

In 2014, we entered into a national level memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (NRLPS) as a National Support Organization to expand the Digital Green approach to other

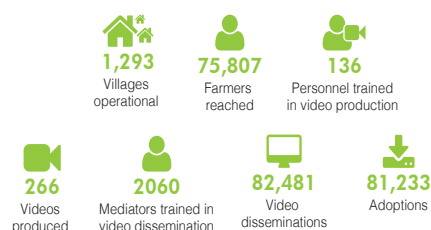


GEOGRAPHIES: Primary focus - Andhra Pradesh and Bihar

DURATION: 2012-2015

TARGET: Reach 10,000 villages and one million farmers through about 3,000 community videos

ACHIEVEMENTS TILL DATE



state rural livelihoods missions and partners.

We have formal Memoranda of Understanding with NRLM's state-level implementation agencies – Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS) in Bihar. The objective is to ensure that of the million farmers to be reached, at least half – 500,000 – should adopt at least one of the practices shown in the videos that they have watched. At present, the videos largely focus on agriculture and allied practices, non-farm practices, financial inclusion, and institution-building.

Out of the total outlay for this project, the Government of India and state governments cover almost 70 % of the cost, while the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation covers 30%.



Digital Green signing the MoU with NRLPS, Government of India

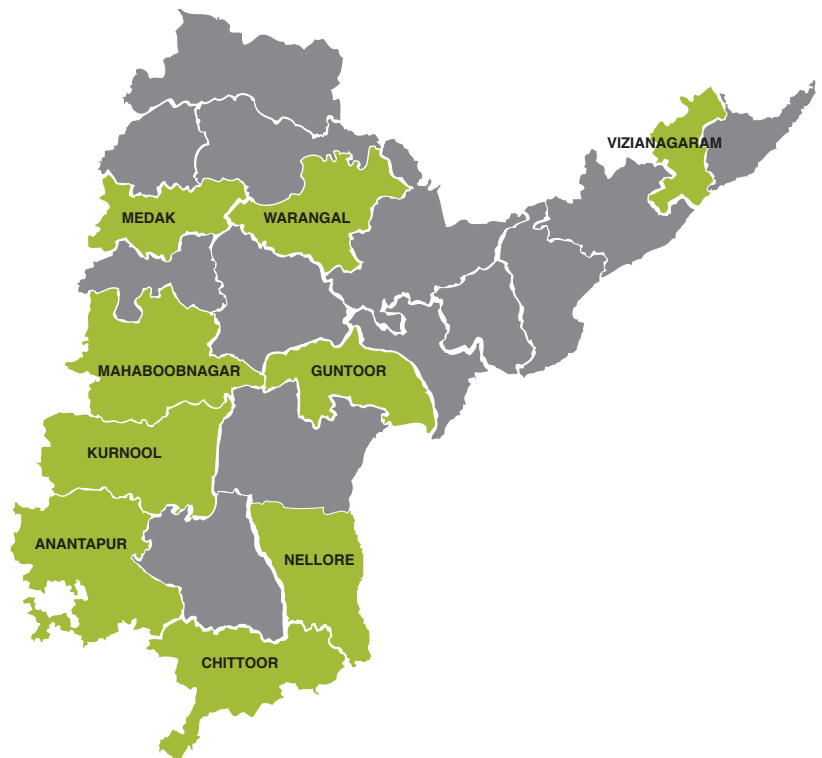
In Andhra Pradesh

SERP works on a comprehensive multidimensional poverty alleviation strategy by focusing on institution-building, leveraging resources through commercial banks, promoting livelihoods, human development, social safety nets, and entitlements. At present, there are 11,129,865 members in 1,016,832 SHGs organized into 39,584 Village Organizations (VOs) and 1098 *Mandal Samakhyas* (MS) in Andhra Pradesh. All SHG members are women.

We partnered with SERP in 2012 to introduce innovative information communication technology (ICT) to help create a strong knowledge management platform around

livelihoods initiatives in the state. In partnership with the Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) unit of SERP, our extension approach was embedded into the existing social organisation to disseminate best practices on agriculture and financial inclusion.

Till date, we have trained 67 community resource persons for production of community videos and 654 mediators to conduct mediated disseminations of community videos featuring local farmers in their fields. A total of 67 videos have been made so far, which have been screened 19,308 times, resulting in 19,722 unique adoptions of the practices shown in the videos.



In Bihar

The Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS) – also known as JEEViKA – is an autonomous society under the Government of Bihar, responsible for implementing the mandate of NRLM. JEEViKA targets the rural poor and women, working for their social and economic empowerment, with a focus on four key themes: institution and capacity building, social development, microfinance, and livelihoods.

In 2012, we partnered with JEEViKA to leverage its extensive social organization by introducing ICT-enabled extension to promote livelihoods and institution-building practices.

Our collaboration with JEEViKA covers 17 districts in Bihar, with 1,070 mediators being trained. These trained local community members have produced 120 videos, which were screened 17,326 times, resulting in 61,511 unique adoption of practices by women and men who viewed these videos.

Lessons Learned

Our partnership with NRLM has been a productive learning experience, with insights gained from the relationship informing our other collaborations:



Content Quality: As our partnerships with NRLM and state implementing agencies begin to stabilize and expand, the importance of ensuring high quality content has come to the forefront. We try and ensure that only rigorously vetted content, with regard to technical accuracy and relevance and production aesthetics, is shared with farmers. We leverage the expertise of subject matter specialists and research institutions through local mechanisms as well as national platforms like the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). These subject matter specialists, who are experienced agricultural researchers or scientists, are responsible for reviewing individual videos and bundles of agricultural best practices across different domains.



Training Quality and Scale: As our operations expand, the requirement of trained community resource persons is also increasing exponentially. To ensure sustainability of our approach with defined quality standards, we are working toward creating a cadre of master trainers within partner organizations, to train community resource persons on video production and dissemination.



Quality Assurance: Quality assurance is crucial to the successful implementation and sustainability of an intervention with expected impact. Along with building internal capacity to ensure quality control of key processes, we also engage third party agencies to conduct a quality assurance audit of our processes and capacities.



Data Accessibility: It is important to ensure that data collected across every aspect of our approach is analysed and used optimally to inform programmatic decisions. We work with expert agencies to evaluate ways in which data can be collected and shared and used effectively by partners, coordinators, and mediators.

The Way Forward

We plan to operationalise our approach to over 10,000 villages in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, to reach 500,000 community members, motivating them to adopt best practices for improved livelihoods and wellbeing.

We are extending our partnership with other NRLM states like Jharkhand through smaller pilot projects. We are also leveraging the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), an initiative under NRLM to empower women in agriculture,

partnering with non-governmental organizations to work in three states – Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. This partnership is aimed at fostering linkages with non-governmental organizations and helping them integrate our approach for improved efficiency of interventions.

We are also exploring opportunities with other partners to extend our approach to other domains such as maternal and child health and nutrition, institution-building and microfinance as well as other private sector partners.