

2017

Project Update



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MicroX Foundation

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Project

Foundation's 3D-approach –

DEMAND DRIVEN focussed upon what can be sold in the market;

with a comprehensive toolkit **DEFINING CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS** addressing the most vulnerable conditions in a crop cycle using blend of technology, digitalisation; best agriculture practices, capacity building & customized-extension services coupled with mandated inter-cropping that

results in **DE-RISKING** of farmers efforts and ensure better yield and revenue.

- is the viable solution to the highlighted problem. Such approach providing end-to-end solution right from facilitating access to better inputs, with technology transfer & interactive knowledge dissemination done through trainings, integrated crop model and ensured market access can **double the income of farmers**, thus improving the general poor economics of the agriculture sector.

The Approach

1. Rate of success of any agri-venture is largely dependent upon the **marketing** of the product they are engaged in. Prior to promoting any technology, a careful study that focus more on the demand side by establishing the markets is conducted.

***Market here refers to access to markets, farm inputs and allied services**

2. Stakeholder & Community Mobilization and Participation: The process involves identifying the service providers in the region, who services can be availed at more grassroot level to align one-self in national goal of poverty-alleviation. Further, the approach focuses on mobilizing the community through structured process by getting engaged with the local stakeholders in the region. Community engagement is ensured by means of survey and mapping needs of the area through a program **"KisaanChaupaal"** in order to provide a customized-region specific solution. It sets an informal road-map between us and community to work towards greater impact.
3. Promotion of Opportunities: It is a transition from previous step where hardware issues of agricultural development are addressed. Issues of increased productivity – technology, practice and so on, are addressed. Using information generated during the first two steps, we identify the best options in terms of enterprises. These options, when adopted by small farm holders, will increase farm incomes. The opportunities promoted are assessed in terms of whether they are technologically, economically, socially and environmentally appropriate for the location and the community.

A comprehensive training module identifying the critical needs of the community have been designed which mitigates the risk of the farmers addressing the most vulnerable conditions in a crop cycle using blend of technology, digitalisation & best agriculture practices.

Statistical Abstract

COVERAGE

Districts	2
Blocks	9
Villages	150
Households	2750
Village Institutions	245
Women Members	1100

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Villages	150
Households	2500
Village Institutions	210
Women Members	1100

AGRICULTURE EXTENSION

Agriculture Input Supply	250
Trainings	37
Members/Women Members	237/75

FARMING AS A SERVICE

Members	30
Land Served	8 Acres

Empowering Communities

2500 farmers reached

150 villages

9 blocks

WHAT: Mobilizing and empowering communities through strategic partnerships, capacity building, appropriate technologies and resource use to achieve sustainable development.

Response in terms of community participation is not always immediate, it requires a lot of hardwork, determination and sweat to build trust among the communities. The success of any project rests on community involvement and mobilization of local financial, natural and human resources.



Fig 1: Field Manager doing the community outreach in Bankey Bazaar Block, Gaya, Bihar



Fig 2: Community mobilization through Kisan Chaupal in Konch Block, Gaya, Bihar

In 2017-18, we reached out to more than 2500 farmers spread across 150 villages in 9 blocks of Gaya through direct outreach, conducting '*kisan chaupal(s)*' local organisations and self-help groups.

We tend to include farmers from all classes, as everyone plays an important role in the ecosystem of the village. We have divided our fields into primarily three mandals (zones), which are as follows –

MANDAL WISE COVERAGE

- ZONE 1 : Son Mandal - Tekari Division
- ZONE 2 : Phalgu Mandal – Gaya Sadar Division
- ZONE 3 : Murhar Mandal – Bankey Bazaar Division

The mandals are created on the basis of

- nature of socio-economic status,
- accessibility to markets,
- types of crops grown and
- behaviour/dependence towards agriculture.

As an example, villages in Murhar Mandal comprises mostly small & marginal farmers. Here, women also actively take part in the agriculture and allied activities; but accessibility to central mandi is not that easy



Fig 3: Community mobilization through Kisaan Chaupal in Konch Block, Gaya, Bihar

NEW INITIATIVES: BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS FOR AGRICULTURE

Applying economics as a psychological discipline helps. Behavioral Economics principles explain how people make choices, view risks and rewards, react to changing conditions, form habits, plan for the future, interact with others, and even remember things that happened in the past.

We have observed, in 80% of our cases, financial literacy is very poor among the farmers; so using it as a tool to empower them helps in reaching out to people and make choices.



Fig 4: Community mobilization using technology as a medium. Behavioral Economics for Agriculture

SUCCESS STORY - WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO START A MOVEMENT?

The important thing is to get recognition, appreciation, criticism from the communities with which we work and it gives immense encouragement when people from community takes your initiative forward as they are able to align themselves to idea/philosophy we believe in. *Rahul Baith, from Dorma village* echoed the same philosophy and effectively put our perspective in front of villagers.



Fig 5: Community mobilization in procession in Dorm, Konch Block, Gaya

Agriculture Extension



Fig 6: Training on Onion Crop practices in process at Saifganj, Bankey Bazaar, Gaya

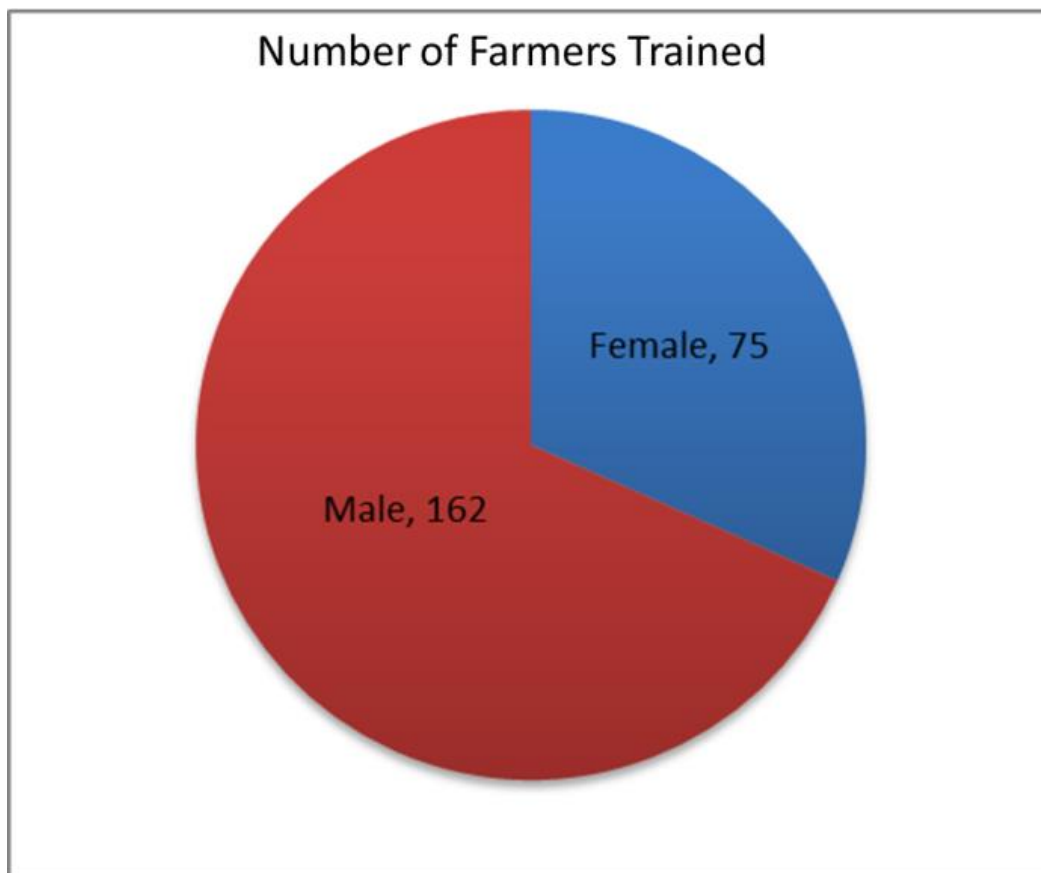
WHAT: Agriculture extension is a staple of functioning food system. Farmers benefit from educational services that help them keep up-to-date on trends and best practices . One of the challenges bringing extension services to smallholders is infrastructure: rough terrain, inclement weather, and limited internet access prevent widespread knowledge dissemination.

1. Rather than focusing on concept of self-note, what we are offering; we have taken into account the farmer's accumulated experience of local environment and crops grown through our community outreach program..
2. Incorporating thoroughly tested experiments in the local conditions.
3. Focus on low cost innovations e.g seed quality, seed treatment, adjusting timelines for optimum yield and market driven approach
4. Seeing is believing, so we practically demonstrate and make them do the same in the field do to it the preferred way
5. Don't leave any class of farmers. All contribute to each other and inclusive development.



Fig 7: Soil Sampling training in full flow in Nawada Basti, Kharkhura, Gaya

As of now, we have trained more than 250 farmers on low-cost methods like seed treatment that enhances the immunity of plants by 90% and result in healthy produce.



Our trainings distribution (as of now) across different mandals can be seen in the pie chart below:

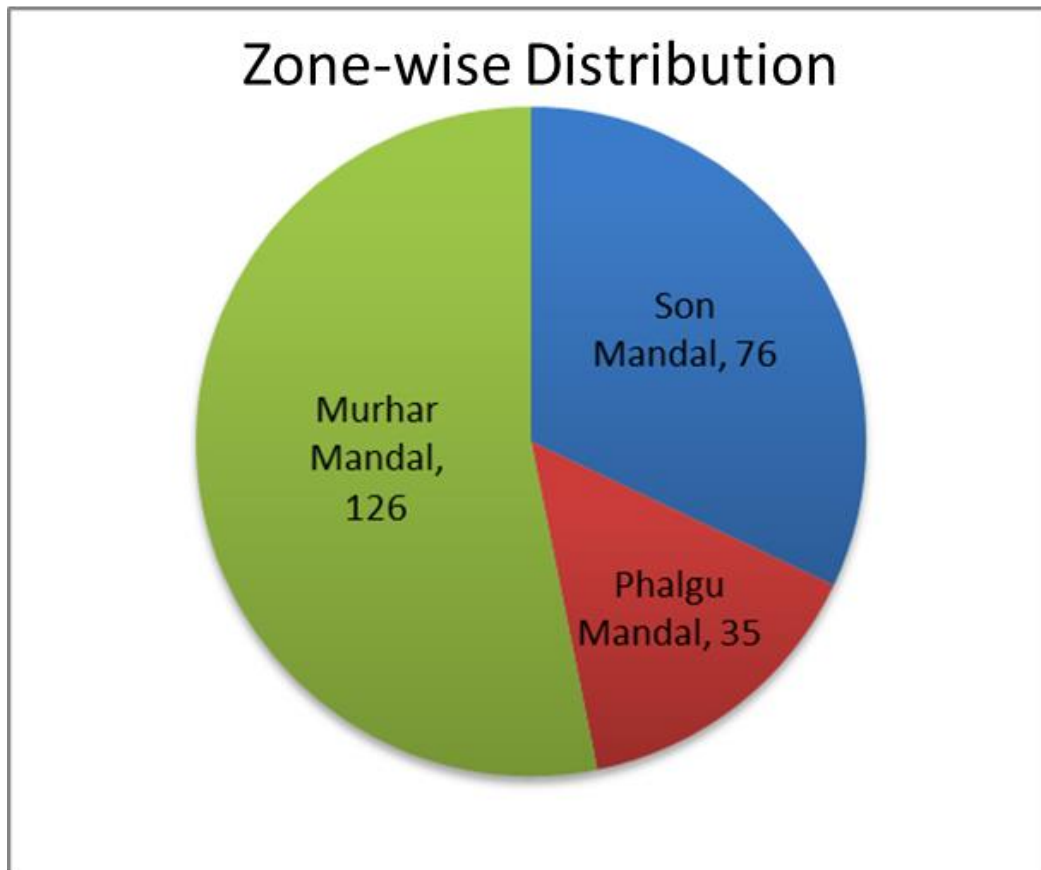




Fig 8: Trainings across different centres.



Fig 9: Our frugal innovations in extension system includes learning from the local wisdom and implementing it into our training programs in a dynamic ecosystem

WHAT FARMERS SAY?



heavy water flow.

In words of our farmer, Aftab Alam hailing from Dhanaava village in Rafiganj Block – “यह लगाए का विधि काफी अच्छा है और साथ में बीजोपचारां से काफी फायदा रहेगा, आमतौर पे हमारा बीज उड़ जाता था, पर इस विधि से पानी के बहाव को काटने का भी अवसर मिलेगा” (the said technique appears very effective and seed treatment will surely help. The technique will also help in preventing seeds from getting damaged due to

Farming As A Service

WHAT: Foundation's equipment bank is equipped with the entire range of machines, tools and technology needed for precision farm operations for crops in this part of the region and fresh horticulture crops. Right from soil preparation to harvesting, we do everything on a pay-for-use.

10* beneficiaries

(* as of now)



Fig 10: 18 HP tractor helps small holder farmers with affordability and make them safe from labour availability

It reduces the effort in time and increases productivity by 15%