

DRIVING IMPACT, NURTURING EXPANSION

Impact Report 2024











CONTENTS

Foreword	04
Board of Directors	05
About Raintree Foundation	06
About Velhe and Problem Statement	07
The Landscape Approach & Programs	08
Watershed Ecology	09
Biodiversity Conservation	14
Sustainable Livelihoods	24
Building Resilience	32
Clean Energy	43
Impact Scorecard	47
Financial Statements	51
Partners & Donors	53

Foreword

Writing this piece evokes a range of emotions- a deep sense of gratitude for our achievements and boundless enthusiasm for the future. We are optimistic that the Raintree Foundation's journey will help create a world where environmental stewardship is paramount. I would like to thank every partner who has been involved in this journey.

Our mission to build climate resilience of living landscapes is based on the ideology that every landscape is unique and what makes it so, is the interaction between the living and non-life forms of the ecosystem. The ecological elements such as water cycle, soil interact with the biodiversity that is native to the region and the generations of communities that have settled there. The nature of interactivity between these stakeholders determines the course of climate for our planet.

While each landscape possesses unique characteristics, the shared interconnectedness between nature and humans transcends geographical boundaries. Achieving a harmonious balance is crucial for sustainable climate action. This journey of maintaining sustainable equilibrium will decide the future we will leave for generations to come. Every intervention might have a small impact today but will lead to considerable impact tomorrow. As a cohort, we need to have the vision to foresee and work towards the long-term impact.

Climate change is not just an issue of today, it is a compounding effect of years of incessant actions of humankind. Every generation moving towards the quest for prosperity has led to the planet moving farther from the equilibrium. It's time that we and our future generations break this chain reaction and move towards restoration and preservation. Our journey since 2018 has made us believe that it is possible to bring back the balance where nature and humankind can coexist in harmony. The needs of all stakeholders can be adequately met if we bring about a generational mindset shift.

Since the inception of Raintree Foundation, every year has reinforced our belief in the path we have chosen and the



approach we have adopted. As we take the next big step in our journey, we seek collaboration in the form of patient coinvestment to amplify our impact on a broader scale.

Leena Dandekar Chairperson and Founder Raintree Foundation



Together, we can champion the pursuit of Gone Planet, One Earth. ??

Board of Directors

Leena Dandekar Chairperson and Founder Rainfree Foundation Abha Dandekar Co-Founder Raintree Foundation

Vivek Dandekar Co-Founder Raintree Foundation

ABOUT RAINTREE FOUNDATION

Raintree Foundation was established in 2018 in response to the pressing need to address the challenges posed by the changing global climate and the concerning rate of biodiversity loss. Since then, we have taken bold steps to think big and act strategically. We remain deeply committed to creating sustainable, resilient ecosystems that thrive, and to fostering community-driven conservation through innovative programs that shift mindsets and lead to systemic change. We have recognized the intricate interconnections between people and nature, and we've worked diligently to manage land in a way that simultaneously achieves social, economic, and environmental objectives.

Vision

Building Climate Resilience for Living Landscapes

Mission

Raintree Foundation's mission-driven approach is to create a world that fosters sustainability and community stewardship of the environment. We are committed to building resilient and thriving ecosystems - both human and natural. Our aim is to advance these goals through innovative, community-led programs that shift mindsets and lead to systemic change.

About Velhe and Problem Statement

Why Velhe and the Western Ghats?

Velhe is in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, a region which is among the top 10 global biodiversity hotspots.

Raintree Foundation is working in several villages in this region to protect it from the onslaught of the effects of climate change while strengthening the local communities that live there. Located in the Northern Western Ghats, Velhe is spread across **2100 hectares**, **9 villages**, **4131 people**, and **654 households**. The Western Ghats are a UNESCO World Heritage site and global biodiversity hotspot that influences India's weather patterns and monsoon. Our work focuses on three key areas: Climate, Community, and Biodiversity. Issues in the region include:

- Global Biodiversity Hotspot
- Limited livelihood options
- Seasonal water scarcity despite high rainfall
- Lowest human development indicators in Pune district
- Lack of active NGO presence, political insignificance and lack of industries

The Landscape Approach & Programs

Landscape approach recognises the interconnections between people and nature for management of land to simultaneously achieve social, economic and environmental objectives. This systems-based approach demands an in-depth understanding of the multifunctionality of ecosystems and the roles played by all actors, as well as potential synergies and trade-offs. The solutions are customised to the landscape ensuring that the needs and interests of all stakeholders are fully captured.



Watershed Ecology

Water Scenario in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra

Due to its hilly topography and dense deccan trap basalt geology, this region's ground water development potential is low. Despite high rainfall, steep slopes and lack of groundwater recharge has compromised water availability throughout the year for consumption and agriculture. As a result, the region and the communities of this region face issues of degraded land, invasive species, retracting forest cover, single cropping, seasonal migration and lack of livelihood options.

Velhe taluka has been facing several challenges in recent years, including soil erosion, sedimentation,

water insecurity and flooding. The accumulation of sediments in the percolation tank has reduced its storage capacity, leading to increased flood risks and water scarcity during the lean season. This has adversely affected the local communities, particularly farmers, who rely on the river for irrigation and allied activities. The limited resources do not adequately meet the household needs, leading to women spending additional time on collecting water or having dependency on water tankers.





About the Program

The Western Ghats, known as the "water tower" of peninsular India, hold immense significance in ensuring water security and health for millions of people. Water plays an important role in developing equitable, stable and productive societies and ecosystems. Water security commonly is considered as a measure of the reliability and availability of water supplies needed to meet human demands. However, it excludes the broad range of issues and complexities inherent in assessing water security. The age-old approach of locating and developing water supplies to meet human demands is being replaced with a more sustainable approach of maintaining a balance between biodiversity as well as human needs. That is where the concept of Watershed Ecology comes into play.

The program looks at achieving these objectives.

Enable profitable

land-using enterprises

which provide regional

development and food

production and support

resilient communities and

economies

Ensure access to clean water for communities and maintain environmental flows in natural river systems to balance human needs with ecosystem sustainability

Drive terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity protection through conservation of surface water bodies

> Raise awareness of crop water budgeting through training programs to encourage efficient water use in agriculture

Activities Conducted

- Desiltation of percolation tank at Gunjavane: Percolation tank is the natural depression in the aquifer recharge area. it helps in replenishing the groundwater. Due to heavy soil erosion in the upper catchment of this percolation tank, siltation reduced its capacity over the years, which led to increased surface runoff and reduced recharge capacity. In accordance with the Gal Mukta Dharan Yojana of Govt. of Maharashtra and through community contribution, a month long desiltation activity was conducted. That resulted in re-creation of nearly 7,200 cubic meter static water capacity. This activity will increase groundwater table of the wells and retention of soil moisture.
- Repair and maintenance of drinking water wells in Phanshi, Merawane, Chirmodi, and Gunjavane
 - Dardighe Vasti, Phanshi a well was dug by the households of the Dardighe Vasti to ensure drinking and domestic water security for 10-15 persons. However, due to lack of proper construction, during monsoon the surface of the well wore off, leading to contamination of the water and eventually depleting its capacity. In collaboration with the households of the Vasti, a well was constructed with safe parapet height. Now the well serves as drinking and domestic water source for the entire hamlet.
- Drinking water well, Merawane The drinking water supply well in this village is located on the banks of the river. Due to short parapet height, the flood water from the river and monsoon water from surroundings drains in the well. The siltation at the bottom of the well not only causes depletion of storage capacity but also blocks flow of natural springs in the well. With the community's participation, stone bunds were constructed between river and the well, increasing the height of the well. This resulted in protection of the source from the surface runoff.
- Repairing of KT check dam and stone bund to arrest the seepage of water: A Kolhapur Type Bandhara is shared by Merawane and Phanshi village. After the monsoon recedes, and river flow reduces, the manual gates of the Bandhara are installed to increase its capacity. Due to lack of maintenance, seepage from the base of Bandhara leads to reduced water supply, especially in lean season. The dependency on this water supply is critical for the livestock as well as for ground water percolation which helps in maintaining the water table in nearby wells.

Repair and maintenance of drinking water wells in Phanshi, Merawane, Chirmodi, and Gunjavane.



- Identification and listing of watering holes: These are natural watering holes located in the forest and some at the forest and village borders. These are used by the wild animals as well as grazing livestock. Identification of such locations is the first step towards maintaining and restoring them. Additionally, these watering holes are the natural springs which in future can be considered for recharge activities.
- Awareness sessions in schools in Gunjavane, Sakhar, Awali, Merawane and Chirmodi to promote environmental conservation and sustainable water management practices. These sessions aimed to educate students on important topics such as the relationship between land degradation due to wildfires and its impact on groundwater and changes in traditional water use practices.
- Data monitoring of rainfall and groundwater tables: This is an ongoing activity where monitoring of 36 dug wells, 35 bore wells and 24 springs each month is done to assess water quality and water levels.
- Identification of sites/locations for drainage line treatments – Loose Boulder Structures, Gabions: As a first step to undertaking

watershed development, 80+ sites were identified in the 8 villages, mainly targeting the second order streams. This helps in reducing the intensity of surface runoff in monsoon, decreasing soil erosion, stream bank strengthening and increase in groundwater recharge.

- Construction of farm ponds: Water availability for agriculture is a major problem in the area which leads to sub-par yields. Additionally, lack of water also does not make a second crop possible. The construction of farm ponds leads to availability of water to combat the dry spells during the kharif season. It also aids income augmentation due to additional livelihood opportunities.
- Aquifer based water balance and crop planning training for farmers for second crops: a training session for nearly 140 stakeholders by partner ACWADAM to promote the aquifer-based water management practice, judicial use of groundwater and promoting aquifer as common pool resource.

Outputs

Desiltation of percolation tank 7200 cum (72,00,000 litres) static water storage



drinking water **200**

Households

Access to safe

No of farm ponds



Watering holes identified for maintenance





Site identification for Drainage line treatment

70



Water Budgeting training 145 participants (4 batches)



Wells considered for repair and maintenance



Springs identified for recharge

12



Static water storage of Farm ponds **26,00,000 litres**



Biodiversity Conservation

About the Program

The Western Ghats are not only picturesque but also a crucial region for biodiversity conservation. Home to numerous endemic species found nowhere else on Earth, this biodiversity hotspot plays a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and supporting local communities. In Maharashtra's Western Ghats, Raintree Foundation's efforts to conserve biodiversity are aiming to safeguard the rich natural heritage for generations to come. Through a combination of conservation initiatives and community engagement, we strive to strike a harmonious balance between development and the preservation of the invaluable biodiversity.



Activities Conducted

The three primary initiatives completed were:

Avenue Plantation

Forest Fires Prevention and Management People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) development and strengthening of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC)

Avenue Plantation

Objectives

- Promote native and indigenous plant diversity by planting a variety of native tree species.
- Create awareness among local communities and involve them in planning, planting, and maintaining trees to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the environment.



Execution

- Site selection for plantation: Identify and survey potential sites for plantation considering factors such as water availability, soil type, accessibility, and community preferences.
- Site documentation: Liaising with Gram Panchayat and Biodiversity Management Committee members to complete the compliance documentation process for each site.
- Engaging the community for planning and organising Shramadaan: Community meetings for Shramdaan (voluntary labour contribution from the community) planning. Site preparation for plantation activities.
- Community Mobilization: Engage in activities to mobilize the community and enhance participation in plantation efforts.
- **Preparation of Implementation Guidelines:** Develop guidelines for implementing plantation activities, ensuring clarity and understanding among community members.
- **Plantation of Saplings:** Carry out the actual planting of saplings with active involvement of the community at designated sites.
- **Periodic Monitoring:** Implement ongoing monitoring of plantation sites to assess growth, address issues, and ensure the long-term success of the project.



Plantation drives through Shramdaan events 9



Survival and growth rate 631 (94%)



Creation of implementation and monitoring guidelines

1



Plantation of saplings (Village-wise distribution) Awali -16 Sakhar-121 Chirmodi-25 Phanshi-40 Lavhi-36 Ghawar-245 Dadawadi-16 Merawane-74 Gunjavane-92

663 (100%)



Participation of community members **167**



Women participation in plantation





Men participation in plantation





IMPACT STORY

Inspiration driven Custodianship: Bharat Baban Gaikwad's story

Bharat Baban Gaikwad, is a 44-year-old farmer and electrician residing in Sakhar village. As an active member of the village's Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC), Bharat's journey into biodiversity management began with Raintree Foundation's BMC awareness and capacity-building program.

Inspired by exposure visits to other villages facilitated by Raintree Foundation, Bharat witnessed the transformative impact of effective biodiversity management. Motivated by these experiences, he returned to Sakhar determined to replicate similar initiatives.

One of Bharat's significant contributions has been his involvement in the Avenue Plantation project implemented by Raintree Foundation. Demonstrating remarkable commitment, he not only helped in planting saplings but also took on the responsibility of regularly monitoring and watering the plantation sites. His efforts have ensured the healthy growth of the newly planted trees, significantly contributing to the village's green cover.

Bharat's dedication to the cause reflects the profound impact of Raintree Foundation's programs on individuals and communities, fostering a sustainable and biodiverse future. Bharat's story is a testament to how awareness and education can empower local leaders to drive meaningful change in their communities.







Community Driven Forest Fire Management

Objectives

- Community Awareness and Education: By conducting workshops and training to educate locals on forest fire causes, impacts, and prevention strategies, aligning with the broader goal of empowering communities through knowledge and engagement.
- Facilitate Community Participation and Ownership: Establish local fire management committees to foster community leadership and involvement in forest fire prevention, aligning with the broader goal of building resilient communities by encouraging diverse stakeholder participation.
- Develop and Implement Fire Prevention Strategies: Identify high-risk areas and advocate for sustainable land management practices, including controlled burning and sustainable pastureland management, to mitigate fire risk and promote ecosystem health and resilience, aligning with the overall objective of fostering sustainable environmental stewardship.
- Build local capacity for early detection and rapid response: Provide training and resources to enable timely fire detection, reporting and equip local teams with the necessary skills and tools for effective firefighting in line with broader goal of enhancing community resilience through skillbuilding and preparedness.

• Enhance Coordination with Local Forest Department staff: Enhance coordination with the Forest Department to ensure a unified approach to forest fire management, supporting the broader objective of promoting partnerships for sustainable resource management and disaster response.

Execution

- **Development of Educational Material:** Posters and digital content in the local language outlining forest fire causes, impacts, and prevention strategies.
- Awareness Campaigns: Implemented community-wide awareness campaigns using local social media groups and village meetings to disseminate the message. Conducted awareness sessions for all stakeholder groups to deepen understanding of forest fire causes, impacts, and prevention methods.
- Student engagement: Organised school level essay and painting competitions to educate students about forest fires and their detrimental effects on the environment, fostering awareness and education among the younger generation.

and the first



Identification of Locations for Setting Up Demo Plots





Stakeholder Awareness Program (Women): Participation in Sessions for SHGs

202



Stakeholder Awareness Program (Men): Participation in Sessions for Farmers

85



Forest Fire Demo Experiment Data Collection



Stakeholder Awareness Program for School Students: Participation in Storytelling, Painting, and Essay Writing Competitions



IMPACT STORY

Leading by example: Balu Raghu Pawar's story

Balu Raghu Pawar, a 52-year-old farmer from Gunjavane village in Velhe taluka, Maharashtra, exemplifies the spirit of community leadership. As a former Up-Sarpanch and a current member of the Gunjavane Gram Panchayat, Balu has always been committed to the welfare of his village. By participating in the awareness campaigns on forest-fire causes, impacts, and prevention conducted by Raintree Foundation in the village, Balu was motivated to act to protect his village and its biodiversity from forest-fires. His proactive involvement in the initiatives of Raintree Foundation has made a significant impact, particularly in the Community-based Forest-fire Management Program.

Balu played a crucial role in this program by mobilizing the villagers and spreading awareness about the dangers of forest fires. His efforts included leading community participation and discussions and participating in the efforts to extinguish forest-fires in the village area. Through his leadership, the villagers gained a better understanding of the importance of forest conservation.

Balu's dedication has resulted in noticeable participation of community members in Raintree Foundation's forest-fire management awareness programs. His ability to inspire and motivate others to participate in these initiatives has strengthened community bonds. Balu Raghu Pawar's story is a testament to the power of grassroots leadership in driving sustainable change and protecting our natural resources.







People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) development and strengthening of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC)

The People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) is crucial for documenting and conserving local biodiversity by engaging communities in the systematic collection and management of data on species, habitats, and traditional knowledge, facilitating informed conservation efforts and sustainable development practices.



Objectives

- Development of comprehensive People's Biodiversity Register (PBR): Documenting local biodiversity and traditional knowledge by cataloguing local flora and faunal diversity, including rare and endemic species. Additionally, it involves documenting traditional ecological knowledge, practices, and cultural significance related to biodiversity from local communities. This aligns with the broader program agenda of community custodianship and engagement in biodiversity conservation, facilitating informed conservation, and promoting sustainable development.
- Strengthening Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC):
 - Awareness and Engagement: Conduct workshops and outreach programs to enhance community awareness and involvement in biodiversity management.
 - **Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs for BMC members on biodiversity conservation, sustainable landscape management, and legal frameworks.
 - Policy Implementation: Support and train the BMC in implementing policies and action plans for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management at the local level.





Community Participation and Empowerment:

- Stakeholder Involvement: Engage various stakeholders and community leaders in the PBR development process.
- Women's Participation: Ensure the active involvement of women in biodiversity documentation and decision-making processes.
- Youth Engagement: Involve local youth in biodiversity conservation activities and educational programs to foster future stewardship.

Execution

PBR development

 Introduced a PBR development course where college students collected baseline biodiversity data through interviews with local communities and recorded traditional ecological knowledge, practices, and cultural significance related to biodiversity. Compiled the collected data into a draft of PBR and organised a community validation meeting to verify the data and incorporate feedback. Finalized PBR of one Gram Panchayat after incorporating feedback from community and technical resource persons.

BMC strengthening

- Conducted capacity-building workshop to enhance community involvement and build BMC's capacity in biodiversity management. Organized session for BMC members on biodiversity conservation and legal framework according to the Biological Diversity Act (2002).
- Organized Wild Vegetables cooking competition to increase awareness on local wild vegetables and their nutritional importance. Also, encouraged participation of women through the competition.
- Regular BMC meetings are undertaken and their active participation in environment conservation activities at the village level are ensured.

Outputs

Participatory Three-dimensional Model (P3DM) of available natural resources in the village



Biological Diversity Act, 2022 & People's Biodiversity Register – Awareness sessions



Local seeds collection drives

36

1

1

PBR of the Gram Panchayat ready for submission

Wild vegetable competition

1

1



BMC exposure visit





Women representation in BMC (no. of women)

8

Heritage site selection -Ongoing documentation

with PBR preparation

Ongoing



Sustainable Livelihoods

About the Program

Nested in the Northern-Western Ghats, a global biodiversity hotspot, lies the hilly and undulating landscape of Velhe taluka in the Pune district of Maharashtra. The monocropping of paddy and dairy farming have traditionally been the mainstays of livelihood for more than ~650 households in Velhe. In addition to abundant rainfall, more than 2500 mm, the landscape serves as a vital reservoir of biodiversity but also provides essential ecosystem services to the community, including freshwater, food security, and fuel and fodder resources. The Rajgad Fort which was the capital of the Maratha empire under the rule of the emperor Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj for 26 years is in Velhe and is of high cultural value to the community as well as a tourist attraction.

Despite its rich natural resources and cultural significance, agriculture is becoming socioeconomically unviable and without locally available income diversification opportunities, most youth migrate to Pune city about 60 kms away. Recognizing the urgent need for income diversification and climate-resilient livelihoods in the region, the Raintree Foundation has been steadfast in its commitment to empower the people of Velhe over the past five years.

Through a series of targeted interventions, including training workshops, capacity-building initiatives, and the establishment of local assets, particularly focused on empowering women, the Foundation has been catalysing a transformative shift in the landscape. Presently, more than 100 households spanning across 9 Gram Panchayats in Velhe Taluka are actively engaged in a diverse array of projects, encompassing regenerative agriculture, clean energy adoption, restoration of natural water systems, and waste management practices.

Program Objective: To increase household incomes through a comprehensive livelihood diversification program, both on-farm and off-farm, aiming to broaden climate resilient economic opportunities and enhance financial stability within the community.





On-Farm Activities

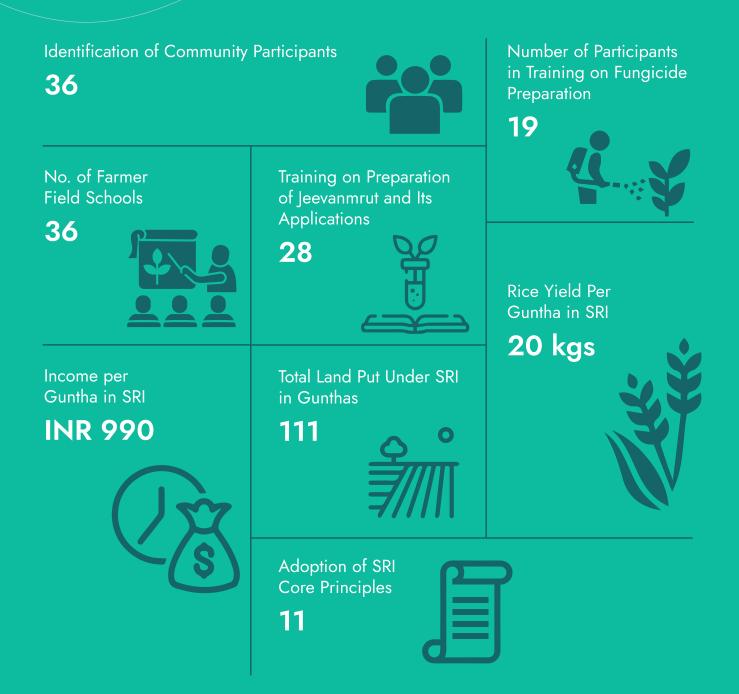
Sustainable Rice Cultivation

Objective: The traditional rice cultivation practice must be conserved so that the yields and productivity can be maintained amidst climate risks and smallholder farmers are capacitated to adapt to changing climatic conditions.

Activities

- The foundation pilot tested the systematic rice intensification (SRI) technique on 3 acres of land with 36 farmer households. The farmers adopted the systematic rice intensification (SRI) principles to the landscape, with approximately 36 farmer-field school sessions held to impart essential knowledge and skills.
- The farmer-field school sessions focused on seed treatment, nursery and bed preparation, adequate spacing, mechanical weeding, local preparation techniques of Jeevamrut (organic fertilizer), the correct application methods of organic fertilizer application, pest management and nutrient management.
- As a result, in a drought-prone year the farmers were better equipped to manage the vagaries of the weather without a significant fall in the yields as compared to the conventional farms.
- The foundation has now trained more than 100 households on sustainable rice cultivation practices across the Velhe landscape and the focus over the next three-years will be to ensure its systematic implementation to bring about a behavioural shift in local cultivation practices by adopting the principles of crop rotation, intercropping and cover cropping.





Off-Farm Activities

Backyard Poultry

Objective:

To promote backyard poultry among the households for nutritional security and strengthen existing practitioners of poultry in the community for income augmentation.

Activities

Raintree Foundation and Vigyan Ashram identified poultry farming as a viable livelihood for nine villages in Velhe, where men migrate for seasonal work, leaving behind women and the elderly. The backyard poultry program, designed to suit marginalized women and existing practitioners, focuses on effective poultry management and cost-efficient practices. Using a free-range hybrid system and local feeds, the program has reached over 100 households, teaching skills that have led to significant community investment. Future goals include value chain development, financial and digital literacy training, and fostering microentrepreneurs to ensure sustainability.





In the two phases, the following activities were undertaken:

- 81 households have been trained in backyard poultry, including exposure visits for building market linkages, low-cost bamboo based caging structure using natural resources to safeguard from wild animal attacks and torrential rainfall and on home-based feed preparation and weight management.
- We thoughtfully selected the DP cross breed (herd community) to survive the climatic conditions at Velhe.
- We distributed 270 saplings for low-density tree plantation around backyard poultry systems to support nutritional needs and develop natural habitat for the birds.
- We instilled a rigorous system in place to ensure safe drinking water access for the chicks from the community water filters to control water borne diseases and a routine for vaccination of the chicks to control disease outbreak.
- We have also ensured a balanced ratio of male and female chicks to support nutritional supply and small income for the poultry households in terms of eggs and chicken consumption and sales.
- We ensured the procurement and distribution of 30-day old chick with vaccination (as a risk mitigation strategy) to lower the risks of mortality and reduce the life cycle for estimated returns.
- We conducted 6 training and capacity building sessions with the community. The grant model poultry households (20 in Nos) also continue to get nutritional security through their own consumption and small income from sale of eggs and spent hens.

Outputs

Identification of Community Participants **53**



Percentage Reduction in Birds' Mortality

187%

4

Identification of Model Entrepreneurs to Demonstrate Poultry

E.Y.

Income Augmentation of Poultry Entrepreneurs in One Cycle (15 Nos @ INR 3,000)

INR 56,651

Making of Low-Cost Bamboo Cages by Community

11



Phase 1: 40 Participants (10 PwDs and 15 Marginalized Women under Grant Model)

Average



income of participants was INR 5,608 with a profit of INR 1,757.

Training of Community Stakeholders



Value Chain Enhancement: Capacity Building of Feed Entrepreneur

1



Phase II: New Participants **41**

Banking Correspondent (BC-Sakhi)

The BC Sakhi Program, launched by Raintree Foundation in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Bank of Maharashtra, MSRLM, Bartronics, and the Rotary Club of Chinchwad, aims at advancing financial inclusion in the nine villages of Velhe. Addressing the challenge of the nearest nationalized bank being 15 kilometres away and the high presence of migratory members (65% of households), the program aimed to provide essential banking services within the community, fostering sustainable income for microentrepreneurs.

Objective

• To deliver door-step financial services to the smallholder farmer households and the marginalised communities in the Velhe taluka of Pune district.

Activities

- The BC Sakhi, equipped with IPOS devices, offered comprehensive banking services including deposits, withdrawals, fund transfers, balance inquiries, insurance, and loans, directly to residents' doorsteps. This was particularly beneficial for elderly and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).
- Over 12 months, the program facilitated financial transactions and encouraged women to engage in banking and savings. The BC Sakhi also assisted with account openings and Aadhar linkages, expanding digital transactions in the community.
- The BC Sakhi acquired essential business and technical skills through continuous incubation support, enabling her to effectively serve the community's financial needs.

Market-Linkage Exposure Visit

On April 3rd, 2023, a market linkage activity was organized under the poultry program, involving local farmers in the process. The aim was to empower anchor poultry farmers to act as marketers, facilitating the procurement and supply of chicken across nine villages to vendors regularly and profitably.

During the activity, farmers actively engaged with shops and hotels to explore opportunities for supplying chicken. They showcased sample chicks to demonstrate quality, which was well received by vendors. They were also showed how to communicate with the shops. The initiative kicked off at a hotel in Khed Shivapur and extended to Nasrapur, mapping approximately 15 poultry shops and hotels. This thorough market survey provided insights into chicken and egg demand, as well as current pricing trends. Some farmers even secured initial orders and potential leads with vendors in Pune.

Looking ahead, we are dedicated to supporting farmers in maintaining connections established during the survey and ensure a steady chicken supply to these establishments. This collaborative effort aims to empower local farmers and strengthen the poultry market in the region.



Selection of Entrepreneur

Handholding Support **12**



Customers Served
1,800+





Total No. of Visitors for Availing Banking Services on a Monthly Basis

113



Total Transaction Value INR 33,41,831



Financial Linkages to the BC Sakhi through Banks and Donor Organisations

2



Net Income (Period of 16 Months) INR 16,990 (per service)/ INR 1,132 (per month)



IMPACT STORY

Wings of Prosperity: Arjun Maruti Ranjane's Poultry Farming

Arjun Maruti Ranjane's foray into poultry farming unfolded as he unearthed a novel avenue for income during a meeting orchestrated by the Raintree Foundation in Sakhar village. Initially unsure, Arjun grappled with concerns regarding the safety of chickens in the rural landscape, where potential threats lurked in the form of mongoose, wild cats, and squirrels. The Raintree Foundation team, however, supported him by helping him construct a small, covered shelter to safeguard the chickens.

Embracing this guidance, Arjun embarked on a journey of faith. He constructed a modest shed and received a donation of over fifty hens from the Raintree Foundation. Poultry farming swiftly evolved into a dependable source of income for him through the sale of eggs. What sets Arjun's story apart is the resilience of his venture. Even as the hens ceased laying eggs, they continued to be valuable contributors to Arjun's financial well-being. Selling these mature hens added an extra income of approximately 400 to 600 rupees, significantly influencing his life. In the present day, Arjun is happy with the income generated from poultry farming and envisions continued growth in the future.

His success narrative stands as a testament to the transformative power of acquiring the right information and applying effort. Arjun's journey becomes a beacon of inspiration, illustrating the advantages of exploring fresh opportunities and devising innovative means of self-sustainability.







Building Resilience

About the Program

Building resilience in communities is a critical aspect our mission to combat climate change and safeguard our natural environment. It entails empowering communities to not only endure but rebound from the trials imposed by a shifting climate, all while actively engaging in the cause of conservation. The building of resilience equips communities to navigate extreme weather events, surging temperatures and other climate-related adversities with greater efficacy. Concurrently, an emphasis on natural conservation practices serves as a shield for local ecosystems and biodiversity. Moreover, the journey towards climate resilience within communities is a well-defined process, weaving together self-help groups, women empowerment, gender and social inclusion and community mental health. This multifaceted approach addresses the interconnected facets of community well-being, fortifying their capacity to adapt, endure, and flourish in the face of the intricate challenges posed by a changing climate.



Mental Health

The program aims to foster inclusive village development by building robust care support systems, enhancing community volunteer capacities for promoting general health and well-being, encouraging health-seeking behaviour, and integrating mental health and psycho-social well-being perspectives into existing health services, with a particular focus on facilitating the inclusion.

The Manosaarthi Counselling Centre, inaugurated in November 2022, serves as a vital support hub. Staffed with professionals and supported by community volunteers trained as para-counsellors, the centre provides ongoing care, fostering a culture of health-seeking behaviour within the community.

Activities Conducted

- Create Awareness in the community through sessions with the community members using different formats such as corner meetings, poster exhibitions, gully charcha, discussion and meetings, Games - Snake and Ladder, Nutrition Game, Emotion Games etc.
- Through these sessions, Community Resource Persons (CRPs) identify people in distress and talk to them about the Manosaarthi Counselling services and how can they benefit from them.
- The CRPs also offer door to door listening space and support services.
- CRPs also form support groups in the community and deliver sessions on coping mechanisms, and how can they keep a check on their mental well-being. Tools of self-care are taught in these sessions to them.









IMPACT STORY 1

*Meena's Story of not giving up hope

Meena's journey unfolded with the chapter of marriage, marking a significant shift in her life. A dedicated police officer, she willingly left her job to embrace the dream of matrimony, basking in the joy and positivity that accompanied it. As time passed, her husband's remarks became occasional sources of discomfort. Subsequently, his work led him to Dubai, leaving Meena pregnant and residing with her maternal family.

The birth of her beautiful daughter, while a moment of joy, became a trigger for memories of the life she had left behind. Society's expectations of her being a good mother added pressure, intensifying her distress. Residing in the Velhe village, we encountered Meena during one of our awareness meetings, where she confided in a mental health field worker from the Raintree Foundation.

When we first engaged with her, Meena was grappling with challenging circumstances — poor hygiene, lack of understanding from those around her, and health concerns, compounded by societal pressure to conform to traditional motherhood norms. Under the guidance of mental health professionals, she began psychiatric medication to address postpartum depression, a condition exacerbated by the absence of psychoeducation.

Misconceptions about her behavior lingered in her community, and Meena felt isolated. Our field worker provided essential support, mobilizing family members for caregiving and addressing medication, nutrition, and environmental factors. However, her husband's return after a year exacerbated her distress, with his denial of her struggles leading to three suicide attempts.

Despite these challenges, our ongoing visits provided a lifeline. Securing consent for

counselling, we offered Meena a listening space, fostering a sense of someone understanding her. Concurrently, we educated her family about her condition and the importance of psychoeducation. Abrupt cessation of medication triggered a violent episode against her daughter, revealing the gravity of the situation.

Intervening with discussions on triggers, we advocated for her rights and successfully convinced the family to resume medication. Mobilizing her friends for additional support, we encouraged Meena to leverage this network during moments of distress. As a result, her outlook began to shift. Reduced suicidal thoughts, increased bonding with her daughter, and a willingness to engage in counselling demonstrated tangible progress.

A subsequent relocation to Mumbai with her husband provided a change of scenery, and Meena's well-being improved. Returning to Velhe, she reconnected with us, signalling a desire for further growth and independence. Her readiness to attend counselling sessions showcased a significant step towards self-improvement.

Throughout our engagement, we collaborated with various systems, including healthcare, nutrition, peer support, and family dynamics. The transformation in Meena was profound — she became more communicative, reconnected with the world, and embarked on a journey towards a more empowered and fulfilling life. Our work highlighted the importance of addressing barriers and enabling environments for individuals navigating psychosocial disabilities, emphasizing the impact of improved caregiving on overall well-being.

*Name changed

IMPACT STORY 2

Embarking on a journey of healing

In the depths of despair, a client arrived at our center, burdened by grief and distress after the sudden, shocking loss of his wife. However, what made this tragedy even more agonizing were the unfounded accusations and judgmental whispers that surrounded him. Some believed he had an affair, while others speculated about his wife's fidelity, even suggesting he was responsible for her untimely passing.

In this sea of judgment, he felt utterly alone and unsupported. The world seemed oblivious to his own profound loss, and as a man, he found it exceptionally challenging to express his emotions.

The grief was compounded by a series of conjectures, including one particularly baffling notion that his wife's demise was somehow linked to the absence of her phone. It was a cruel narrative that only added to his anguish.

But then, he walked through our doors. In that first session, he found solace in sharing his story, shedding tears that had been trapped within. His experience was validated, and we began by offering a heartfelt prayer for his departed wife.

We embarked on a journey of introspection, addressing the guilt that weighed heavily on him. He grappled with the haunting feeling of not being able to save her, wondering why he hadn't known what was happening when everyone else seemed aware. His restlessness and trembling hands betrayed the turmoil within.

Yet, slowly, through validation and guided visualization, he started to feel a newfound sense of support. He shared that it was the first time someone had truly listened to him. Together, we engaged in exercises that summoned cherished memories of his wife, imagining what she might say if she were with us. We also celebrated her dreams and aspirations; dreams he had once lived for.

As the sessions progressed, he discovered the power of forgiveness, releasing himself from the relentless grip of self-blame. He whispered, "Maybe this was not in my hands," a realization that lightened his burden.

Gradually, he began to focus on his children and household responsibilities. Confidence returned, and he expressed profound gratitude for the safe sanctuary our counselling had provided.

He came to understand that his wife's absence, while heart-wrenching, did not signify the end of his own life. He uncovered his purpose and newfound reasons to embrace life. Criticisms and questions from others no longer held him hostage; he learned to pause and step out of the cycle of negative thoughts.

With courage as his guide, he embarked on a new journey, choosing to live life on his terms, one courageous step at a time. This is a testament to the power of empathy, validation, and support in the healing journey, where a man emerged from the darkness as a resilient soul, embracing life with newfound strength.

Gender Inclusion

In a concerted effort to promote gender equality and social inclusion, a pioneering program was launched in the Velhe Block, targeting nine villages within the region. The series of comprehensive awareness sessions were conducted that engaged all stakeholders, reaching out to approximately 955 individuals, including boys, girls, women, and men. The program utilized a variety of interactive tools to facilitate a deeper understanding of the topics and empower participants to apply these concepts to their lives. These methods included movies on topic, activities such as games, skit plays etc.

The program was divided into two crucial modules, each designed to address distinct aspects of gender and social inclusion.

Module 1

Gender, Patriarchy, Equity, and Equality In this module, the focus was on understanding the fundamental concepts that underpin gender dynamics and social equality. The topics covered included:

- Need to Understand Gender Equality
- A System of Gender
- Gender and Society
- Equity and Equality, the Source of Power
- Gender and Patriarchy
- Personal Transformation

Module 2

Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health: The second module of the program, focusing on Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health, addressed a range of critical topics important for reproductive health of women. The sessions covered:

- Need to Talk About Women's Health
- Menstruation (When a Girl Reaches Puberty)
- Pregnancy (Care to Be Taken During Pregnancy)
- Pregnancy Fertility Services and Maternity Schemes
- Miscarriage, Infertility, and Other Health Issues
- Reproductive Tract Diseases and Care
 Contraceptives

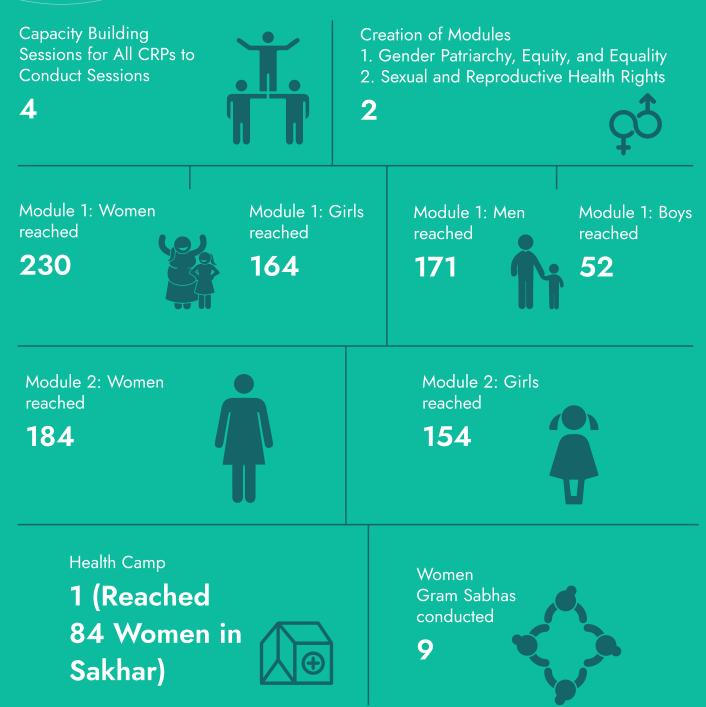
This module is vital in promoting gender and social inclusion by ensuring that women and girls had access to comprehensive information and healthcare services related to their reproductive health. By addressing these topics openly and sensitively, the program aimed to break down barriers to access and support, empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive well-being.

Modules were created with the support of the Samyak organization, and capacity building of Community Resource Persons (CRPs) was done to execute the sessions in the community. Initially, the sessions targeted women and girls, as men and boys displayed reluctance to join. Females eagerly participated, engaging in discussions about key issues and possible solutions. This platform allowed many women to highlight their health-related issues and resulted in the adoption of better menstrual hygiene practices. The challenge of male participation was gradually addressed through activity-based sessions. Men began to participate and recognized the need for change. As women became more empowered, they supported the idea of starting a women's Gram Sabha. Consequently, women's Gram Sabhas were established in most of the Gram Panchayats (GPs). Majority of the amendments proposed in these sessions were passed in the main Gram Sabha. Women began to advocate for their rights and the facilities they needed in the community.

By engaging various stakeholders, the program aims to create an inclusive platform for dialogue and empowerment. It fosters heightened awareness of gender-related issues, encouraged open discussions on sexual and reproductive health, and took significant steps towards taking down gender-based barriers within the nine villages of Velhe Block. This program is on consistent journey towards creating a more just, equitable, and inclusive society where all individuals can flourish, regardless of their gender.







Career Exposure Visit for School Children

Objective

To empower the youth by providing comprehensive career guidance and customised skilling opportunities.

- Career Guidance sessions and exposure visits to skill training organization to help them choose their career path.
- Visits to Vigyan Ashram and Lighthouse communities were arranged: 3 youths joined the programs at lighthouse communities.

Gender Sessions in School

Objectives:

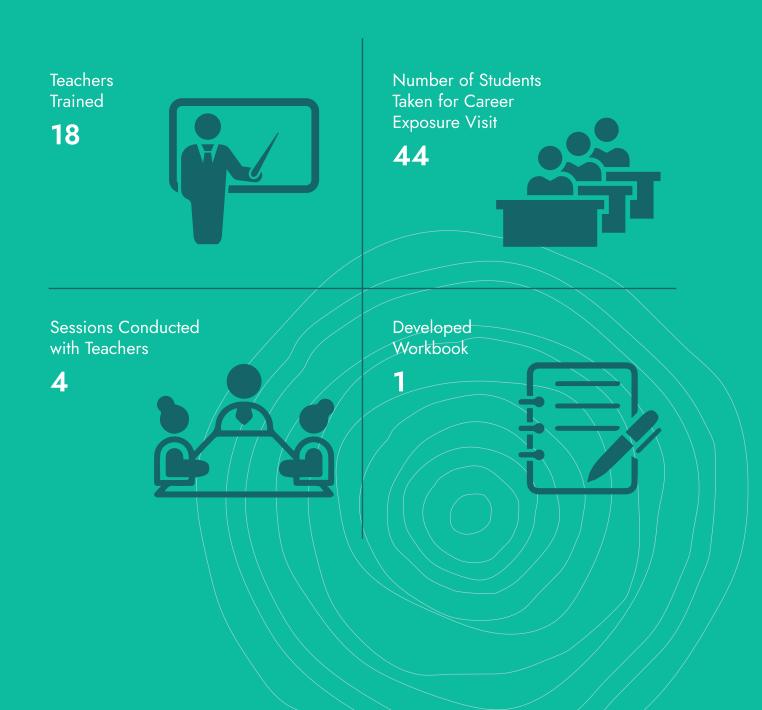
- To enable the students to reflect on their understanding of sex and gender and clarify the difference between the same
- To elevate the understanding of the concept of gender and the comfort level on discussing gender issues

Activities

- Training workbook was created: "The Change Makers" workbook was created with numerous activities and lessons designed to be engaging for children, helping them easily understand the concepts.
- Training of Trainers: Provided training sessions for teachers on gender-sensitive teaching practices and classroom management strategies. Equip educators with tools and resources to create inclusive learning environments that promote gender equality and diversity.

- **Capacity Building of children:** Facilitated discussions and interactive sessions to challenge existing beliefs and attitudes towards gender roles and responsibilities.
- Community awareness through changemakers: Launched community-wide awareness campaigns using various media channels, including posters, flyers, and social media, to promote messages of gender equality and respect. Organized community events, such as film screenings, street plays, and panel discussions, to engage residents in dialogue and reflection on gender-related issues.





IMPACT STORY

Gauri Renuse's Journey to Health: A Story of Awareness and Recovery

Gauri Renuse, a 25-year-old resident of Merwane village, lives with her husband, one son, and one daughter. Gauri's education ended at class VIII, and her marriage was arranged by her parents with a relative's son. With no financial support from her family, Gavari works in a company to support her household as the husband is addicted to alcohol. In the midst of her responsibilities, she struggled to find time for herself and her health.

For the past two years, Gauri had not been experiencing her menstrual periods. She believed this was due to her family planning operation and thought it was not a concern since she already had two children. However, this issue caught the attention of other women in her family. When Raintree foundation started a session on SRHR we explained the need of regular menstruation and highlighted that missing periods could indicate underlying reproductive health issues. They emphasized the need for proper care and treatment. Despite initial fears about seeking medical help we motivated her to see the doctor with regular interaction with her.

We accompanied Gauri to the PHC center, were doctor diagnosed Gauri with anaemia, which could be contributing to her absence of menstruation. The doctor recommended further tests, including a sonography, and advised her to seek treatment at Sassoon or Bharti Hospital. After many months, Gauri finally went to Pune and received the necessary treatment. She was prescribed iron tablets, and with proper medical care, her menstrual cycle resumed. During a meeting with the Raintree Foundation, Gauri expressed her gratitude, acknowledging that without their information and support, she might never have sought treatment.

Before treatment, Gauri often felt dizzy, weak, and experienced frequent shivering during her missed menstrual periods. These symptoms have significantly reduced, and her overall health has improved. Gauri's story underscores the importance of prioritizing health and seeking timely medical intervention.

Gauri's journey from neglecting her health to receiving proper treatment highlights the vital role of awareness and education in addressing women's health issues. Her experience serves as a reminder that aiming for good health is crucial for leading a fulfilling and active life.

Clean Energy

About the Program

Clean energy involves using eco-friendly sources, like renewable energy derived from sunlight, wind, and others. This type of energy doesn't deplete natural resources and has minimal environmental impact. It's a vital step to mitigate climate change, reduce pollution, conserve resources, and foster a greener, more sustainable future.





Activities Conducted

Solar Pump Distribution and Training for Farmers in Ghawar Village, Velhe Taluka

Following the harvest of paddy crops, the foundation facilitated the distribution of solar pumps to 120 farmers, grouped into sets of four individuals. The aim was to provide farmers with a means to sustain themselves through agriculturebased businesses for a significant portion of the year, typically spanning 8 to 10 months.

The solar pumps operate solely on solar energy, eliminating the need for electricity, petrol, or

diesel. This not only reduces operational costs but also promotes environmentally sustainable farming practices. Raintree Foundation selected farmers who owned land adjacent to rivers and demonstrated an interest in cultivating vegetables.

A total of 30 solar pumps were distributed to the selected 120 farmers and a training was conducted on the usage of the pumps.

Other On-ground Activities

ser Somming So

Digital Literacy and Financial Literacy Training

Enhance Digital Literacy: The primary objective of the training was to improve participants' digital literacy skills, including proficiency in using digital tools, navigating online platforms and understanding basic digital security measures. Create awareness about the cyber-crimes and preventive measures to be taken to avoid landing in sticky situations.

Promote Financial Literacy: Another goal was to impart knowledge and skills related to personal finance management, budgeting, saving, and loans understanding financial products and services.

The idea of these trainings was to empower the participants with knowledge and skills to make informed financial decisions, effectively manage budgets, and save for the future, thereby reducing financial stress and insecurity. Consequently, ensuring not only economic stability but also an improved quality of life.

Trainings conducted: 5

120 farmers from 9 villages and 20 Community Resource Persons participated in these trainings

An IT & Digital expert delivered Digital literacy training covering topics such as - its importance, usage, benefits, internet use, potential risks while using the various platforms on the internet, cybercrime and prevention. The trainer also explained about ways to promote and market the products through WhatsApp for business and other related apps. Another trainer explained how to use the mobile banking, Krishik app and MahaDbt app.

Financial literacy training covered topics such as financial budgeting and management, unnecessary expenses, importance of saving, types of insurance and its importance, loans, financial institutions, and types of bank accounts.





Stakeholder Feedback

For the sustainability of intervention, the Raintree Foundation adopted two core tenets, Circularity and Civic custodianship.

Circularity promotes the creation of a sustainable and regenerative system where resources are used efficiently, waste is minimized, and materials are kept in circulation for as long as possible.

Civic custodianship involves fostering a sense of ownership, collaboration, and shared responsibility among individuals and community towards the protection and conservation of the environment.

We have taken pre and post-surveys to measure the change. During the implementation, we will conduct meetings with stakeholders to know their suggestions and feedback. Regular program monitoring and timely evaluations helps us to take data driven decisions.

Impact Scorecard

Metrices monitored

Raintree Foundation monitored the metrics that can help gauge the success and progress of the intervention. Some of these metrics are:

- Number of lives impacted
- Economic empowerment
- Health and well-being
- Environmental sustainability
- Gender inclusion
- Social innovation and collaboration
- Community engagement and participation
- Sustainable development goals alignment
- Stakeholder satisfaction

All monitoring metrics include Activity input indicators, Outputs, Outcomes and the impact indicators.





Impact on target segment(s)

Baseline status

- There is a need to maintain the existing water infrastructure as water storage or harvesting during non-monsoon months is still a concern.
- 98.6% of Households reported that their farmlands depend on solely on rainfall and hence rabi cultivation is an issue.
- Water scarcity during the non-monsoon session.
- 65% of households depend on agriculture for livelihoods.
- The average agricultural landholding size is 1 acre.
- Annual net earnings through agriculture is INR 12,000.

- Timeline analysis from the PRS exercise reveals that the number of trees has drastically fallen since 1970.
- The waste and grazing areas have witnessed a steep decline since 1990.
- Biodiversity is a matter of concern for the villagers and serious interventions are required for their preservation and revival.
- Instances of forest fires are frequent, especially during summer.
- 24% of the respondent require either a preventive or an active psychosocial intervention with females having a higher burden of mental health concerns than men.



IMPACT

- 9 water resources restricted to resolve the issue of water storage or harvesting during nonmonsoon months is still a concern.
- 23 farm pond developed and desiltaion work done of 1 percolation hence increased water availability for rabi cultivation.
- Ground water recharge and watershed related work done to minimize the water scarcity during the summer session.
- 130 farmers started poultry as supplementary livelihood option for agriculture.
- To increase the green cover, we planted 663 trees of local species.

- Biodiversity awareness session organised for in the 9 villagers. People's biodiversity register developed in 5 villages.3 Devrai sites preservation and revival work started.
- Awareness session of forest fire management and mitigation done with 1000 community stakeholder. 10 forest fire incidences managed by villager in current year.
- Counselling center started at Sakhar health sub center and Karanjavane PHC. 53 community stakeholder received counselling service at counselling center. 960 community stakeholders participated in Mental health and wellbeing awareness session.

According to project planning, Water Security has completed 87% of its activities and outputs under the various projects, while Environment has completed 51% of its work with more results to come in the upcoming years. 60% of the activities and outputs specified have been met by gender and social inclusion. While Sustainable Livelihoods has completed 88% of its defined activities and outputs in creating models for income augmentation and food security through farms and non-farms-based livelihood, among the nine villages in Velhe, Community Mental Health has completed 86% of its program activities and outputs.

With 75% of the pre-defined program activities and outputs achieved, Raintree Foundation has successfully met the set targets under the various thematics.

Audited Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

Particulars	Note	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
I. EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
(1) Shareholders' funds			
(a) Share Capital	3	1,000.00	1,000.00
(b) Reserves and Surplus	4	89,142.73	57,691.65
Total		90,142.73	58,691.65
(2) Non-current liabilities			
Long-term Provisions	5	18,957.49	3,260.52
Total		18,957.49	3,260.52
(3) Current liabilities			
(a) Trade Payables	6		
- Due to Micro and Small Enterprises		295.00	295.00
- Due to Others		13,403.72	5,644.06
(b) Other Current Liabilities	7	13,153.89	4,504.93
(c) Short-term Provisions	8	1,588.87	65.46
Total		28,441.48	10,509.45
Total Equity and Liabilities		137,541.70	72,461.62
II. ASSETS			
(1) Non-current assets			
(a) Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets			
(i) Property, Plant and Equipment	9	32,417.39	34,973.71
(ii) Intangible Assets		10,299.46	15,255.19
Total		42,716.85	50,228.90
(b) Long term Loans and Advances	10	9,430.50	7,230.50
Total		52,147.35	57,459.40
(2) Current assets			
(a) Cash and Cash Equivalents	11	80,820.30	7,295.31
(b) Short-Term Loans and Advances	12	4,574.05	7,706.91
Total		85,394.35	15,002.22
Total Assets		137,541.70	72,461.62

Audited Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024

Particulars	Note	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
Grant Income	13	901,084.70	430,300.00
Total Income		901,084.70	430,300.00
Expenses			
Employee Benefit Expenses	14	505,367.74	156,966.40
Depreciation and Amortization Expenses	9	13,374.70	7,198.70
Other Expenses	15	350,891.18	230,162.99
Total expenses		869,633.62	394,328.09
Surplus/(Deficit) before Exceptional and Extraordinary Item and Tax		31,451.08	35,971.91
Exceptional Items		-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) before Extraordinary Item and Tax		31,451.08	35,971.91
Extraordinary Items		-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) before Tax		31,451.08	35,971.91
Tax Expenses			
Surplus/(Deficit) after Tax		31,451.08	35,971.91
Earnings Per Share (Face Value per Share Rs.10 each)			
-Basic (In Rs)	16	314.51	359.72
-Diluted (In Rs)	16	314.51	359.72

Donors

Donor for Clean Energy activities

Collective Good Foundation

Partners



Vigayn Ashram Sustainable Livelihoods



ACWADAM Water Conservation



Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse Mental Health



Srushti Conservation Foundation Biodiversity Conservation

Be a part of our journey

Climate Change is widespread and complex. Hence, climate action demands collective and sustainable efforts. If you are inspired by our vision and approach, feel free to reach out to us to be a part of this journey.



Dignity and Well-being for Planet & People

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