

STORIES OF CHANGE



Humara Gaon

To experience community led systemic change, one must go to Pipra – a village where one can see sustainable development in action, for the people and by the people, and in harmony with nature. What is striking about Pipra's people is their collective vision for social, economic and ecological well-being – a vision, in which every family in the community has its basic needs fulfilled, has sustainable livelihoods, and where the land, water and forests are cared for as common resources.

It all started in 2014, when the community in Pipra decided to take ownership of their future. They designed a micro-plan for their development, with short and long-term priorities, encompassing infrastructure and services, land management and water security, potential economic opportunities and institutional design and capacities to manage. They formed collectives of women, farmers and children, who engaged actively with the Gram Panchayat, and adopted many water efficient and drought resilient farming methods. Livelihood opportunities were promoted, and a community system for drinking water

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supply was established for the entire village. With basic needs met and livelihoods secured, the people of Pipra are now actualising their potential, as they reaffirm their belief in a culture of shared benefit. INR 4 million was invested, benefitting 2,700 individuals. Household incomes increased by 40% through diversified livelihood opportunities, 80% have drinking water supply at their doorsteps, 100% women are literate, and the village is now 100% open-defecation free in just 3 years.

The Humara Gaon model for integrated village development, as exemplified by Pipra, shows that it is possible to launch village economies onto a trajectory of sustainable socio-economic development by systemically addressing people's aspirations for a resilient tomorrow. Leveraging the potential of technology based solutions and social collaboration, even difficult and vulnerable geographies such as Bundelkhand can transform.