

Urmul Seemant Samiti

About the organization

With the aim to empower village communities towards self-reliance, Urmul Seemant Samiti has been working since its inception in 1994 in Indo-Pak border village of Bajju, Bikaner, to develop a safe and enabling environment for people that ensures that their right to health, education and employment is respected and realized without discrimination and exclusion, with special focus on children and women. Striving for development in the most distant and underdeveloped villages of Bikaner and Jodhpur district to ensure that people are empowered to decide, design, implement and eventually self-finance the package of development services which are made available to them under different projects.

The GROW Fund's impact

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, Urmul Seemant Samiti suffered a devastating blow with the loss of key leadership, including founding Chairperson, Sh. Arvind Ojha, and Secretary, Sh. Harbansh Singh, along with two senior members. This tumultuous period marked the organisation's most challenging phase in its more than three-decade history. This was exacerbated by significant changes in FCRA regulations by the Government of India, leading to a drastic reduction in funding and program capacity.

However, in the face of adversity, Urmul Seemant Samiti embarked on a journey of reimagination and resilience through the Agla Dashak initiative—an organisational development endeavour aimed at envisioning the next decade for the Urmul Seemant Samiti in a participatory manner. The initiative encompassed a series of transformative steps with the support of The GROW Fund:

- **Expanding Horizons and Changing mindsets:** Through targeted training and capacity-building initiatives, the initiative sought to broaden the perspectives and empower the workforce, fostering a collective re-imagination of the organisation's future.
- **Redesigning the Implementing Structure:** Recognising the need for adaptability, the initiative aimed to redefine core program verticals and supporting elements to align with evolving objectives and challenges.
- **Identifying Long-term Goals:** By engaging stakeholders in dialogue and reflection, the initiative aimed to articulate ambitious yet achievable objectives in terms of outreach, financial sustainability, and social impact.
- **Strengthening Governance:** Through enhancements in leadership effectiveness and decision-making processes, the initiative sought to fortify the organisational governance framework, fostering transparency and accountability.
- **The participatory visioning process unfolded through a series of structured steps:**
 - Step 1: Multi-stakeholder discussions held in September 2022 in Bajju, Bikaner, and surrounding villages, involving current and former employees, community members, other organisations, and board members.
 - Step 2: Presentation and discussion of a draft report in November 2022 in Punrasar, followed by the formation of a core committee and sub-committees tasked with intensive work on proposed verticals and other pertinent issues.
 - Step 3: Presentation and discussion of core and sub-committee reports in January 2023 in Bajju, culminating in revisions and finalisation in February 2023.

- Step 4: Comprehensive HR training led by renowned corporate HR trainer Nilesh Mantri in Bajju, addressing key areas such as teamwork, personal leadership, and communication.
- Step 5: Presentation of the final report and discussion with the Urmul Seemant board in April 2023 in Bikaner, showcasing the culmination of collective efforts and strategic insights.

The organisation was able to drive initiative known as Agla Dashak initiatives. The initiative delved into various domains through sub-committees, including Human Development, Collective Enterprises, Entitlements and Government Welfare Programs, Natural Resources Management Research, Advocacy, and Communication, and Digital Services.

The outcomes of the Agla Dashak initiative were profound:

- Promotion of Social Enterprises: Two social enterprises were established to foster future stability and promote community development initiatives.
- Policy Review and Update: Organisation policies were reviewed and updated to align with current requirements and emerging challenges.
- Risk Mitigation: Current challenges were comprehensively understood, leading to discussions on effective risk mitigation strategies.
- Enhanced Resource Mobilisation: The capacity of the team was bolstered, enabling more effective resource mobilisation efforts to sustain and expand organisational impact.

Testimonial 1

Mr. Sunil Lahri, Secretary, Urmul Seemant Samiti

In essence, the Agla Dashak initiative not only revitalised Urmul Seemant but also reaffirmed its commitment to community-driven development and organisational excellence in the face of adversity.

Testimonial 2

Mr. Aakriti Srivastava, Programme Lead, Urmul Seemant Samiti

It usually happens that one gets into the grind of everyday work deliverables and deadlines, that you miss to zoom out and assess the growth, challenges, aspirations, or failures of your work as an individual and collective. The 10-year vision exercise gave us the space to get on the balcony to understand, evaluate and prepare ourselves for a foreseeable future. We bonded as a team in our collective dream and vision of how we see the organisation in the coming 10 years, with experiences and realities of the past many. We look forward to observing and act on the decisions we have taken together

Snapshots

Team Workshop



Strategy workshop with core team



Team building workshop

