

Enhancing diverse livelihoods in Western India - DFID

Intervention:	Western India Rainfed Farming Project
Country:	India
Date:	Phase 1: 1993-98; Phase 2: 1999-2007
Challenge:	Sustainable improvement in livelihoods of 700,000 poor tribal people in Western India
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Social mobilization and widespread adoption of appropriate farming systems technologies and off-farm activities in over 800 villages. □ Participatory generation, testing and dissemination of improved farming systems technologies (especially plant varieties). □ Testing and scaling up of a rights-based programme to support villagers when they migrate as labourers to cities in the dry season. □ Policy advocacy with government in key areas, including seed systems and laws affecting migrant labourers.
Approach of the Intervention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The project costs approx. US\$30 million and was implemented by a national NGO - Gramin Vikas Trust (GVT), established by major cooperative sector fertiliser company. GVT was supported in developing and implementing a business plan to ensure it was viable once DFID support finishes in mid-2007. Another NGO, the Indian Farm Forestry Development Cooperative (IFFDC), also implemented part of the project.
Benefits and Impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The project successfully targeted poor families from the Bhil tribal community. Virtually all participating households report increased income from crop production, livestock and common property resources; reduced vulnerability; and improved access to public services. □ The project was successful in targeting women, who report significant empowerment within their families and the community. □ Many of the approaches adopted by the project have been replicated by other organizations. □ Preliminary results of a cost-benefit study indicate internal rates of return for the project, overall, of 15-20%.
Lessons learned:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Participatory varietal selection (PVS) and plant breeding (PPB), in which the poorest farmers work in partnership with plant breeders to test existing and breed new varieties, can work and bring substantial benefits. □ Local villagers can be trained in technical and other skills needed to manage their own development (called 'jankars'). □ Support programmes for seasonal migration can significantly increase the returns to labour migration and reduce the vulnerability poor people face when migrating. □ It is important to maintain continuity in donor support (in this case through a single Project Adviser, who worked on both phases of the project) in innovative programmes of this kind.
Wider application:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Many of the approaches developed by the project have been influential and have been replicated or adopted by other organizations (including PVS/PPB and migration support).
Implementing agency & partners	Gramin Vikas Trust; Indian Farm Forestry Development Cooperative; the Centre for Development Studies, University of Wales, UK; and WS Atkins International; DFID India.
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