



**Asian Institute of
Poverty Alleviation**

ACTIVITY REPORT

2017 - 2018

OUR FOCUS-POVERTY CHALLENGE

Enabling extreme poor community to positively change their world

We partner with local organizations – formal and informal
– to build inclusive, sustainable communities
in which their people thrive.



FOREWORD

Asian Institute of Poverty Alleviation works with extreme poor, most vulnerable women and children. AIPA gets engaged with groups to deliver participatory based livelihood initiative for women, education for girl child, skills and entrepreneurship for youth throughout seven states of India. We consider ourselves to be agents of change. We enable people to positively change their world by facilitating local resources, professional development and volunteering, and partner with governments and communities to improve people's lives. Everything we do is inspired by our vision to enable people to positively change their world.

AIPA'S development portfolio "Inclusive Growth with Economic Value" includes Livelihood, Education, Health, Skills and Entrepreneurship. AIPA's inclusiveness to promote 'skills and Entrepreneurship for prosperity' by working within local systems to enable disadvantaged men and women to become skilled workers, producers and entrepreneurs.

Public health and nutrition programme is also another priority agenda for AIPA's community intervention work. It is an evidence from field data that malnutrition currently affects one in two vulnerable women and children and is the underlying cause of 45% of deaths in children

under the age of five. Women are both disproportionately affected by malnutrition (60% of extreme poor women are malnourished). And lasting solutions is to have promotion and scaling of nutrition practice.

Within a period of 5 years, AIPA's women groups have become a leading advocate for the health, rights, education for children and wellbeing of girls and women, with a particular focus on gender equality, maternal, sexual, and reproductive health and rights. Local women team builds capacity, shares solutions, and forges partnerships, together creating coalitions, communication, and action that spark political commitment and investment in girls and women.

We're proud of the work we do to enable people both near and far too positively change their world and it's our pleasure to share this snapshot of 2017-18 with you.

We do look forward to your comments, commitment and platforms to advance advocacy initiatives and policy change – convening, campaigns, coalition activities, and communication tools – to bring the best ideas forward, highlight what works, and fuel action for benefit of most vulnerable community along with youth, children, adolescent girls, women and small farmers.

Warm regards,



Amalendu Pal

Honorary Director and Board Member
Kolkata, April 4, 2018



POLICY PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Deliver for impact: Multi-sector campaign

It is increasingly clear that cross-sector and cross-issue integration are critical to powering progress for girls and women — and global development. AIPA advocacy campaign leads to: 1) change the narrative around girls and women from vulnerable victims to powerful change makers; 2) mobilize multi-sector stakeholders committed to focusing on girls and women during the implementation of the SDGs; and 3) make powerful actions that reflect the centrality of girls and women in SDG implementation at country levels. We strongly believe that girls and women are the drivers of sustainable development and powerful agents of change.

The campaign objective is to yield economic and social returns through government investment with budget provision for girls, women. Its social investment portfolio covers gender equality, women's health (including maternal health and sexual and reproductive health rights), education, democratic rights, access to resources, women's role in climate mitigation, and beyond.

Inspiring collaboration with Government: Community driven solutions

AIPA team builds the capacity of government leaders and civil society organizations to better collaborate, advance transparency and accountability and effectively respond to the needs of citizens.

It was the local parents especially mothers and lady school teachers who first recognized that they needed to cultivate vegetables start in their own land and at school to provide food to support their children's well-being. AIPA local women facilitators and community mobilizers helped the community develop a plan to grow and harvest diverse crops, including rice, maize, cabbage, tomatoes, onions. With AIPA agriculture team support, parents and school leaders also learned how to make nutritious meals using the crops, safely store them for year-round availability and to sell the surplus to pay for other needs. The district government noticed the progress in remote part of West Bengal and Assam seized on the opportunity to do even more to build local resiliency.

More than five hundred community members who oversee the farms are now working hand-in-hand with their government counterparts. A network of 136 parents and community members from 75 schools are establishing granaries to store stockpiles of food during the harvest season. Excess food will be sold and the money earned will help buy much-needed food, such as fish and other sources of protein, during the dry season. Community members, parents, school employees and students all work in the school gardens that produce vegetables and grains to feed school children.

Innovation for growth: Making difference and women's empowerment through value chain

Building on local resources and market innovation that included more than 150 youth members established 15 innovation hubs on how to cultivate fish and chicken and market fish products and chicken in emerging markets. The goal of civil society organizations, six regional innovation hubs were launched in 2016, self-branded as “Innovation for Change.”

The goal of the innovation hubs is to provide gainful employment of whole families, sustainability of regular income and meeting their family needs and other social needs like education for children, health risks and hygiene and sanitation facilities at home. Each innovation hub along with its value chain supports 25 families with 150 members.

BUSINESS CSR AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



Framework of action to advance women's health, rights- Focused dialogue

Women help small businesses succeed and grow. Yet women continue to face barriers to achieve their full potential at work, in the marketplace, and in many other aspects of life. This not only holds women back, it impairs the growth of businesses, economies, and communities. Empowering women in global value chains presents a unique opportunity to create business value and strengthen women's health, rights, and wellbeing.

Business Benefits of Investing in Women's Empowerment for most companies, their starting point for investing in women's empowerment is a fundamental commitment to gender equality. Women's rights are human rights; not only do companies have an obligation to respect those rights, but that respect also aligns with core company and individual values.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are also essential to building healthy and resilient businesses. Holding back half the population from achieving their full potential at work and in other aspects of life does not make good business sense. When women do not have access to family planning, lack proper prenatal care, or suffer from intimate partner violence, this results in lost productivity and high rates of absenteeism or turnover, all of which affect companies. When laws restrict women's access to financial services, the market misses out on new entrepreneurs and companies lose out on potential new consumer markets. When women face barriers to professional advancement, companies limit opportunities for product and process innovation. Unequal opportunities for women can also affect company reputations with employees and consumers, with consequences for efficiency and growth.

Key Principles of CSR intervention in promoting women empowerment

To be effective at both advancing the health, rights, and wellbeing of women and also generating benefits for business, companies need to develop an approach grounded in building inclusive society approach.

Asian institute of Poverty Alleviation initiated gender equality and inclusive society through its corporate social responsibility intervention in collaboration with different corporate adopting three key principles: holistic, integrated, and strategic.

» A holistic approach means that companies look at the full scope of economic, social, cultural, and political factors that affect women's access to information, opportunities, and agency.

» An integrated approach requires embedding gender considerations throughout company functions, processes, policies, values, and relationships across the company value chain. It also means that opportunities for women's empowerment are not housed in isolated departments. Rather, they are considered in different decisions along the value chain, prioritized by company leadership, and reiterated in company values and mission statements.

» A strategic approach takes into account feasibility, business drivers, and long-term investment, as well as a company's own competitive advantages based on its expertise, resources, tools, and networks. It seeks to prioritize issues that, from the company's perspective, have the greatest potential to improve opportunities for women to contribute to the value chain. A strategic approach also recognizes that there are times when companies cannot and should not be leading efforts to advance women's empowerment on their own.





FINANCIAL INCLUSION, LIVELIHOOD, HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Investing in women: Market growth

Investing in women also unlocks new market opportunities by increasing access to goods and services for women at different ends of the income spectrum. Women create and control an increasing share of wealth in many parts of the world, making them an important investor group and powerful consumer demographic. Normally women make 82% of household purchasing decision.

At the same time, there are many missed opportunities to expand markets for essential goods and services for low-income women. There is a gender digital gap. It is estimated that the gender digital initiative could unlock a new market opportunity. More than 70% extreme poor will have a sustainable livelihood.

Asian Institute of Poverty Alleviation has a special programme to promote financial inclusion with entrepreneur business practices for poor women because women are also a large and growing market for financial products and services. Pilot programme is initiated in 70 villages covering 10,500 in the state of West Bengal through local governance system.

Livelihood

Livelihood- community wide transformation: One way that we are able to help rural families develop sustainable and profitable lasting change, is through their fisheries, livestock, vegetable cultivation programme & training initiative. This is an income generation programme focused on helping families start small businesses centred on breeding livestock which can provide them with a much-needed income source. In addition to receive seed for fisheries, livestock and vegetables to begin their small business, a representative of each beneficiary family is involved in a series of training on the care required for their livestock, fisheries and vegetable production and marketing. Cost of training is being borne by government and seeds are provided through government subsidies. Each family receive subsidies about Rs. 5000/- to initiate small business. After a period of nine months two members of families are fully get engaged

This income generation program is a revolving loan system where the initial recipient will receive a loan to initiate livelihood activity and will have time to generate income and repay the loan. Once the loan is repaid it will then go out to other community groups who will then in turn do the same over time. Through this programme, we have been able to reach 900 families of West Bengal and Assam during the year 2017-2018. This has helped them to increase the level of income (monthly additional income per family is Rs. 4700/- 43% higher in compare to their previous income), employment opportunities, food security and nutrition for those involved

Build-A- Farm and Farmer: AIPA has a programme for small farmers with a focus on advanced agriculture training programme. Its aim is to increase the income generation capacity of local farmers. Every year 50 farmers are trained on two crops by 5 agriculture specialists round the year. Farmers receive training not only on production process but also food processing and agriculture production value chain system with an established market federation.

The main focus of this project is an emphasis on training and equipping the farmers with the knowledge to be able to improve their situation including education on: disease prevention, new farming techniques, proper use of insecticides and fertilisers, and proper irrigation etc. The reason for this heightened emphasis on training is because it equips existing farmers with the necessary skills to improve their crop yields which will in turn increase their level of income and provide their family with nutritious good. In addition to the training, participants of this program are also given seed crops to put their new knowledge into practice.

Adopt-A-Farmer provides recommendations to farmers about the crops to grow, based on the individual conditions on each farm and the reliability of local market demand for the crops. As part of the program, an agricultural specialist visits each participant's farm, tests and analyses the soil and conducts follow up visits to provide customised advice.

Improving women's health

AIPA has been operating in the state of Assam since its founding. Its history provides unique insights on the complexities of working in diverse health care environments and the pressing needs facing women. AIAP local team and its partner recognize that women's health and well-being are essential to ensure families and communities thrive and AIPA succeeds in the region. With a support from a tea company in Assam, AIPA initiated maternal health camps in three districts reaching 2700 women and 1900 children. This helped to raise awareness about improving nutritional status of children and mother, institutional delivery increased from 67% to 92%. Community volunteers were trained on rapid malaria testing facility.

In the state of West Bengal 32 camps were organized on cancer care and addressing the issues on non-communicable diseases and maternal health reaching to 2400 participants belonging to 5 districts.

Human rights

AIPA equal rights campaign team aims to mobilize multi-sector allies to redefine the narrative around girls and women from the most vulnerable, to agents of change and policy makers. It is helping to build a movement to fuel a measurable action and implementation of SDGs and ensure equal rights. It has set priorities in the area of i. Equal payment for work; ii. Control of reproductive health and family formation; iii. Social protection and child care; iv. Control over family assets; v. Education and training; v. Equitable and safe employment and vi. Voice in society-policy influence.

To achieve the mission its team is guided by following steps

1. Clear accountability of social and democratic leader
2. Fostering a culture of inclusion within the organization
3. Measurement and reporting meaningful gender-disagreement data and outcomes.

Program Snapshots

1. Multi-sector campaign on SDG focussing girl and women
2. Government-community driven solution- programme on vegetable cultivation- establishment of a network of 136 parents
3. Engagement of 150 youth members in fish farming innovation hub
4. Focused dialogue on business- CSR and Women Empowerment
5. Invest in women through financial inclusion-10,500 women
6. Women livelihood programme-900 families
7. Medical outreach camps-32 covering 2400 participants

Our financial accountability

The responsibilities of running an ethical, compliant and transparent organization rest on the shoulders of everyone in Asian Institute of Poverty Alleviation. In our commitment to be good stewards, we've designed and continuously update our policies to meet the requirements set forth by donors, laws and regulations.

Financial review

Governance and Civil Society Strengthening: 36%

Nutrition, Health and Access to Education: 22%

Livelihoods, Environmental Sustainability and Economic Development: 18%

Social Sector Accelerator- Education and skill: 24%





WHO WE WORK ON BEHALF OF

Asian Institute of Poverty Alleviation works on behalf of the social sector – individuals, organizations and networks around the region who are committed to creating social good. We get engaged with are our counterparts – those striving for more open and participatory government; healthy communities, access to education, natural resource protection and climate resiliency; and improved livelihoods. Gender equality and women's empowerment are our priority along with human rights .that lie at the heart of development. Counterpart integrates gender equality in all program activities, and ensures gender equality in our hiring practices and in the selection of partners and grantees.



HOW WE'RE ACHIEVING CHANGE

We believe it's possible to accelerate development process by developing the capacities of leaders, organizations, and networks to identify challenges and implement their solutions more effectively, transparently, and inclusively.

We believe in the right and ability of people to drive their own destinies and maintain that the best solutions come from inside a community, not from outside. Local leadership is at the centre of every solution.

We are particularly focused on developing emerging leaders that have been traditionally marginalized: women, youth, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities. Their talent and energy is needed if any country is to reach its full economic potential while also providing for the social good



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ADDRESSED



Creating lasting change



**Asian Institute of
Poverty Alleviation**

Promoting models that are self-replicating and sustainable to reduce poverty
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