

Integrated Village Planning: Bringing Children Issues in Center of Ground Level Development

Sarathi Development Foundation is working over 20 years on participatory principles to prioritize and address needs of **children, adolescent girls, youths and women** in the sphere of integrated community development. It has evolved, implemented and scaled **impact driven** practices engaging community, local governance institutions and government effectively with a focus on child rights, education, health, child protection, water, sanitation, hygiene and livelihood. Sarathi was profiled in Dasra's research report *Owning Her Future*, which sought to understand the most effective ways to empower adolescent girls in India's most backward states and used for scaling of Integrated village planning in rural and slum areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Integrated Village Planning: A Proven Practice for Child Friendly Development

As a foundation of Integrated District Development Approach in partnership with UNICEF, Sarathi started to evolve integrated village planning to bring issues of children, girls and women in center of community development in partnership with the UNICEF in Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh in 2005. Since then, it has been core strategy of our numerous programmes supported by credible national and international development agencies such as UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, ChildFund, Oracle, Charities Aids Foundation, Terre des homes, Water Aid, Global Giving, Stockholding Corporation of India, Dasra and Government in districts of Barabanki, Lalitpur, Lucknow, Bhadohi, Firozabad, Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh. Sarathi has developed strategic road map for wider scaling of this practice.

Integrated Village Planning is a transparent and inclusive method of decentralized community development planning system in line with 73rd and 75th amendments to Constitution of India. It aims to ultimately empower children, adolescent girls, youths, women and wider community to identify and solve their own problems, while leveraging government mechanisms and schemes. Community is facilitated through participatory tools such as Venn diagramming, social map, households' baseline to identify issues such as school dropout, children labor, child marriage, health, nutrition, WASH, social norms and behaviors, to public service provisions. It also maps availability of mandated government service provisions such as anganwadis, health visits by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), safe drinking water sources, schools and adequate sanitation facilities. This data is compiled, analyzed and used by the community for preparation of village action plan, raising demand for public services and advocacy on child rights and community issues.

Outcome of the five days integrated village planning exercise is formulation of Village Action Plan by the community. The village action plan establishes needs as prioritized by the community, determines self, behavioral change, collective and service delivery actions, allocates responsibilities and sets time line in a logically sequenced manner. It is also a robust monitoring and evaluation tool used by the community to track the progress on a monthly basis. It is updated on a monthly basis by the community volunteers by collecting progress data through household visits, group meetings, and interactive meetings with the service providers. All data and documents such as base line, community resources, and village action plan are maintained by the community at community resource centers established in project villages. Sarathi has implemented and facilitated integrated village planning strategy in more than 1100 villages and slums in districts Lalitpur, Fatehpur, Bhadohi, Barabanki, Lucknow and Firozabad. It has demonstrated encouraging results in areas of education, child rights, child marriage, birth registration, mother child health & nutrition, WASH. It provides platform for children and wider community participation, PRI engagement and leveraging government resources and schemes.

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