Community Ownerships
Renewable Energy Technologies
in Distt. Gonda, Uttar Pradesh

Brochure No. 1
Project Background
Steel Authority of India (SAIL) through the project was keen to address its social, environmental and economic responsibilities of business. SAIL wanted to address key concerns such as reducing unemployment, creating primary and secondary education, addressing health facilities and enhancing sustainable livelihoods, approached Centre for Environment Education (CEE) to develop a more hands-on, participatory and gender sensitive approach in a remote, flood-plain landscape of Gonda District.

Series of discussions between SAIL and CEE led to defining the area in Paraspur Block of Gonda District.

Regular meetings with village communities by the CSR team of CEE built on the experience from GEF UNDP SGP led to develop a more systems approach, wherein all actions and decisions were agreed with the people in village meetings.

The CEE SAIL CSR team has developed a more process approach with people encouraging a 3-step approach.

- Village meetings: participatory rural appraisals, building greater rapport and trust between communities.
- Local village institution building, e.g. formation of women Self Help Groups; and issue-based groups for actions like sewing machines, rent a light for school, etc.

Name of the Organization
Centre for Environment Education (CEE), New Delhi

Geographical Area
15 villages with 810 households in 3 Gram Panchayats; Bahuan Madar Maza, Shivgarh and Charchari of block Paraspur

Project Time Period 2013-2015

Funding Agency/Grant
Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) Rs. 80 lacs

Project Partners
Barefoot Power, Local Banks, District Collector-Gonda, District Forest Officer-Gonda, NEDA, CMO-Gonda, KVK-Gonda and other line departments (e.g. Forests, Agriculture, Schools and energy, etc.)

Co-Financing
Rs. 20 lacs from various departments, local Banks, CEE and other sources
• Exposure, skills-building of the local communities on a range of issues, e.g. smokeless chulhas, savings and credit groups, schools, crops, livestock and plantations, etc.

PROJECT GOAL
Enhancing the quality of life and increased incomes of the poor and marginalized through a community led integrated approach using enterprise based, renewable agricultural approaches.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES
Poor agriculture and non agriculture farmers, landless, physically challenged, women, girls and children. All age, gender and class groups to be involved in the program.

PROJECT PURPOSE
I. Build skills and capacities of farmers by introducing low cost, easy to understand and implement modern agricultural and allied technologies, based on local conditions and available resources enabling them to increase their knowledge and income in a range of activities in natural resources management.

II. Introduce simple energy efficiency, biomass based technologies, and usage of organic fertilizers and pesticides for better management of households and reduced drudgery for women.

III. Ensure more community led participatory, gender sensitive approaches for building local institutions and local ownerships.

IV. Link and leverage resources, including knowledge, best practices to the ongoing schemes of the state and central governments. Link to the national action plans, banks, institutions for skills and enterprise.

V. Encourage locals to establish more sustainable business enterprises for increased incomes.
Project Strategy

The project adopted a two phase strategy in doing the implementation of actions with communities.

In the beginning participatory methodologies, including participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) were used. The process started with primary data collection. Apart from this, PRA tools like social mapping, well-being analysis, village socio-economic survey, seasonality tools, venn diagram & pie diagram etc. at village levels were used.

Developed and strengthened different village level informal social institutions through kinship, common trade and gender based approaches of group formation and dynamics. CEE's experience through Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Program (SGP) and lessons learnt to build women Self Help Groups (SHGs) and other resource based user groups were developed with community support.

Knowledge Sharing and documentation is the essential and integral part of the project approach. Emphasis is laid in process level documentation and learning during the community interactions. The key objective of SAIL project is to be seen as a responsible actor in society. SAIL is keen that their every action leads to sustainable growth and economic development in India.
The SAIL project – through the eyes of locals

Babu Yadav Bahun Madar Mazha: When Pradip and Piyush entered into our villages for the first time, we were very suspicious about their whereabouts and didn't believe they were here for our betterment. They called upon various meetings with us and I hardly used to attend them in the beginning. When from other villagers I heard good things about them I started attending meetings. Then eventually I started gaining faith in them after several meetings and understood the basic purpose behind their work. With their arrival we have understood the importance of meetings, working cohesively in groups and how to use the solar lanterns effectively.

Earlier we used to have Kerosene lamps which are harmful to health and did not provide good light. I deposited only Rs 650 to the Kangdan Purva Village Development Committee and got this light. In the last 8 months I have saved around 24 litres of kerosene, means Rs. 480 and the money I spent I will get back in a few months. "Jab bhi mai khet mai jata hu toh yeh light mera bahut saath deti hai, iski roshni bahut aachi hai" he said. Now I want to take more lights. I am really thankful to the funding organization i.e. SAIL and CEE and wish they remain with us till we become self-sufficient with increased income.

Phule Raj; Kangdan Purva: With the arrival of SAIL CEE project here our home is lightened. They have voluntarily come to our village and started working for development of our village. At start we didn't believe in them but also had a hope they will do something good for us. They have never taken anything from us nor have demanded any fund from us, even whatever we contribute it goes into the Kangdan Purva Village Development Committee. This whole new system of working has made us have faith upon the team.

Earlier in the evening we used to light Dhibri (Kerosene Lamp) and now we have solar lanterns because of which we not only get good light but also can have food together in the evening with the whole family with our own light. This also helps in cooking and studying of my children. This has really brought happiness to us. I would like them to work more for us in the field of agriculture, some income generation activities as my income is very meagre and would like to thank SAIL & CEE for their gracious work and sending the team here for our development and I would say such project should run for at least 5 years to achieve the development goals.

Rajkaran Yadav; Kangdan Purva: One incident I would like to share is that, in a marriage ceremony of our village we could not manage generator because of financial problem. But the solar lanterns the SAIL and CEE had provided us saved us from great shame. We put together around 18-20 lights in many places in the marriage venue and the ceremony went well with the blessings of these solar lanterns. That night I saved nearly Rs 1500/- in place of generator. Moreover every month I nearly save Rs 60-80/- in place of Kerosene. "Hamko ye light milne se bahut faida hua hai. Paise ki bahut bachat hui hai aur light bhi aachi mitta hai. Kahi aane jane me bhi iss kati suvidha hote hai, haath mai lekar aana jaana kar sakte hai". I will never forget them for their work in the village and will be very happy to provide them full support for more works in the village. Now there is a huge requirement of solar lights in this area and would want SAIL to provide full assistance to this program.
Project Activities

Till January 2014 more than 200 village meetings have been conducted in all the villages. In each meeting, nearly 20-25 participants attended.

5 Sewing machine classes setup and held in the village itself. Local teachers are identified from the village and they carry out the classes. All the girl students are organized into groups to attend the classes. They contribute Rs 25 per month to attend the classes and are responsible for the overall management of the course.

2 Masons from a village named Badhain Purva have got a micro enterprise setup for Smokeless Chulha Making and installation. Pipes are procured from Gonda and moulds are made by themselves at their house. They then install it in the village households when they receive orders from other villagers. Communities contribute Rs 200 - 250 per smokeless chulha.

A set of 24 solar lights under a program “Rent to own” School solar light program of Barefoot Power is installed in two schools. With this 24 students from a school can get solar lights with very easy installment process. The panel is mounted on a fixed stand and remains at school and student takes only the light to their home. Every day they bring the light to get it charged at the school and pay Rs 5 per day for 15 days in a month and for rest of the days for that month they charge for free. Eventually after few months their installment completes the cost of the light then they take back the panel along with the light and they own the complete set. Then the money so collected is used to install another unit for another set of 24 students.

60 Solar lanterns are provided to the villages named Kangdan Purva and Marran Purva of Bahuan Madar Maze. Villagers have contributed 45% of the cost and the amount so collected is deposited in a committee formed to look after the solar lights in the village.

54 Farmers participated actively from the project villages on 25th Sept 2013 in a farmers training organized at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Gonda. These farmers have never received any training so far related to agriculture. The topic discussed in this training program was Gap Analysis, Organic Farming, various modern and beneficial tools like drum seeder, zero tillage etc for farming, Village Seed Bank, Quality and Varieties of seeds. Reducing cost of cultivation with increased production, Horticulture etc.

6 Travis were installed in village for better animal husbandry practices. For its installation, meetings were held with the VDCs and a place was agreed with the villagers and minutes of the meetings were recorded. Then in the selected spot the Travis is installed. Villagers helped in its installation with manpower.