



RESILIENT TO DISASTER IN INDIA

PROGRAMME AND PROJECT

Resilience and Livelihoods project within Patna, Bhojpur and Vaishali Area Development Programmes

TIMEFRAME

Programme: 2006/7 – 2022

Project: 2016 – 2022

LOCATION

Three districts in Bihar State India

GOAL

Resilient Families and Communities



Introduction

World Vision UK supported three long term programmes in Bihar state, starting in 2006 (Vaishali) and 2007 (Bhojpur and Patna). The focus of the Child Sponsorship-funded programmes was to support the most vulnerable families, such as smallholder farmers, landless tenant farmers, the unemployed and others with very low incomes.

With Vaishali and Bhojpur being rural and Patna being urban, the context of each programme was different but there were also common issues, including risks of child labour and child marriage, poor health and sanitation, gender-based violence and frequent floods.¹

The initial phases implemented projects in health and nutrition, livelihoods, education and child protection. The final phase, from 2016, implemented resilience and livelihoods projects, alongside 24 other similar projects across India. This involved six different project models that combined together to build household and community resilience. These models were:

1. **Ultra-Poor Graduation model (GM)**² which supports poor households to lift themselves out of poverty through cash or asset transfers, business skills and access to markets.
2. **Savings Groups**³ to enable women to save money, have access to credit, and access government-backed loans for livelihood activities.
3. **Citizens Voice in Action**⁴ which equips citizens to monitor government service provision and access to social welfare schemes.
4. **Climate Resilient Agriculture** trains farmers in techniques to improve water efficiency, diversify crops and to access better markets for their produce.
5. **Men Care** Provides a space for men, their partners, and their daughters to critically reflect on the cultural and gender norms that perpetuate the devaluation of girls and promote non-violent, caring relationships and shared decision-making.
6. **Community-based disaster risk reduction** trains community teams to identify hazards and mitigate the risk of disasters.

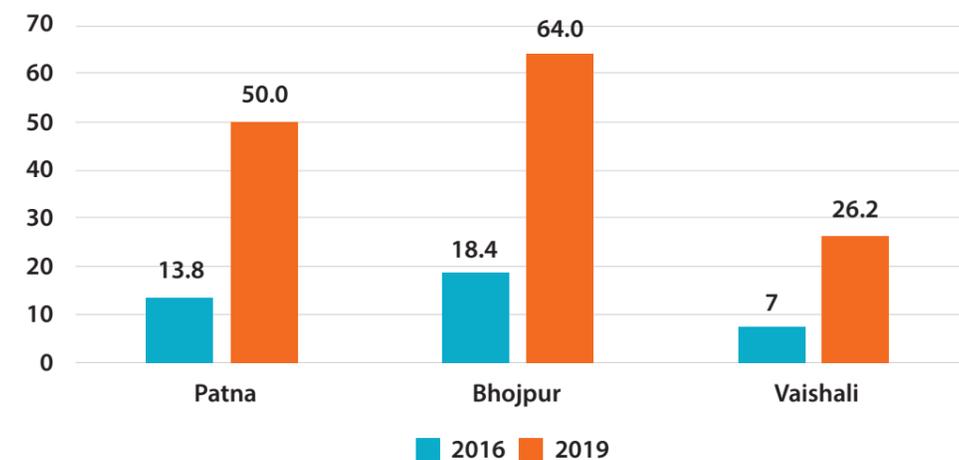
¹ For example, Patna had floods in 2013, 2016, 2019 and 2020.

² [Ultra-Poor Graduation | Economic Development | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#). Factsheet giving details on the project model.

³ [Savings for Transformation | Economic Development | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#). Factsheet giving details on the project model. In India, savings groups are called Self Help Groups and are now supported entirely by the government of India.

⁴ [CVA Project Model Appendices | publication | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#). Webpage giving details on the project model.

% Households with a secondary source of income



Households more economically resilient

Improved economic resilience across all three programmes was seen by the increase in households with a secondary source of income⁵.

With many households relying on livelihoods that are vulnerable to disasters, such as the frequent flooding, as well as the challenges of access to fair market prices, a secondary source of income helps improve a household's resilience to shocks. In good times a secondary income increases overall household income, creating a buffer for more challenging times. And when shocks do come it is more likely that one source of income continues even if another is lost or greatly reduced - preventing a household from losing everything.

Rekha Devi is a mother of five children. Her husband used to work as a mason. Rekha said:

“My life was very difficult earlier. We did not have three meals a day and ... taking care of the children was very difficult.”

Rekha worked as a day labourer but could not meet the family's needs.

Through the Vaishali Area Programme, Rekha was provided with finance to open a shop where she now earns more a day than as a labourer. The shop is next to her home so she has more time to spend with her children, who are now going to school regularly.

Through the CVA Rekha was able to access a free gas connection to replace her clay oven and she also receives food through the Government Public Distribution System, getting rice and wheat every month. Rekha joined a savings group in her community and saves 40 rupees a month.

Rekha is now debt free!

“I was able to clear all loans from the earning I got from the shop. My dream for my children is to buy more land, build a good house, to give them the best education and for my daughter to get married after 18 years.”



TABLE ABOVE: Graph showing results on sources of income from the final evaluation reports in 2021 and earlier comparable studies.

ABOVE: Rekha in her shop. She is now able to provide for her children, thanks to the programme. ©2022 World Vision

OPPOSITE: A World Vision India Disaster risk reduction task force in action, warning of risk of disaster in the local language. ©2022 World Vision

⁵ The data in this case study come from two sources, the national level endline evaluation of the WW India resilience technical programme published in 2020 and the final evaluations of our WVUK funded programmes in 2021. These were limited in their methodology by Covid but provided insight on how communities coped during the pandemic amongst other essential qualitative detail.

Adapting to a changing climate in farming

The poorest farmers with very small areas of land find it difficult to get a fair price for their produce. Farmers who are part of Producer Groups are able to gain more income from their produce due to collective action on prices. A study⁶ found that being part of a farmers' producer group enabled 800 farmers in the Vaishali programme to get between 100-300 rupees more per quintal than the normal market rate. The same study found that improving the variety of crops grown, and using improved seed types, can double the farmer's income, by reducing costs and increasing production.

During the pandemic, 200 farmers from the producer groups in Vaishali and a neighbouring programme were involved in growing high quality wheat, which the local government distributed to nearly 2000 vulnerable families through a voucher scheme.

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"World Vision India believed in small farmers' organisation and has given us a business to move forward with and we are very excited."

– Prem Kumar, Chairman, Desari Producer Company (FPC) Ltd.



Reduced risk of disaster across communities

Community-based disaster risk reduction (DRR) task forces were trained to identify hazards and mitigate the risk of disasters. In Patna and Bhojpur they are linked to the district and state Disaster Management Authorities, who will continue to provide support in future years. "DRR task forces represent a cross-section of the community, with the active engagement of existing leaders. The Bihar State Disaster Management Agency has given us technical support such as materials, expertise and training, plus they are conducting disaster prevention exercises, which is benefiting people in the Area Programme." (Staff member, Patna)

These task forces have played a key role in protecting the most vulnerable families from disasters, including flooding in Bhojpur where the entire community was under water, and also in providing families with Covid relief from government and NGOs.

Children in Patna drew pictures of the changes they had seen in their communities (see back page). The task forces featured in their pictures, for their role in saving lives during floods and helping mitigate the risks of disaster caused by Covid.



ABOVE: "Patna being busiest city and lot of transportation on the road leave us prone to accident therefore am thankful to World Vision for giving us training on how to rescue people and children who meet with accident," says 15-year-old Ruchi. ©2022 World Vision

LEFT: Mr Prem holding the potatoes he's grown. ©2022 World Vision

Further findings

The three Area Programmes had the following impacts:

- 1463 most vulnerable households in Patna, Bhojpur and Vaishali grew economically through the Ultra Poor Graduation Model.
- An average of 73% of households are in Savings Groups with access to savings and credit.
- An average of 74% of all households know about government welfare schemes and an average of 86% of vulnerable households are accessing government support.⁷
- 5,573 farmers in Vaishali and Bhojpur adopted improved soil and water conservation practices and 1,250 farmers now gain more income as members of Producer Groups.
- 39 community disaster preparedness plans updated.
- Domestic violence reported by women reduced by an average of 24 percentage points and we saw an increase of 21 percentage points in adolescents who report that they have a strong connection with a parent or caregiver

TABLE BELOW: Graph showing results on the use of coping strategies from the final evaluation reports in 2021 and earlier comparable studies where available.

Coping during the pandemic 2019-2022

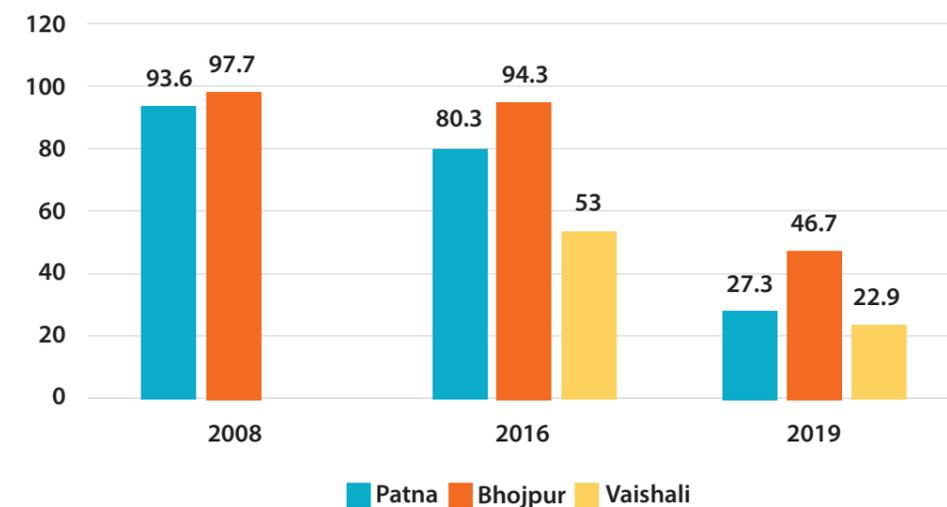
Since 2019 all three programmes have faced a combination of different threats, with floods, fires and Covid. This increased pressure on families, who needed to resort to a variety of coping strategies. 84% of households used savings, which is a positive coping strategy. More negatively, spending on education and food was reduced by 52% and 19% respectively.

During the second wave of the pandemic, there was greater use of savings, securities, assets, loans and additional livelihood activities. Borrowing from friends and relatives reduced by 6%. This suggests that households felt more secure and had more savings and assets than previously, which indicates an increase in resilience.

The extent to which families are more resilient can be seen through a reduction in the use of negative coping strategies, such as reducing meals, selling assets or not paying school fees. The graph below shows how this has changed.

This shows that fewer families needed to use a negative coping strategy over time, indicating that families across our programmes are now more resilient. This is less the case in Bhojpur, where there was serious flooding in 2016 and 2019, devastating property and livelihoods. This presents an on-going challenge, where climate change is likely to make flooding more common and building resilience to flooding is more complex due to its origins further upstream in Nepal. Some of these events are beyond the scope of a community to tackle, which is why World Vision is also working at district and state level to advocate for government action to reduce flood risks.

% Households who have adopted a negative coping strategy



⁶ Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) – A project in collaboration with Centre for Agricultural Technology Assessment and Transfer, Indian Agricultural Research Institute and World Vision India. Study to assess the impact of the project involving a sample of 200 farmers. The CRA study was completed in 2021 based on the demonstrations of Climate Resilient Agriculture technologies from winter 2019 to summer 2021.

⁷ Includes welfare schemes such as Public Distribution System, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, insurances and pension schemes.



Conclusion

Families have increased and diversified income, more savings and access to small loans, more sustainable farming practices, and awareness of welfare schemes. The disaster risk reduction activities have helped communities be better prepared to tackle disasters, which will save lives and reduce injuries from flooding.

While more progress is needed, the most vulnerable families in Patna, Bhojpur and Vaishali have been given skills and resources to enable them to continue their progress towards economic security and resilience to disasters. With access to government welfare schemes and support services, and local community groups, these communities should have the capacity to continue to see improvements in child well-being.

ABOVE TOP: A river of life diagram drawn by children in Patna Area Programme capturing the changes they have seen and their hopes for the future.

Patna, Bhojpur and Vaishali programmes came to an end in 2022. The resilience project was part of a wider programme to support child wellbeing in several different projects over 15 years. ©2022 World Vision

ABOVE: Children take part in recording the changes they have seen, through the river of life drawings. ©2022 World Vision

Learning

The communities in the three Area Programmes all faced a complex mix of different threats and hazards, so the programmes needed to include a range of integrated approaches, which was more effective than simply focusing on one issue.

All communities are now better equipped to deal with disaster - task forces have been well trained and supported by government partners, alongside advocacy by World Vision and other NGOs at district level. Working with different stakeholders, including district and state level government, as well as a variety of community groups, has contributed to increased resilience and will ensure activities can be sustained.

Increasing community resilience has meant many families have chosen to educate their children to a higher level now that they are more economically resilient.

Forming and supporting community organisations here has taken many years. In future, the interventions which have been successful but need more support - such as Farmer Producer groups - will begin at the start of all new programmes. This includes our new WVUK funded project Gaya AP, which will also include other proven models, such as CVA, to improve service delivery (including access to welfare schemes).

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At World Vision, our focus is on helping the most vulnerable children, in the most dangerous places, overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian faith, we've worked together with communities, partners, local leaders and governments, for over 70 years, so that children – of all faiths and none – are empowered to experience fullness of life.

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COVER PHOTO: A World Vision Emergency response manager assesses the situation during flooding in Bihar, India. Our three Area Programmes in Bihar, Patna, Bhojpur and Vaishali included disaster risk reduction to help communities prepare for respond to emergencies including floods. ©2022 World Vision