





**Institution:** Welthungerhilfe

**Summary:** Bhoomi Ka, meaning “from the earth,” aims to transform the food systems in India by promoting ecological, safe, and healthy consumption, which benefits both the farmers and the consumers. The programme focuses on increasing the demand for millets to create a pull factor for farmers to produce healthier food and get fair prices. Bhoomi Ka works with all stakeholders of the value chain to address gaps and challenges.

**Pitch:** The programme collaborates with consumers to create awareness, promote, and develop innovative millet recipes to address the low demand for millets. Bhoomi Ka organises awareness camps, multi-stakeholder meets, cooking classes, nutrition talks, and food yatras. To promote the production and supply of millets, Bhoomi Ka works with smallholder farmers to build their capacities in millet production systems, form FPOs, and connect them with urban markets to ensure a farmer-to-consumer connection.

**Problem:** The current agriculture and food system in India faces numerous challenges, including degradation of land and water, climate change, high use of chemicals, unhealthy food habits, and declining health of people. The promotion of production and consumption of millets directly addresses these challenges. Millets are nutri-cereals rich in iron, zinc, proteins, vitamins, and minerals, and have a low glycemic index that helps tackle health challenges such as diabetes, heart diseases, anaemia, and obesity. Millets are climate-resilient and drought-tolerant plants that require minimal inputs, irrigation, and care, making them good for both farmers and the planet.

**Solution:** Bhoomi Ka addresses the demand side of millets to revitalize the missing urban-rural and producer-consumer connect in selected towns. It improves visibility and product experience, communicates producer and product information to consumers, Bhoomi

# Bhoomi Ka-Promoting Sustainable Production and Consumption of Millets

**Location:** Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi, India



## Embracing Organic Farming

#BhoomiKa



Ka-Promoting Sustainable Production and Consumption of Millets Mainstreaming in India, Asian and African Countries-A Compendium of Inspiring Stories from Field and increases accessibility to millets. The programme achieves this through advocacy and awareness campaigns in schools, colleges, fairs, festivals, hospitality sector, farmers' markets, and food yatras in rural and urban regions. The second objective of the programme promotes production and marketing of millets through direct engagement with smallholder farmers and small local businesses. The programme promotes FPOs and CFCs to support farmers in marketing and promoting their produce. Attractive packaging and branding make millets attractive to high-end consumers who would pay better prices for the products. Bhoomi Ka also engages with the Government to advocate and promote millets in the state, resulting in the inclusion of millet processing units in subsidized agri-machines.

**Target population:** The programme aims to create awareness and promote healthy and safe foods like millets among urban and rural consumers, while also working with smallholder farmers to promote millet production and ensure fair prices, as well as ecological production systems.

**Results:** The programme has successfully reached over 500 farmers in Punjab and Haryana who have transitioned from inorganic to organic food systems and are now engaged in millet production. These farmers are associated with 48 Participatory Guarantee Scheme (PGS) groups, which provide them with support through certification and production. Additionally, three Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs) have been established in the states, each with a Common Facility Center (CFC) to support the processing and packaging of millets. Over 20 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed between FPOs and local retailers to sell their produce in their stores. The programme has also reached over two lakh consumers through various awareness programmes, online events,



school programmes, food yatras, and social media promotions. Where awareness activities have been conducted directly with consumers, local retailers have seen a 10% increase in consumption.

**Potential for upscaling and replicability:** The programme's solution is simple, direct, and easily replicable. It is not limited by geography or locale and can be scaled up to different parts of the country as well as globally. Creating a strong network of similar awareness and promotion can be done in different locations. Similar activities have been initiated in Rajasthan through programme partners, which has started to show promising results.

**Drivers of change:** There is a growing consciousness among consumers towards healthy lifestyles and diets. More and more people are now seeking healthy foods to replace their unhealthy habits. This was further triggered by COVID-19 and its impact on health. When millet was offered as a solution, many consumers were interested in learning more and incorporating it in their diet. Another important factor that supported the acceptance of millets among the farming community was climate change and the degradation of land and water due to the heavy use of chemicals and fertilizers. Millet production supported the farmers in facing adverse weather changes and improving the soil and water requirement in the

field. They are also economical for smallholder farmers as they have very little production cost.

**Dilemmas and barriers:** One of the key risks anticipated was how the farmers and small retailers would be able to cater to the increased demand once it arose. The programme strengthened farmer groups and systems to address growing demand. The programme also worked to map and identify local businesses that would be able to supply products to consumers in different cities and locations.

**Novelty and innovation of solution:** The solution looks at the entire value chain to address the key challenges faced at different levels by creating awareness and promoting millets through health talks, nutrition awareness, cooking classes, and peer-group sharing. While creating awareness among consumers, the programme also links them to local ecopreneurs and farmers who can supply them with the produce. Simultaneously, it builds capacities of farmers and promotes millet production among them. The third key aspect has been to engage with local Government to advocate for the promotion of millets in the states. The solution addresses gaps at different levels by creating a strong network to make the practice sustainable.

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