

Connect

SEPTEMBER 2025 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 2



Sunil Misra
CEO
CII Foundation

“
Our programs reflect the power of collaboration, commitment, and community participation. We believe that social development is the foundation upon which sustainable growth and inclusive progress are built.”

At the CII Foundation, our vision is to touch lives and transform communities through meaningful, scalable interventions across India. From the high-altitude landscapes of Ladakh to the tropical coasts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, from Maharashtra in the West to the Sundarbans in the East, not leaving behind the heartland of the country, Uttar Pradesh. Our programs reflect the power of collaboration, commitment, and community participation. We believe that social development is the foundation upon which sustainable growth and inclusive progress are built.

In Haryana's Farukh Nagar, our tree plantation initiative took a step forward with a large-scale plantation drive in village Judola in August. What made this effort truly remarkable was the spirit of participation: community members, schoolchildren, NSG Commandos, and CII colleagues came together to plant native trees like Jamun, transforming a wasteland into a green space that will benefit generations to come. Reforestation assumes even greater significance against the backdrop of recent flash floods and landslides, highlighting the importance of resilient ecosystems in mitigating climate risks.

Our health and nutrition programs continued to strengthen communities across project villages in Chandauli district, Uttar Pradesh.



Over the past two months, efforts have focused on both service delivery and capacity building. From creating Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) IDs to organising awareness sessions on hygiene, communicable diseases, nutrition, and engaging with families initially hesitant to access health services, our aim has been to empower every household to make informed health choices.

Skill development and livelihoods remain another pillar of our work. In Andhra Pradesh, an Industrial Coating & Painting Training Program was launched in Nellore. In Tamil Nadu, our project on skilling women prisoners gained momentum with Phase 2 commencing in Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, and Chennai, focusing on vocational training and capacity building to enable economic independence.

Under our crop residue management program in Punjab and Haryana, we continue to expand our geographic footprint by partnering with new corporates such as JSW Foundation, with whom we signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 11 August. This first collaboration between our organisations aims to reduce stubble burning, improve soil health, and promote sustainable farming practices, benefiting select villages in Mansa district, Punjab, over three years. Continuing our work with farmers, a specialised program on improved agronomic practices in chilli farming is being undertaken in Ballari, Karnataka, equipping farmers with the knowledge to enhance productivity, build market readiness and adopt sustainable practices.

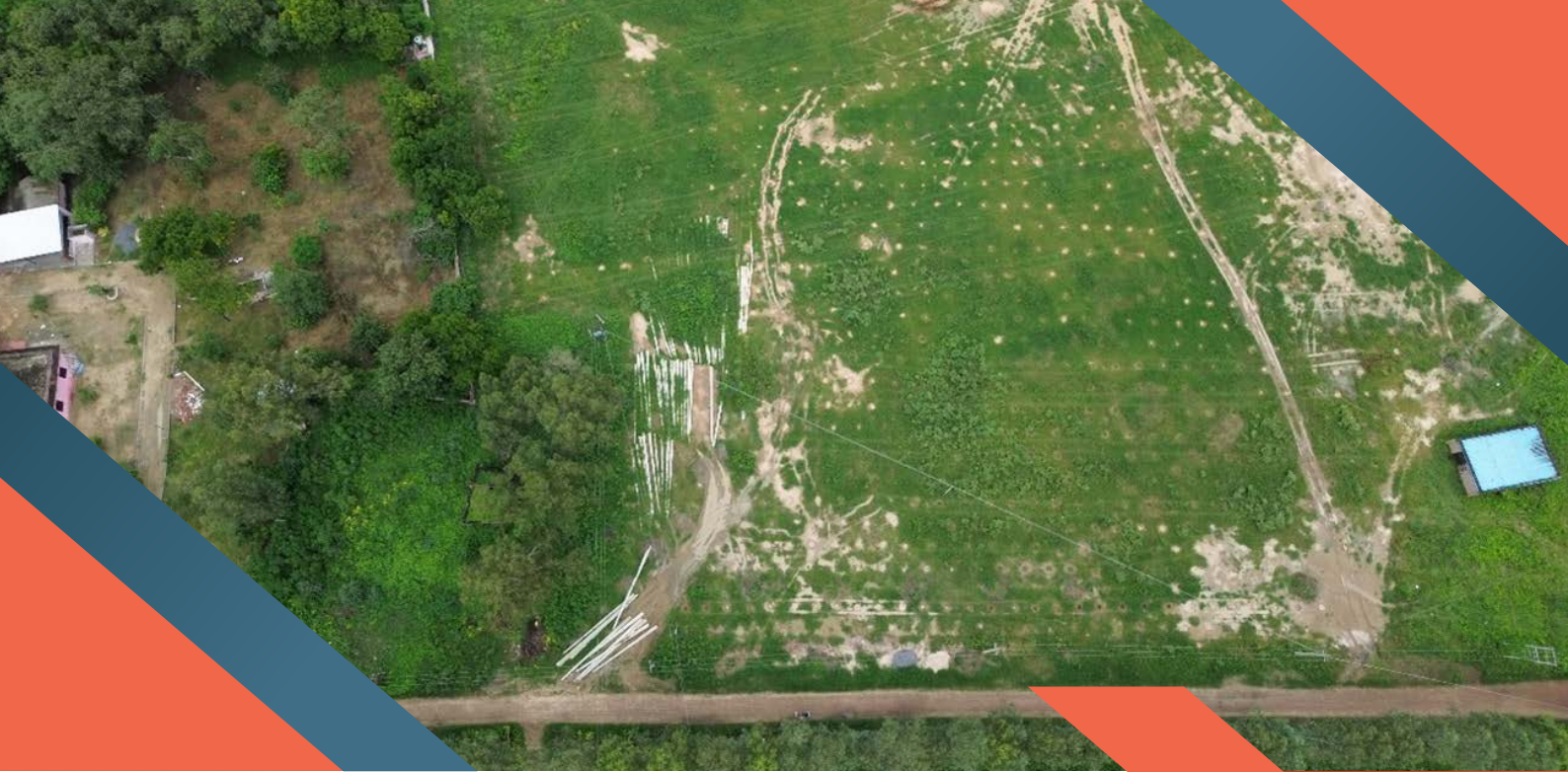
Our initiatives - spanning climate action, health, skill development, livelihoods and women's empowerment - demonstrate not just the breadth of CII Foundation's work but the depth of our engagement.

This is the 21st year of our flagship program on women empowerment, the Woman Exemplar Program, and we launched the Call for Nominations for the Woman Exemplar Award 2026 on 1 August.

This flagship program recognises and celebrates grassroots women leaders driving social change in areas such as health and education and empowers them through training and mentorship to scale their work for greater impact.

These initiatives—spanning climate action, health, livelihoods, skill development, and women's empowerment—demonstrate not just the breadth of CII Foundation's work but the depth of our engagement.

We remain grateful to our partners, communities, and colleagues who walk alongside us on this journey. Together, we are shaping a future where growth, inclusion, and sustainability go hand in hand.



CLIMATE RESILIENCE



BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Climate change has complex and far-reaching impacts, including rising temperatures, droughts, floods, and loss of biodiversity. Addressing it requires holistic action across agriculture, water, and green cover. CII Foundation is partnering with government, industry, local authorities and communities to drive initiatives that enhance environmental sustainability and build healthier ecosystems.

CROP RESIDUE MANAGEMENT

To combat air pollution and promote sustainable agriculture, the CII Foundation has been implementing a multi-stakeholder program on Crop Residue Management (CRM) since 2019.

Today, the program covers over 1,000 villages across Punjab and Haryana, where it is supporting farmers to adopt environment-friendly alternatives to stubble burning. The program is significantly reducing air pollution and soil degradation due to stubble burning, while increasing farm yields and farmers' incomes.

During July–August, the geographic footprint of the program was expanded, and several on-ground activities were organised to strengthen donor and community engagement and increase awareness about the program.

Key Components of the Program

Awareness
Building

Machinery
Support Through
Community
Tool Banks

Farmers' Training
and Farm
Demonstrations

Managing
Biomass through
Ex-situ
Technology

FIELD VISITS AND MEETINGS

Community and donor engagement is strengthened through field visits and meetings, which give donors a first-hand experience of on-ground activities and impact, and bring the community together to share their views and how the program is benefitting them.

Volunteer Visit in Ratia, District Fatehabad Haryana

A volunteer visit was organized with HDFC Bank employees in the project village at Ratia, Fatehabad on 23 August. The volunteers interacted with students, inspired and motivated them to nurture their creativity and sportsmanship, while being cognizant of the need for environmental stewardship. Students participated in engaging activities such as Kho-Kho, Tug of War, poster making, and slogan writing, which encouraged teamwork and awareness.



Volunteer Visit in Khanna, District Ludhiana Punjab

HDFC Bank employees engaged with students at the Government Middle School, Goh, Block Khanna, where several competitions were organized. Thirty-two students enthusiastically participated in poster making, street plays, and model making, showcasing their talent. Winners from each category were recognised for their outstanding performances by a panel of judges, led by Mr. Ashish Goyal, Branch Manager, Khanna, along with Mr. Amandeep Singh and Mr. Jaswinder Singh from HDFC Bank. Volunteers also encouraged students to take proactive steps for environmental conservation, sharing valuable insights on protecting our planet and building a sustainable future.



EXPANDING GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

The CII Foundation has partnered with JSW Foundation to expand its ongoing CRM program in Punjab. On 11 August, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Mr. R. Pavithra Kumar, CEO, JSW Foundation, and Mr. Sunil Misra, CEO, CII Foundation to launch a three-year project covering 50 villages in Mansa district, Punjab.

This marks the first collaboration between the two organisations, which are united by a shared commitment to reduce stubble burning, improve soil health, and promote sustainable farming practices.



URBAN CLIMATE RESILIENCE – RESTORATION OF WATERBODIES AND TREE PLANTATION INITIATIVE

WATERBODY RESTORATION

In Farukh Nagar, Haryana, the CII Foundation, in partnership with PTC Financial Services and local Gram Panchayats, has launched an integrated initiative to restore village waterbodies and expand green cover through large-scale tree plantation.

Under the project, over 1,00,000 trees will be planted across multiple villages, enhancing biodiversity, combating climate change, and supporting community livelihoods. The plantations are being developed on village wastelands owned by gram panchayats, with community members involved at every stage—from planning to maintenance—ensuring sustainability and ownership.

As part of the initial phase, 5,150 saplings were planted in Daboda village across 7 acres, where regular maintenance, including watering, pest management, and monitoring, has resulted in an 80.6% survival rate for the trees. In Khandevla, 6,900 saplings are being planted on 10 acres of land, which will be maintained with regular care.

The initiative prioritizes native and climate-resilient species, including tall trees such as Neem, Bargad, and Pipal for shade and carbon sequestration; medium-height trees like Gulmohar, Arjun, and Amrud for soil conservation and biodiversity; fruit and Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP) species such as Jamun, Mango, and Chiku for food and income; and ornamental plants like Night Jasmine, Desi Rose, and Hibiscus to enhance aesthetics. These species are strategically planted in zoned layouts to optimise growth and maximise ecosystem benefits.



TREE PLANTATION DRIVE

A large-scale tree plantation drive was organised on 23 August at Village Judola in Farukh Nagar block, Gurugram district, bringing together community members, CII volunteers, schoolchildren, and local leaders. The event was graced by Jagdish Prasad Maithani, Group Commander (Garrison), NSG Manesar; Shri Shishant Sharma, Sarpanch, Village Judola; Shri Shiv Taj, Sarpanch, Village Taj Nagar; Shri Dharampal, Sarpanch, Village Hajipur; R K Panwar, Principal, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, along with CII Foundation and CII representatives, NSG Commandos, school children, and community members.

Lauding the efforts of CII Foundation and PTC India Financial Services Ltd, the chief guest Jagdish Prasad Maithani said, "With temperatures rising, sustaining life on this planet will become increasingly difficult for future generations. As forests continue to deplete, we must approach plantation responsibly, avoiding invasive species and focusing on native trees. Planting native trees is the most effective way to restore balance to our environment." Sarpanch Shishant Sharma expressed his gratitude to CII Foundation and PTC India Financial Services Ltd. for their efforts in restoring the village's green cover. He said: "Often, plantations are carried out, but the trees are left unattended and fail to survive. Here, however, the approach is different—regular care and maintenance are being ensured, from providing nutrients to using drip irrigation for watering—so that the plantations are truly sustainable and long-lasting."

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from all who came together to plant trees, clearing the site, digging pits, planting trees, watering plants, and installing bamboo sticks to support young saplings. Children participated in a variety of awareness-building activities such as painting, photography and cultural performances. These activities aimed to nurture environmental consciousness and community pride in the initiative.





DISASTER RELIEF AND REHABILITATION



India's diverse geography makes it vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, landslides, and droughts, whose frequency and intensity are being aggravated by climate change. These disasters trigger mass displacement, destroy infrastructure, and disrupt livelihoods, creating humanitarian crises. The CII Foundation adopts a multi-stakeholder approach, working closely with

Government, industry, medical facilities such as hospitals, communities and other stakeholders to provide immediate relief through food, medicines, and essential supplies, and support long-term recovery by rebuilding infrastructure.

During July–August, our rehabilitation work in flood-affected Wayanad gathered pace, bringing succour to several people.

Key Components of the Program

Establishing a Robust Disaster Response System using the extensive CII Network

Distribution of Relief Material such as Food, Ration, and Medicine to Affected Regions

Rehabilitation Initiatives through Reconstruction of Impacted Infrastructure like Schools and Health Centres, Coupled with Livelihood Programs for Affected Communities

REHABILITATION EFFORTS IN WAYANAD, KERALA

In July 2024, severe floods and landslides struck Wayanad district in Kerala, causing widespread destruction. The CII Foundation, in collaboration with the Wayanad District Administration and industry partners, initiated an integrated rehabilitation programme focused on restoring essential infrastructure, strengthening services and improving livelihoods for vulnerable tribal communities, and enhancing the capacity of Anganwadi teachers.

Anganwadi Refurbishment in Flood-affected Areas

As part of the Anganwadi strengthening program in Wayanad in partnership with Orkla India Private Limited, 15 Anganwadis across 8 Grama Panchayats and 1 Municipality in Wayanad have been selected for refurbishment, following a detailed assessment of 21 Anganwadi Centres in consultation with the Wayanad ICDS office and Nirmithi Kendra—the official technical partner.

The initiative focuses on restoring safe, stimulating, and child-friendly learning environments through the Building as Learning Aid (BaLA) concept and enhancing the capacity of Anganwadi workers. Refurbishment work is currently underway in 5 centres.

Alongside, a comprehensive baseline survey is being conducted to assess infrastructure, preschool education, nutrition, health services, growth monitoring, and the capacity of Anganwadi workers. The findings will guide targeted support and training programs, ensuring that services are strengthened to effectively address the needs of local communities.



Livelihood Support for Tribal Communities

The Priyadarshini Tea Estate in Wayanad, established in 1984 is a cooperative society with a rich and meaningful history. The estate was part of a large-scale rehabilitation initiative aimed at providing land and employment to tribal communities, and it continues to play a vital role in sustaining livelihoods. However, the estate's gruel kitchen, which serves as the primary meal preparation facility for workers, is in a severely deteriorated condition.

To address this, the CII Foundation has launched a project to construct a gruel-cum-recreation building, providing free midday meals and a dedicated recreational space for the tribal workforce. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with the estate, and the implementing agency—Nirmithi Kendra, Wayanad—has been engaged for the construction, which is to begin soon. This initiative is supported by Synthite Industries.





EDUCATION



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) forms the foundation for a child's lifelong learning, health, and well-being. Quality ECE, combined with proper nutrition and health care, equips children with the abilities to succeed in school and beyond. In India, Anganwadi Centres under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme play a pivotal role in delivering these early learning, nutrition, and

health services at the grassroots level. Strengthening these centres and the capacity of their frontline workers ensures that every child has an equal start in life. The CII Foundation, together with Government, industry partners, local NGOs, and other stakeholders is working in different parts of the country to strengthen early childhood care and education.

Key Components of the Program

Infrastructure Support to Develop Model Anganwadi Centres

Developing Age and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum

Promoting the use of Teaching Learning Material (TLM)

Capacity Building of Anganwadi Workers

Involving and Engaging the Community

ANGANWADI STRENGTHENING PROGRAM, TAMIL NADU

The CII Foundation, in partnership with CII Southern Region and Kasa India Pvt. Ltd., implemented Project Narumugai to revitalize the Kottaikarai Anganwadi in Gummidipoondi, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu. The project, launched with a groundbreaking ceremony on 4 April 2025, focused on upgrading the centre's infrastructure to create a safe and child-friendly learning environment. Key improvements included roofing repairs, renovation of toilets, fresh painting, electrical and plumbing upgrades, installation of mosquito nets, repair of doors and windows, development of paver block pathways, fencing with a name board, and the creation of a play area equipped with indoor and outdoor play materials.

The inauguration and handing over took place on 16 July, attended by notable dignitaries including Mr. R.V. Chari, Convenor, MSME Panel, CII Tamil Nadu and Managing Director, GH Induction India Pvt. Ltd.; Mr. Sankar Ganesh G, AVP – Finance, Kaleesuwari Refinery Private Limited; Mr. Karu Thiruman K, General Manager, Kasa India; and Ms. Mogana, Child Development Project Officer, Gummidipoondi, Thiruvallur District.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Chari remarked, "The ages 1–5 are formative years for a child, making interventions in Anganwadis all the more important." Mr. Sankar Ganesh stressed on the need for ongoing maintenance to preserve the benefits of the renovation.



Capacity Building for Anganwadi Workers

A comprehensive training program was designed and implemented for 35 Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Helpers (AWHs) from Gummidipoondi Block. The program strengthened both conceptual understanding and practical skills in:

- Early Childhood Education: Physical development (gross and fine motor skills), language development (phonological awareness, pre-math concepts),

cognitive development (pattern making, colour and shape recognition), routine creation, free conversation, circle time activities, and "good touch–bad touch" awareness.

- Nutrition: Growth monitoring, hygiene, identification and management of nutritional deficits, and facilitation of community health/nutrition engagements.

The Child Development Officer of the district participated in the sessions, reinforcing the importance of applying these learnings in daily Anganwadi activities.



Montessori Play Equipment Distribution

To create stimulating and inclusive learning environments, age-appropriate Montessori learning tools were distributed in 20 Anganwadi Centres in Gummidipoondi Block. These included flash cards, finger puppets, stacking toys, musical instruments, geometric puzzles, sensory books, building blocks, doctor kits, kitchen sets, and bilingual English–Tamil charts.

These resources promote play-based learning, enabling children to develop cognitive, motor, and language skills in engaging, hands-on ways.





HEALTHCARE



Access to quality healthcare remains one of the most pressing challenges for underserved communities. Lack of awareness, limited infrastructure and uneven distribution of resources often leave underserved communities without timely and appropriate healthcare support.

The CII Foundation combines strengthening local health systems with building awareness on preventive care, ensuring that communities are not only treated but also informed and empowered to make healthier choices. The CII Foundation adopts a multi-stakeholder

approach and works closely with government, industry, healthcare providers and communities to increase awareness and improve access to quality healthcare.

In partnership with organisations such as the HOPE Initiative and DigiSwasthya Foundation, recent efforts in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana have focused on enhancing healthcare access, promoting health-conscious behaviour among schoolchildren, and strengthening the health and nutrition ecosystem at the village level.

Key Components of the Program

**Strengthening
Community
Access to Public
Healthcare and
Nutrition**

**Strengthening
Infrastructure**

**Raising Health
Awareness and
Good Practices
Amongst
Children and
Adolescents**

**Capacity
Building**

HEALTH AWARENESS PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS, UTTAR PRADESH AND HARYANA

In partnership with the HOPE Initiative, the CII Foundation is implementing healthcare programs in schools in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

On 17 July, a panel discussion was held in Lucknow on Partnerships for Community Health Awareness, bringing together sector experts and community representatives for meaningful dialogue on inclusive health and sustainable development. The event was marked by the launch of two books by Dr. Gourdas Choudhuri – *The Unwritten Chapter: Stories to Shape Your Journey* and *The Unwritten Chapter: Self-Help Stories and Tools to Propel Your Growth* – both capturing real-life experiences and tools for personal and societal transformation.



In parallel, school-based health awareness sessions were organised, including a programme at Mount Olympus School, Sector 47, Gurugram, Haryana, where 119 children learned to identify safe and unsafe touch, and how to respond assertively. The session encouraged open dialogue and empowered children with essential safety knowledge. In Lucknow, on 7 August, an environmental awareness drive led by "Ped Baba" of Lucknow, inspired students to plant trees and care for the environment. The campaign's message – *Ped Lagao, Dharti Bachao* – resonated across classrooms and playgrounds, linking environmental stewardship with community well-being.



HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING PROGRAM, CHANDAULI, UTTAR PRADESH

In Dhanapur Block, Chandauli district, health and nutrition interventions continued across eight project villages – Sisaura Kala, Murali Pur, Mahuji, Medhana, Jigana, Visunpur Khurd, Avahi, and Vira Saray – with a strong focus on awareness, service delivery, and capacity building.

Key activities in July-August included the creation of Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) IDs for community members, awareness sessions on Typhoid, communicable diseases, hygiene, and nutrition, and targeted outreach to families initially reluctant to access health services. Role-play activities with adolescent girls, community meetings with women's

groups, and school engagement under the *School Chalo Abhiyan* reinforced the importance of education, hygiene, and nutrition.



Observing World Breastfeeding Week

As part of World Breastfeeding Week, from 1-8 August, informative sessions were organized across all eight villages under the project. These sessions focused on key topics related to breastfeeding and were attended by pregnant women, lactating mothers, and other community women.

During the sessions, the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child were explained. These included enhanced immunity and nutritional benefits for the baby, as well as improved health outcomes for the mother,



such as reduced risk of certain diseases. In addition, common myths and misconceptions surrounding breastfeeding were addressed and clarified.

The sessions witnessed active participation from Community Health Officers (CHOs) and ASHA workers, whose involvement significantly contributed to raising awareness and promoting appropriate breastfeeding practices within the community.

Immunisation and Nutrition Outreach

Immunisation drives were actively supported in villages including Mahuji, Jigana, and Avahi, covering pregnant women, adolescent girls, and children under five. Vitamin A supplementation was provided, and families were counselled on its benefits. Door-to-door visits ensured the inclusion of left-out children, while school and Anganwadi visits reinforced health messages and facilitated enrolment support for children without Aadhaar cards.

Through these sustained interventions, the project continues to strengthen local health systems, improve maternal and child health outcomes, and promote behaviour change for long-term community well-being.





SKILLING AND LIVELIHOOD



In rural India, skilling is about nurturing the dreams and abilities of people, enabling them to build better lives by using the resources, traditions, and opportunities of their own land. Many rural communities, especially women and youth, face barriers to formal education, skilling and employment but possess deep knowledge of local trades, crafts, and ecosystems. By building on these strengths and tailoring training to local needs, skilling can become a powerful driver of self-reliance and rural prosperity.

CII Foundation is committed to this vision, strengthening livelihoods across the country by equipping individuals with practical skills, market links, and entrepreneurial pathways that foster financial independence and long-term resilience. Working closely with Government, industry and grassroots organisations, the CII Foundation enables communities to access dignified work, harness local opportunities, and chart their own path to sustainable growth.

Key Components of the Program

Rural Livelihood:

Supporting rural women through livelihood initiatives that build on local strengths—such as beekeeping, tamarind processing, and poultry farming

Skilling of Youth:

Equipping rural and underserved youth with industry-relevant, market driven skills to enhance their employability by leveraging CII Model Career Centres and CII Multi-skill Training Centres

EMPOWERING RED CHILLI FARMERS IN BALLARI THROUGH FPO-LED INTERVENTIONS

CII Foundation, in collaboration with Orkla India Private Limited, and with technical support from CII Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE), is implementing initiatives in Ballari district, Karnataka, to strengthen the red chilli value chain through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

A specialized training on improved agronomic practices in chilli farming was organized at ICAR-IISWC, Ballari, Karnataka, on 8 July. The program brought together experts, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and farmers to strengthen field-level capacities. Resource persons included Dr. B. Krishna Rao, Pr. Scientist and Head at ICAR-IISWC

Ballari; Dr. Anusha N M, Horticulture Scientist at ICAR-IISWC Ballari; Dr. Palaiah P, Senior Scientist (Pathology) and Head of KVK Hagari and Dr. Ravi S, Scientist (Soil Science) at KVK Hagari.

The training focused on soil and water management in chilli cultivation, nutrient deficiency identification and correction, integrated pest and disease management, and nursery management practices. The sessions were attended by FPO staff, directors, and farmers, and concluded with discussions for continued collaboration. This initiative demonstrates a strong industry-institution-community partnership to promote sustainable agriculture and build resilient chilli value chains.



SUNDARBANS MANGROVE RESTORATION AND LIVELIHOOD GENERATION PROJECT

As part of ongoing restoration efforts in the Sunderbans, the Foundation has planted 15,000 mangroves along the riverbanks. Distribution of chicks

for poultry-based livelihoods will take place after the monsoon to ensure optimal conditions for success.

SKILLING AND LIVELIHOOD OF WOMEN PRISONERS ACROSS TAMIL NADU

Rehabilitation and sustainable livelihood programs play a vital role in enabling women prisoners to adopt positive behavioural changes and support personal development. To address these needs, CII Foundation has launched a transformative program in Tamil Nadu that equips women prisoners with vocational skills, promotes personal growth, and facilitates reintegration into society.

Phase 1 of this program, implemented in Trichy, Coimbatore, and Vellore, in collaboration with Titan Company Ltd. provided six months of skill development and personality enhancement training, along with machinery and raw material for one year following training, enabling self-sustenance.

Phase 2 is now commencing in Trichy, Madurai, and Chennai, continuing the focus on vocational training, capacity building, and awareness programs to support successful reintegration and long-term empowerment.



PROMOTING SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH CII MODEL CAREER CENTRES

CII Foundation, through the CII Model Career Centres (MCCs), continues to strengthen employability and skill development by implementing CSR projects in collaboration with leading industry partners. The focus remains on equipping youth from diverse backgrounds—including women, SC/ST/OBC groups, unemployed graduates, tribal communities, and underserved rural and urban populations with future-ready skills, career guidance, and access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Industrial Coating & Painting Training with SEIL Energy India Ltd.

CII Foundation in partnership with SEIL Energy India Ltd. launched an Industrial Coating & Painting Training Programme in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh on 11 August. Targeting 100 trainees, the project has already enrolled 75 candidates, and the first batch of 42 beneficiaries commenced training in August. The program is designed to introduce trainees to structured training modules, safety protocols, and industry expectations, ensuring alignment with current workforce standards.

A formal inauguration ceremony marked the commencement of the project, followed by an orientation session for the trainees. A mentorship framework was established to provide continuous guidance, equipping students with hands-on expertise and promoting applied learning.

The initiative aims to create a sustainable talent pipeline and contribute to industry strengthening and youth empowerment.



Project Rhino

CII Foundation, in collaboration with PwC Acceleration Centres, launched Project Rhino across Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Tripura. The project mobilises, counsels, and trains youth for employment in IT, Retail,

Hospitality, Healthcare, and Manufacturing, using curricula aligned with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). During July–August 2025, more than 850 candidates were successfully placed across the intervened states.



Project Sampann

Project Sampann, in collaboration with Infosys Foundation, is being implemented in 11 states across 16 locations, providing training in Excel and soft skills. In July–August 2025, over 2,700 youth were enrolled, 2,651 trained, and around 1,300 placed in various industries.



Saksham Yuva Pariyojana: Employment-Oriented Skill Development for Youth

CII Foundation, supported by HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Ltd. (HRRL) is providing employment-oriented skill development for youth in Jalore and Barmer, Rajasthan, and Kutch, Patan, and Banaskantha in Gujarat. The programme offers expert career guidance, industry-oriented training in high-demand sectors, hands-on workplace learning, and dedicated placement support. During July–August 2025, around 800 youth were mobilised, 115 trained, and approximately 100 were offered jobs.



CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY

CII Foundation celebrated Independence Day with great enthusiasm across India, bringing together communities and partners to hoist the national flag at multiple project locations. The celebrations spanned the Material Recovery Facility in Chellanam, Kerala, set up under our waste management initiative; the Family Health Centre in Puthuvype, Kerala, renovated through our disaster relief efforts; the Anganwadi in Wayanad, Kerala, revitalized as part of our rehabilitation initiative; the tree plantation site in Farukh Nagar, Haryana; and farmers of the Kampli Red Chilli FPO in S. Suggenhalli, Ballari, Karnataka, under our initiative to empower red chilli farmers in Ballari, and communities in Chandauli District,

Uttar Pradesh, engaged through our healthcare initiatives.

The day was not only about commemorating India's freedom but also about reaffirming our commitment to building resilient and empowered communities. By celebrating at diverse project sites, we highlighted how every initiative—whether in health, education, environment, or disaster relief—contributes to strengthening the fabric of the nation. The presence of community members, frontline workers, and local partners made the celebrations truly meaningful, as each flag-hoisting symbolized the collective spirit of progress and unity.





WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



WOMAN EXEMPLAR PROGRAM

Grassroots women leaders are at the heart of community transformation, yet their work often goes unrecognised. Since 2005, CII has been identifying and recognising such leaders. The initiative became part of the CII Foundation in 2011 and, in 2017, evolved into the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Program. The program recognises and supports grassroots women leaders in Education, Health, Micro-enterprise, and the newly introduced Community Strengthening category. Along with

visibility and credibility, it provides capacity-building opportunities, enabling leaders to amplify their impact. Today, it supports a network of over 150 women leaders across India, collectively reaching out to more than 3 million people annually.

A key highlight of the work during July-August was the launch of the Call for Nominations for the Woman Exemplar Award 2026. Capacity building sessions for the woman exemplars were also conducted across diverse geographies during this period.

Key Components of the Program



**Scan the
Ecosystem for
Exemplars**



**Award and
Recognize
Women
Leaders**



**Amplify the
Impact of Work
Through
Leadership
Trainings &
Mentoring**



**On Ground
Interventions
to Create
New Leaders**



**Broaden and
Strengthen
the Network**

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: WOMAN EXEMPLAR AWARD 2026

The Call for Nominations for the Woman Exemplar Award 2026 was launched on 1 August using a multi-channel communication outreach strategy. Application forms were made available in 9 languages-Hindi, English, Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil, and Odiya to widen the outreach.

Nominations were invited from grassroots women leaders who:

- Have at least 3 years of experience in their area of work
- Are positively impacting the lives of women and children from underserved communities
- May be running their own initiative or organisation, working with a non-profit, serving as an individual volunteer (e.g. Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), community mobilizer), or contributing through the local government system (e.g. sarpanch, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), Anganwadi Worker (AWW))
- Have not received any state-level, national, or corporate award

Social Media Outreach

A multilingual social media campaign was launched on 1 August 2025 with the hashtag #LeadLikeANaari to spotlight the program's purpose and eligibility criteria and share inspiring stories of past exemplars. Short videos, visuals, and infographics were shared to encourage nominations for the 2026 Award. A paid campaign was also launched with targeted bilingual posts to encourage nominations from diverse geographies. [The Call for Nominations campaign garnered over 1,600 registrations by 15 September 2025.](#)

To promote the program, and amplify outreach, CII Foundation partnered with GivFunds as the Due Diligence Partner. In addition to the social media outreach, multiple webinars were conducted to explain the application process, improve understanding of the value of the program and the benefit to the women leaders to scale up their work for greater impact.

The next step in the process would be the evaluation of the received nominations. Each form will undergo a multi-level screening process with desk review and telephonic interviews to shortlist suitable candidates.

Subsequently, field visits will be undertaken to meet the nominees in their natural surroundings to further evaluate their work and impact. At the end of the screening process, three winners will be chosen by an eminent jury to receive the prestigious CII Woman Exemplar Award.



BUILDING CAPACITY: EXEMPLAR EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Through the Exemplar Exchange program, the CII Foundation empowers grassroots women leaders to enhance their capacity by engaging in peer learning, experience-sharing, and skill-building—enabling them to drive deeper impact in their communities.

Exemplar Exchange Program, Rajasthan

In the last week of July, grassroots women leaders from across states were brought together for a session on menstrual health management (MHM). Held at Jatan Sansthan, Udaipur, Rajasthan, the program was inaugurated by Dr. Lakshmi Murthy, Co-founder and President of Jatan Sansthan, who set the tone with a powerful introduction that encouraged openness, curiosity, and collaboration.

Participants engaged in conversations about the taboos, silence, and hardships women and girls face, including limited access to menstrual products and the stigma around reproductive and child health (RCH). Through lived experiences, they explored the myths and realities surrounding menstruation,



dismantled harmful narratives around disposable sanitary pads, and learned about their adverse environmental and health impacts. They discussed the evolution of menstrual products, the environmental cost of sanitary waste, and heard first-hand accounts of communities where leaves are still used as absorbents.

The exchange also introduced creative educational tools, including a Menstruation Box in Braille for visually impaired users, menstrual wheels, Kavad books (a layered storytelling device), nutrition flags, and pocket comic guides, making menstrual health education more inclusive and accessible.

Interactive sessions showed innovative ways to raise awareness, such as using sports to initiate dialogue with adolescents, demonstrated by one exemplar through a football session with girls. The program also included hands-on training in stitching sustainable menstrual products, including cloth pads, panty liners, and diapers. What began as intricate work quickly became a rhythm of teamwork and pride, with each participant completing a set of products.

By the end of three days, exemplars had developed concrete action plans to integrate sustainable MHM practices into their initiatives, train peer groups, and conduct community-led workshops. The exchange strengthened technical skills, built confidence, and deepened the collective commitment to making menstrual health accessible, stigma-free, and environmentally responsible across diverse regions of India.

Exemplar Exchange Program, Maharashtra

Another Exemplar Exchange program was held in Osmanabad from 18–20 August, hosted by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP). Designed for women who already run micro-enterprises or aspire to start one, the training brought together women from the 2025 cohort and imparted knowledge on how they can scale their ventures, strengthen essential business skills, and engage more women in their entrepreneurial journeys.



Over three days, the women learnt more about financial literacy and management to practical business know-how, while also exploring the 3E model (Entrepreneurship, Enterprise, Entrepreneur).

Women entrepreneurs shared their inspiring journeys – the challenges and how they surmounted them to build successful businesses – sparking rich conversations on best practices and resilience. Classroom learning was complemented by field visits: exploring soybean cultivation and value-added products.

A key component of the program was that each participant put together a business plan, ready to take back and set in motion within their communities. The participants also prepared a 10-day action plan—a simple yet powerful tool to guide, refine, and sustain their enterprises in the long run.

Equally enriching was the opportunity for the 2025 exemplars to meet and learn directly from exemplars of 2019 and 2017 cohort, exchanging experiences across cohorts and drawing strength from each other's journeys.

The Osmanabad exchange helped build the confidence of the exemplars, while also strengthening connections between them to help them scale their work.





WASTE MANAGEMENT



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR A GREENER TOMORROW

Waste management is not just an environmental imperative - it is key to building healthier communities, stronger local economies, and accord greater social dignity, especially to waste workers. Yet, the challenge remains stark with inefficient systems that lead to overflowing dumpsites that pollute the environment and endanger public health. To improve waste management, the CII Foundation partners with government, industry, and communities to build practical, community-led systems that drive lasting change.

The waste management projects are currently being implemented in Farukh Nagar, Haryana; Kochi, Kerala, and Leh, Ladakh, where interventions are tailored for the environmental and social context of each location.

During July–August, on-ground activities focussed on increasing public awareness through clean-up drives and providing essential infrastructure support.

Key Components of the Program

Creating
Awareness and
Catalysing Civic
Engagement

Strengthening
Waste
Management
Infrastructure

Building Skills of
Waste Workers
and Enhancing
their Safety

WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE, LEH, LADAKH

The CII Foundation, in partnership with HDFC Bank, has been working to strengthen waste management systems in two blocks of Leh district, where plastic waste is a key challenge, aggravated by the influx of tourists.

Advancing Sustainability Through Cloth Bag Campaign & Waste Collection Trucks

A cloth bag campaign was flagged off and two new waste collection trucks for Chuchot and Kharu Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) at Sindhu Ghat, Leh, were handed over on 12 August as part of the Mission Indus Cleanup.



Present at the occasion were Advocate Tashi Gyaltzen, Chief Executive Councillor, Leh, Romil Singh Donok (IAS), Deputy Commissioner, Leh; Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Chief Secretary, UT of Ladakh; Ms. Diskit Yangdol, Manager, HDFC Bank, Leh, district officers, heads of religious bodies, representatives from the Indian Army and ITBP, and other key stakeholders.

A cleanup drive was carried out across 15 villages in Chuchot and Kharu blocks, reflecting a strong community commitment to sustainable practices, reduced plastic usage, and improved waste management.



CHELODE CHELLANAM WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE, KOCHI, KERALA

In Chellanam, Kerala, the CII Foundation has been working with GIC Re and the Chellanam Grama Panchayat to implement a community-led waste management model since March 2024.

Waste to Worth Initiative

On 10 and 11 August, as part of the “Har Ghar Tiranga, Har Ghar Swachhata” campaign, a special drive was conducted under the theme “Let’s Turn Waste to Worth”. The campaign centred around collecting used clothes and footwear, aiming to reduce textile and leather waste while advancing a circular, sustainable future. All donations will be reused, upcycled, or processed responsibly to maximise their value and minimise environmental impact.

A small exhibition was also set up to showcase upcycled products such as cloth bags, keychains, and hairbands made from donated garments, encouraging

visitors to explore upcycling options for cloth waste generated at home. In addition, a metal upcycling workshop and display was organised to raise awareness about creative reuse of discarded metal items—demonstrating how objects like screws and other scrap material can be transformed into decorative or functional pieces.





Implemented in collaboration with Greenworms, the initiative promoted responsible waste management, while also demonstrating practical ways to effectively manage waste and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Workshop with School Children

A one-day workshop was organized on 23 August to build awareness among children on sustainable waste management practices. Over 70 children from 5 wards of Chellanam Grama Panchayat participated in the workshop, which was conducted in association with IBS Software and was the third in a series of workshops. With this workshop, all wards of Chellanam Grama Panchayat were covered, including 273 children in the 12–15 age group.



The workshop was led by employees of IBS Software, Infopark Kochi, with nearly 38 volunteers actively engaging and providing practical insights into effective waste management practices.

The workshop was designed to be interactive and activity-oriented, featuring Waste to Art – transforming discarded materials into creative pieces and Mind Gym Exercises – fun activities to stimulate awareness, problem-solving, and teamwork. The workshop combined learning, creativity, and community engagement, inspiring participants to embrace responsible waste management and sustainable lifestyle practices in their daily lives.



OUR KEY SUPPORTERS



To know more about CII Foundation [Click Here](#)

For feedback and suggestions please contact Priya Shirali, Head - Communication at Priya.Shirali@cii.in

Copyright © 2025 CII Foundation All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in, or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), in part or full in any manner whatsoever, or translated into any language, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. CII Foundation has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information and material presented in this document. Nonetheless, all information, estimates and opinions contained in this publication are subject to change without notice, and do not constitute professional advice in any manner. Neither CII Foundation nor any of its office bearers or analysts or employees accept or assume any responsibility or liability in respect of the information provided herein. However, any discrepancy, error, etc found in this may please be brought to the notice of CII Foundation for appropriate correction.

Published by The CII Foundation