

PLUSTRUST

E-Newsletter



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HIGHLIGHTS

2020-2021 has been both challenging and exciting for **Plustrust**, as we touched the 100 fellowships mark. Having adapted the fellowship to include projects on innovation for livelihoods, the experience has further strengthened our resolve to empower women changemakers.

A virtual hub was set up at Udaipur to keep pace with the requirements and a new hub is now operational at Ujjain.

FELLOWSHIPS: SEPT 2020 – APRIL 2021

Thanks to our anchor network, We worked with 23 women in 5 states. Five of our anchors were able to identify and work with fellows in their neighbourhood through our virtual hub from Udaipur. Based on the emerging ideas, we enlarged the scope of our fellowships to seed any activity offering women security and balance. Our anchors and fellows displayed tremendous enthusiasm and resilience in their work, despite the delays arising from the lockdown.

The batch comprised 11 Return to Roots (R2R) Fellowships and 12 Rural Women Edupreneurs (RWE) – spanning 5 states.

Five women from this batch have already ventured into the world of entrepreneurship.

ANCHORS FOR THE BATCH

With a dedicated set of anchors, we have been able to expand our footprint and reach out to many more women and help them become catalysts for change. The selection of candidates was completed by March 2019. However, the fellowships were delayed due to lockdown.

Once the situation eased, the anchors were able to move around and the fellowships began in September 2019. Shaila Yadav and Rahisuddin offered an online workshop for potential fellows and Mehrun identified suitable candidates. However, the proposals received did not meet our expectations. We now think an in-person workshop is essential to help the candidates frame their proposal well.

				
ASHWANI TIWARI RAJASTHAN	PRAMILA CHAUHAN MADHYA PRADESH	PRAMOD KUMAR KARNATAKA	POONAM KUMARI BIHAR	SIMMI MOZIZ AND AFAQ ULLAH UTTAR PRADESH
RETURN TO ROOTS Savita Joshi and Bhagwati Vaishnav Manju Jain Renuka Meena Hemlata Soni Hemlata Bajaj RURAL WOMEN EDUPRENEUR Amba Kumari Meena Parvati Meena and Sawalal Meena	RURAL WOMEN EDUPRENEUR Parvati Chouhan Laxmi Baghel Sonam Meena	RURAL WOMEN EDUPRENEUR Bhramarabika K.G Vasanthkumari.R	RETURN TO ROOTS Fulkumari Devi RURAL WOMEN EDUPRENEUR Anita Das Meera Kumari Sarita Devi Sonali Chaudhary	RETURN TO ROOTS Babli Prajapati Sheela Nazmeen Bano Shama Perveen Kumkum

PLUSTRUST FELLOWS 2020



Amba Kumari Meena (RWE), Rajasthan
Sashakt Naari Abhiyaan
Learning centre for out of school kids to re-connect them to education and explore alternate career options.



Anita Das (RWE), Bihar
Koshish Ek Asha
Spreading awareness on health and menstrual hygiene among young girls and women to change perceptions



Bhramarabika K.G. (RWE), Karnataka
Angala Shaale
Help for children in the age group of 8-15 years, who are first-generation learners from low – income families during the pandemic



Babli Prajapati (RTR), Uttar Pradesh
Ujala Training Centre
Coaching centre for beautician course and sewing skills to make women financially independent



Fulkumari Devi (RWE), Bihar
Mahila Evam Kumari Silai Centre
Teaching women the use of new tools and techniques in stitching



Hemlata Bajaj (RWE), Rajasthan
Sugam Shiksha
To educate children of migrant labourers working in brick kilns of Shri Ganganagar



Hemlata Soni (RTR), Rajasthan
Alamban Silai Centre
Training migrant workers in stitching to start their own business and sell designer products at an affordable cost



Kumkum (RTR), Uttar Pradesh
Prerna Canteen
Setting up a canteen to provide tiffin services



Laxmi Baghel (RWE), Madhya Pradesh
Rang Bhed
A space where women can openly talk about their issues related to Mahavari (menstruation)



Manju Jain (RTR), Rajasthan
Maayra Maahwari Swachta Abhiyan
A sustainable menstrual hygiene management programme creating employment for women

PLUSTRUST FELLOWS 2020



Meera Kumari (RWE), Bihar
Samta Ke Liye Pahal
Improving awareness about gender inequality among children- a topic that is never spoken about or taught in schools



Nazmeen Bano(RTR), Uttar Pradesh
Rehnuma Skill Development Centre
Teaches sewing and wants to open her boutique for designer kurtas. She also wants to provide employment to other women through her boutique.



Parvati Meena and Sawalal Meena (RWE), Rajasthan
Srijan Shala
Learning centre based on Nai Taleem philosophy and project-based curriculum with real-time projects



Parvati Chouhan (RWE), Madhya Pradesh
Pehel Pustakalaya
Education support to the children of the Korku tribal community



Renuka Meena (RTR), Rajasthan
Chali Mere Sathi
Reviving goat rearing profession for women in villages



Sonam Meena (RWE), Madhya Pradesh
Humari Pehchan
An initiative for school drop-out girls to continue their education and accomplish a dream that every girl child must be educated.



Sheela Yadav (RTR), Uttar Pradesh
Kanha Animal Protection and Welfare Program
Teaching women about animal protection, animal husbandry and health care



Savita Joshi and Bhagwati Vaishnav (RTR), Rajasthan
Mahvari Mera Adhikar
Educating girls on menstrual hygiene and manufacturing safe sanitary napkins



Sonali Chaudhary (RWE), Bihar
Pragati Shiksha Kendra
Education for less privileged kids through fun and interactive ways of learning



Sarita Devi (RWE), Bihar
Aatmanirbharta ki Aur Ek Jatan
Teaching women and girls in her village to make sanitary napkins and improve awareness about the use and disposal of sanitary pads



Shama Parveena (RTR), Uttar Pradesh
Ujiyaara Foundation
Training girls to work in teams to produce women's garments and connect them with the tailoring community



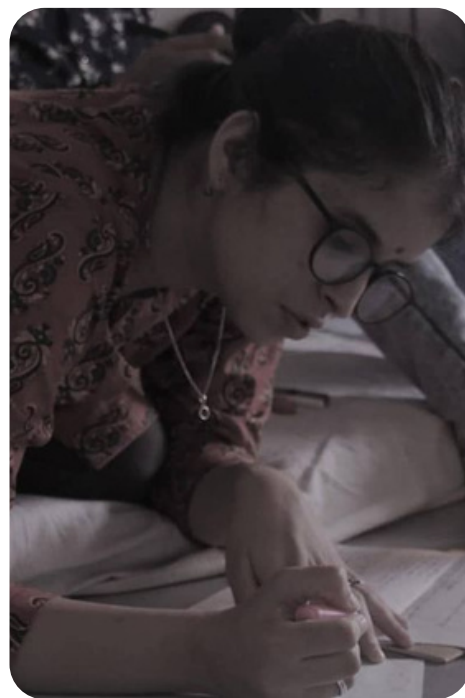
Vasanthkumari R. (RWE), Karnataka
Kitchen Garden Project
To address malnutrition and create awareness about seed conservation and food security

OUR NEW ANCHORS

Vasudha Kapoor and Nageshwar Panchal joined our dedicated team of **Plustrust** anchors in January 2021. As co-founders of **Mera Gaon Meri Dunia** in the rural areas of Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, they work towards bringing a sustainable change in the communities and enabling an ecosystem where youth can explore ethical leadership.

Hailing from Himachal Pradesh, Vasudha started her journey with **Plustrust** as a Rural Women Edupreneur fellow in 2019 at Mathura. She is a Postgraduate and gold medallist in Human Development and Childhood Studies from the University of Delhi. With a keen academic interest in gender and human development, Vasudha has also worked with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Himachal Pradesh to empower children in correctional settings in rural areas.

Her other noteworthy contributions include a project for **Delhi AIDS Control Society** with sex workers in East Delhi and children residing in slum settings of central Delhi and the work she has done with **Save the Children**, Delhi State Office to understand the initiatives of the organization through photo documentation of functional programs. Vasudha is a pahami at heart who loves to discover and tell stories. In-depth learning and attention to detail are some of her strong points. Vasudha has taken the responsibility of managing the **Plustrust** Adda in Ujjain.



Vasudha Kapoor

Nageshwar Panchal

A social entrepreneur by profession, Nageshwar is currently working as the Director at **Mera Gaon Meri Dunia**, an NGO based in Ujjain. Extremely passionate about building sustainability in the community through a decentralized model of leadership and service, he has been among the founder members of **Go-On India** and **Sanima**. Nageshwar has been part of the first cohort of School for Social Entrepreneurs in India and the world's longest train journey '**Jagriti Yatra**' to build India through enterprise.

He has played an active role in systemic transformation in government and aided schools to ensure a conducive environment for quality education. He has closely worked with teachers to build upon their skills to create engaging classrooms where life skills are nurtured through academics. Nageshwar is a poet at heart and a movie-enthusiast. He loves to connect with people, groups, and organizations and has the eye of an explorer.



Nageshwar and Vasudha announced Mission Malwa in January 2021 and were fortunate to be able to conduct the **Plustrust** workshop with a group of 15 women from the rural region of the Malwa belt of Madhya Pradesh. They have been able to offer 10 fellowships from April 2021.

INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Plustrust, with great joy, acknowledges the incredible grit displayed by the fellows to combat COVID related disruptions in their locations and effectively utilise the opportunities that arose.

Figure - 1 below outlines the tremendous progress observed over these 6 months personally, project-wise and professionally among the fellows. On the personal front, most of them have gained confidence and established their presence in the community. They have also achieved a high level of professional growth in goal setting, project planning and sustainability and building on ideas from a chaotic start. Skill development and small business management have also been major areas of learning.

The reviews and discussions around the fellowships offered interesting insights. Some anchors felt year long programmes would help engage at a deeper level and strengthen the 3Ps to make it more meaningful and holistic.

A few suggested including a 3-month training session for fellows who need help in certain areas.

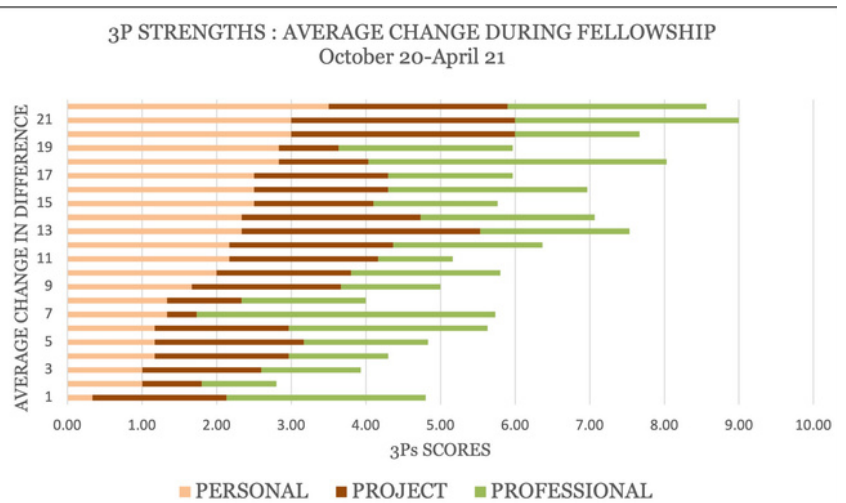


FIGURE - 1



The discussions also brought forth ideas for improving the anchoring process and the 3Ps model. These included capacity building sessions and an alternate version of the model that allows fellows to recognise and track their improvement and mentors to identify when their intervention is required during the fellowship process.

“It instilled a sense of confidence and courage in me and gave me a platform to use my skills towards becoming a changemaker in my society” Laxmi Baghel



“I was extremely shy and embarrassed to speak to anyone. I was not well-spoken, and this made me anxious and nervous.

With guidance and motivation from Plustrust, I became confident and I was able to realise my dream,” Fulkumari Devi

INSPIRING STORIES

Meera from Muzaffarpur district, Bihar wants to develop professionally, expand her expertise, and use her skills to work with children on issues of gender inequality - “a topic that is never spoken about or taught in schools,” she says. **Samta Ke Liya Ek Pahal** is her initiative to experiment with teaching and discussing these issues with children at an early age to create a long-term impact. It integrates communicating with children through a variety of ways like games, videos, internet resources, books and stories to achieve the goal.

Having worked with children at a centre run by **i-Saksham** since October 2020, She intends to continue there to build her association and improve the model. In future, she plans to collaborate with other educational institutions and create awareness among children on such important issues.



Bhramarabika from Tumkur, Karnataka, is a first-generation graduate in her family. She joined the fellowship program to become a teacher and help underprivileged children as well as those with learning disabilities. Her project **Angala Shaale** was designed to help first-generation learners from low-income families in rural communities, during the Covid closure of schools.

She taught basic English, Mathematics and Science through discussions, quiz, role-plays and debates, besides working on life skills and civic awareness through activity-based classes and training videos. She says that the fellowship helped her to recognise her strengths and weaknesses, boosted her self – confidence and helped her build professional skills.

Unfortunately, Bhramarabika was unable to continue this after the 6-month fellowship program due to a lack of family support. She has therefore found a way to pursue her passion and now works with **Kaliyuva Mane** in Mysore- a free, residential, eco-friendly, co-educational, an alternative school for children who do not fit in the conventional education system.

INSPIRING STORIES

Kumkum, Masodha Block, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh joined the fellowship to start a canteen to provide tiffin service and snacks. Her **Perna** canteen is gradually picking up pace in distributing tiffin to various government and non-government offices.

The food is cooked using 100% naturally grown ingredients and hand mixed spices prepared by Kumkum and her team. They also make pickles with 100% pure spices. In January 2021, the Uttar Pradesh government recognized their efforts and added Perna canteen in **AJEEVIKA** mission in Masodha village.

They also got an opportunity to put up a stall of Perna canteen during an event in an Avadh School. Many government officials have praised the team for their efforts.



“Through my venture I am able to create hope and positive energy in my community and motivate and steer women to utilise their talent and help them think about commercialising local products”

Renuka Meena, Kherki - Udaipur, Rajasthan is keenly interested in goat rearing having spent most of her life with these animals. During her fellowship, she learnt to make goat-milk soap from **Art Vatika Institute**, New Delhi.

Under the guidance of her mentors (Ashwani Tiwari and Komal Roy), she has since trained herself in a variety of soap making methods. She is now producing two varieties of goat milk soap, involving 7 women in her community for local sales.

She hopes to launch her own brand soon. “In the coming years we can capitalize on these products and generate more employment in the village,” she said.

Renuka is now training 20 women in soap making using goat milk, in collaboration with **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes – ICICI Foundation and Rajeevika**(Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad), Government of Rajasthan.

Short video of Renuka at work:

<https://www.facebook.com/vidhyalayudhyam/videos/442005866886122>

VIRTUAL HUB - UDAIPUR

This batch was successfully handled by Priyanshi Sharma as she went about setting the template for a Plustrust hub. It was a virtual entity, with the anchors spread across states. She worked closely with them and refined the internal systems to understand progress and guide the work.

This experience is the foundation for our plan to develop two physical hubs in 2021-2022. The collaborative spirit among the anchors has helped us to handle a significant increase in the number of fellowships during the year.

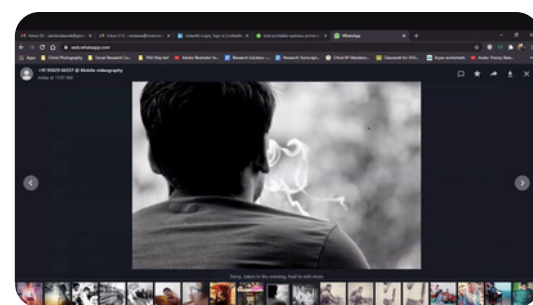
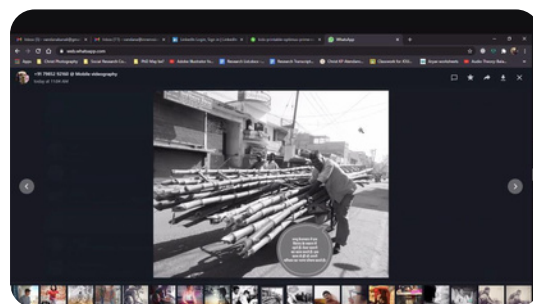
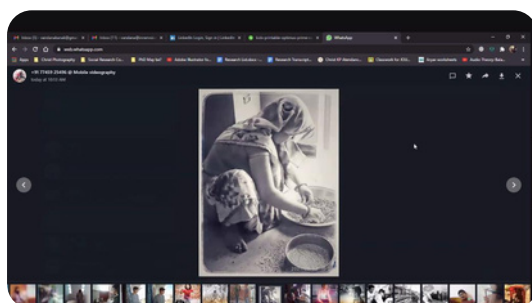
The virtual hub offered some interesting learning workshops for our anchors, fellows and Plustrust team members. Usually, the topics were those sought by the anchors or fellows, and the involvement was enthusiastic.

Introduction to the process of developing the Vision of an Organisation was offered by Lalitha Iyer, for the anchors. This was followed by a workshop on fundraising proposal writing by Lalitha Iyer and Laxmi Raman. Next came a session by Lakshmi Raman on “The Theory of Change” as a strategic framework.

The masterclass on photography and videography by Vandana Jaikumar, CEO, **Inner Voice Consulting** covered techniques used for portraits, angles, lighting, storyboard, scripting and interviewing. She also introduced easy-to-use editing and audio recording applications and offered opportunities to put the learning into practice.

Priyanshi Sharma and Madhur Murti from our team participated in a 9-week training workshop by **EdelGive Foundation x Tech4Good Spotlight Series Special '21**. Topics included fundraising platforms, payment gateways, programme management software, online data collection tools, stakeholder management systems etc. to improve our quality of services and scale sustainably with the help of technology.

In addition, there were monthly reviews of the progress made by fellows and other related aspects.



Photographs clicked by anchors during the masterclass

PLUSTRUST CARING FRIENDS ADDA

We launched our new hub – The **Plustrust Caring Friends Adda**, in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh in March 2021 with all due credit to Vasudha's energy and enthusiasm.

The name – **Plustrust Caring Friends Adda** celebrates our association with **Caring Friends** over the last 6 years. It captures the shared ideologies of the two organizations of working with people at a human level, investing in their passion and leading with simplicity.

The hub was inaugurated through our virtual event 'Lab to Land'. After an introductory session and songs, a short story set the context for discussions on 'Present Scenario for Rural Women Entrepreneurs'. The conversation focussed on the situation at the grassroots level, resources available to pursue dreams and improve entrepreneurial skills. Following the discussion, Ms Smriti Kedia, Trustee, **Plustrust**, spoke about the journey of **Plustrust**, the role of the local anchor network and their contribution and the unique differentiating aspects of the **Plustrust** fellowships. It was an opportunity to welcome and present the newly identified fellows who were at the threshold of starting their fellowship journey.

Nimesh Sumati, Founder, **Caring Friends** joined us to share his views based on his work with 75 NGOs in 25 states in the last 15 years. He spoke about their associations, journey and shared some valuable lessons.

"Experience and understanding are two totally different aspects and we should emphasise or focus on the importance of understanding rather than experience"

"Inspiration should have an impact on the action otherwise it's just an 'influence'"

The Ujjain Adda will be an innovative space offering opportunity for women to interact with like-minded people, share ideas and engage in debates and discussions with mentors, alumni and peers. It will also provide a platform to run fundraisers and other campaigns and highlight local impact. It will provide access to local and national partners ready to share learning and technological resources.

The anchors assigned to Ujjain are Pramila, Shaila as well as Nageshwar and Vasudha and we expect to offer around 30 fellowships from this hub during this year. It will coordinate the activities for anchors in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and work in the virtual mode until it is safe to meet in person.

PLANS FOR LEARNING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Both the hubs plan to work together to bring learning and networking opportunities for our anchors, fellows and alumni. For the present, we plan virtual events such as:

E-Learning series by Priyanshi Sharma, Programme Manager-**Plustrust** for individuals who wish to learn Basic and Advanced MS-Office. The series will impart practical knowledge on how to use these tools effectively.

'Designing a Program' by Vasudha Kapoor, Manager, **Plustrust Caring Friends** Adda, Ujjain to meet the needs of many fellows and alumni. It will be conducted in Hindi every month and cover the process of change, designing activities based on stakeholders' requirements and assessing the impact.

'Effective Report Writing and Data Management' by Priyanshi Sharma, Programme Manager, **Plustrust** to help fellows to improve their report writing and presentation skills, effectively manage data and present their projects and proposal ideas in a professional manner.

TEAM UPDATES

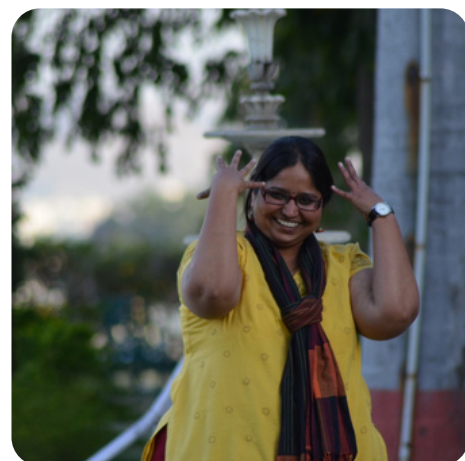
Smriti Kedia joins Sadhna

Smriti Kedia joined **Sadhna** in November 2020 and took over as CEO in February 2021. **Sadhna** is a women's handicraft enterprise started by **Seva Mandir** (an NGO) in 1988 with an aim to provide alternative income to women in the Udaipur and Rajsamand districts of South Rajasthan. As the handicraft industry has been severely affected by the pandemic, Smriti is committed to pulling **Sadhna** out of this situation and she is confident they will make progress. Smriti has diverse roles in managing this social enterprise. **Sadhna** is a production and retail house together with its roots in women empowerment. This combination being Smriti's favourite, she believes there is so much to learn and explore.

Madhur Murti joined us in Bangalore and she has been working with us as a freelance content creator since January 2021. An MBA, from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, she brings her experience of marketing and events from the corporate world. What she likes best about her work at **Plustrust** is the opportunity to interact with inspirational women from rural communities and be a part of their lives through her writing. Other than work, she enjoys reading, travelling and spending time with her feline friends Lucy and Ebony.

IN REMEMBRANCE

We are sad to announce that Charu Bhati, a loving friend and a valued team member of **Plustrust** passed away on April 27th, 2021 due to Covid – 19. We value her work for **Plustrust** in 2016, as she led the effort to raise the first batch of RWEs. A happy and beautiful soul, she will always be fondly remembered by all those who came in touch with her. May she rest in peace.



HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

We would like to thank all well-wishers and donors, organizations and our network of retired SBI officers for the invaluable support.

Anita Malpani
Arvind Gupta
Abhi Murthy
Bharati Rao
CBV Reddy
Devika Rajan
Jasmeet Kaur
Kailash Rathi
Karthik Radhakrishnan
L Ram Mohan Rao
Mira D'Souza
Mahpara Ali
Manju Iyengar
Mythili Rangarajan
Nisha Singh
N Sreekumar
Neha Kedia
Priyanshi Tripathi

P Pradeep Kumar
Pankaj A P N
Radha Ramaswamy
Rishabh Lalani
Shruthi Aggarwal
Sucharita Kumar
Shreya Bhattacharya
Sunny Sharma
Sashikala
Shanta Raghavan
Tejaswini Madhabhushi
Vidya Murali
V L K Sharma
Vikram Lal
Vanaja Muthukrishnan
Basanta Kumari Das Foundation, Assam
John L Bissel Foundation, Delhi

We invite you to contribute to our campaign on GiveIndia to raise funds for our Micro-incubation Addas in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh and Udaipur, Rajasthan: <https://fundraisers.giveindia.org/fundraisers/nurturing-changemakers-and-social-entrepreneurs-micro-incubation-addas-for-rural-women?ref=t9khKt5LJX&fbclid=IwAR1MqrhNNxB5oPxuZ8qQegFudlYWJlzdVepvVL6qEXkWr8QYYTHoUyW0HTk>

All donations will be eligible for 80 G exemption (Tax benefit) and FCRA permission.