



Sharing Power

# Bi-Annual Update

December 2024

# Sharing Power

Reflecting on our journey since the selection of Rebuild's first cohort in November 2022, we find ourselves filled with a profound sense of gratitude and commitment to the path ahead. As we celebrate our portfolio of 200+ grassroots organizations, we are reflecting on courage, community and our mission- we must break the cycle of vulnerability.

We are immensely proud to witness the expansion of Rebuild's portfolio to include diverse communities in North East India, including the Rabha, Bodo, Garo, Naga, Kuki, Meitei, tea tribes and various other ethnic groups in Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya. We have also extended our reach to caste groups across India including the Valmiki, Musahar, Harijan, Chamar, Arunthathiyars, Pariyars and others. Our partners are serving gender and sexual minorities, Persons with Disabilities, including those with spinal cord injuries and rare blood disorders- all facing intersectional challenges.

The milestone we've reached is pivotal, yet it carries with it a sense of unrest. We are excited because 2025 marks a year of setting the bar even higher for ourselves. It serves as a towering reminder that the very reason for our collaboration lies in the stark inequities that continue to prevail and sometimes, surge around us. For many of our communities, the world remains divided as the shadows of old scepters of violence, discrimination, hate, vulnerability and helplessness return, again and again.

There is profound learning and unlearning to be made in this journey.

Despite challenges, there has been a strengthening of our portfolio with 200+ partners, 80% of which are led by leaders from the communities they serve. 52% of these organizations are led by women. Together, our partners responding in this cycle of reporting have touched the lives of more than 6.3 million individuals, overall, 89% portfolio partners are operating on annual budgets of less than INR 2.5 crores. It is no small feat to bring these small organizations together to share their lived experience and aspirations while creating a safe space where they can 'build' together.

As members of the Investment Committee, we too have evolved significantly since our first meeting in November 2022. While concluding our seventh gathering, we believe we are walking towards 'sharing power', a significant step for the Indian philanthropic ecosystem toward participatory grant making.

In the past year we sought to understand what determines an organization's intent and effectiveness in bringing about positive transformation in India's most vulnerable communities. Together, we have reflected on what defines leadership, community centric interventions and vulnerability. We have also strived to gauge the depth and strength of each potential partner organization's connection with the communities it identifies as its target beneficiaries.

As we usher in Rebuild's seventh cohort, assessed by Rebuild's own partner NGOs, we trust unto ourselves a greater responsibility in shaping Rebuild as a platform that enables gender equity. We have endeavoured to make this platform more accessible, fostering learning from our growing community and sector experts- we are committed to selecting 100 women-led NGOs to our portfolio.

We recognize that it will take all of us, in unity and movement, to tackle the immense challenges of the decade that lies ahead. A revolution for equity, justice, and social change is underway and we invite you to join us as we strengthen pathways to equity.

With gratitude and determination,

**Anita, Deep, Deepa, Nandita & Rameez**

(Members, Rebuild India Fund's Investment Committee)



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# Executive Summary

Grassroots journeys towards resilience are built on a series of investments in institution and program building. With multi-year flexible grants, a fascinating rubric for growth is emerging and we are inspired to rethink a comprehensive approach to evidence-based impact.

Learning from evidence built by our partners at the grassroots, the Rebuild India Fund continues its transformative journey to foster equity and resilience across India's most underserved regions. Since its inception in November 2022, Rebuild has partnered with over 200 NGOs, this report shares highlights from journeys in organizational, programmatic and financial resilience building as reported by 136 grassroots organizations that have been part of Rebuild's portfolio for over six months to two years.

Post joining Rebuild, these organizations have impacted over 6.3 million lives, it is significant that their efforts prioritize vulnerable communities, including marginalized caste and indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, survivors of gender based violence, persons, youth and children with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities. Every day, we learn of new ways in which Rebuild's partners are marching towards resilient futures.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Portfolio Respondents:

- Responding grassroots organizations are addressing critical and emerging issues in livelihoods, education, gender equity, and social inclusion.
- 60% of respondent organizations have proximate leaders that are from the communities they serve, and 35% of organizations are women-led.

### 2. Regional and Sectoral Reach:

- Our partners are expanding support to historically underserved and underfunded regions, including the North-East and Eastern states.
- Top sectors with programmatic interventions include livelihoods (24%), education (23%), and gender (21%).

### 3. Organization Resilience:

- Rebuild has enabled 70% of respondent organizations from its portfolio to improve operational efficiency and 32% to strengthen community relationships.
- 82% organizations allocated funds to institution building and administrative costs, ensuring operational sustainability and long-term outcomes in resilience building.
- Organizations were also able to retain programme staff, invest in their capacities and provide better salaries given the multi-year nature of the grant. This has led to incremental results in overall efficiency, programme implementation and staff well-being.

### 4. Programmatic Resilience:

- 86% of organizations strengthened their programs, with 47% piloting new initiatives in healthcare, education, climate resilience, mental health and gender equity.
- Programmatic innovations have also led to unlocking more funding as Rebuild's funds were used for pilot programmes that demonstrated scalable impact for future investment.

### 5. Financial Resilience:

- Overall, 68 organizations have leveraged ₹53 crores in funding, achieving a 4.2x multiplier effect to their disbursed grant investment.
- Women-led organizations secured ₹21 crores, and even though more women leaders leveraged funding, male headed NGOs leveraged 2X more grant value.

### 6. Movement Building:

- 72% of organizations benefited from peer networks, sharing resources, funding contacts, and sector innovations.
- Events like the Dasra Philanthropy Forum and participation at UNGA side events showcased the power of grassroots leadership at global platforms.

### 7. Gender Expansive Impact:

- Organizations working on gender focused on reducing gender inequities through initiatives for adolescent girls, survivors of GBV, and enabling financial inclusion for women.
- New innovations in livelihoods have been enabled for transpersons using Rebuild's flexible funds.
- Programs have also engaged boys and men to promote gender-just communities.

Flexible funds are strengthening organizations in diverse ways, each portfolio member utilizes flexible funding basis their unique needs, journeys and planned milestones. With a growing body of evidence around impact, we are excited to share learnings, innovations and peer collaborations as reported to us by our partners.

# Our Portfolio Respondents

The Rebuild India Fund is dedicated to reaching underserved, marginalized communities across India, focusing on regions facing chronic poverty and systemic underfunding. This report features insights from bi-annual reporting by organizations who have received funding from Rebuild and engaged with its platform, receiving capacity building support for more than six months.

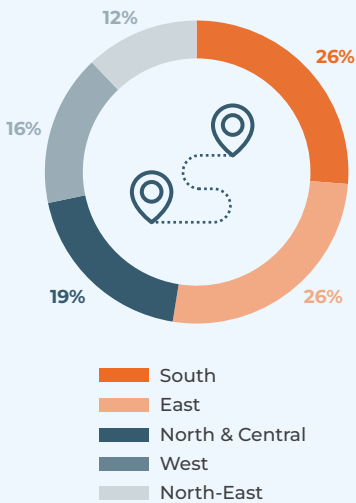
## Growing impact and targeting needs

These **136** grassroots organizations are impacting **6.3 million lives** across **22 states in India**, with operations in historically underserved areas. Notably, **26%** of these organizations serve the Southern and Eastern states, **19%** the North and Central region, and **11%** the North-East, forming a broad support network that spans regions from Jammu & Kashmir to Tamil Nadu in the South; Maharashtra in the West to Manipur in the North-East.

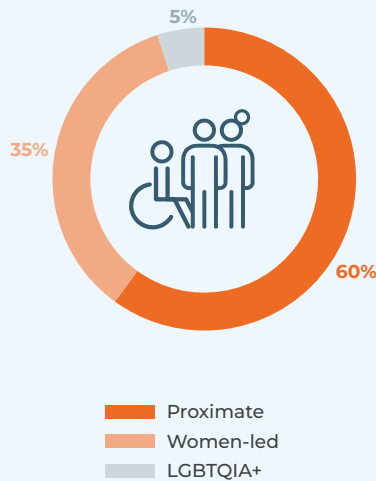
This distribution is critical as **11%** of India's population lives in multidimensional poverty, with pervasive needs in areas enduring extreme poverty such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

### 136 Respondents (Cohorts 1-5)

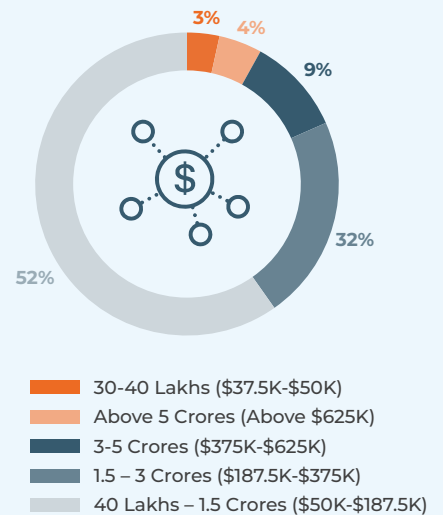
Geographic Spread



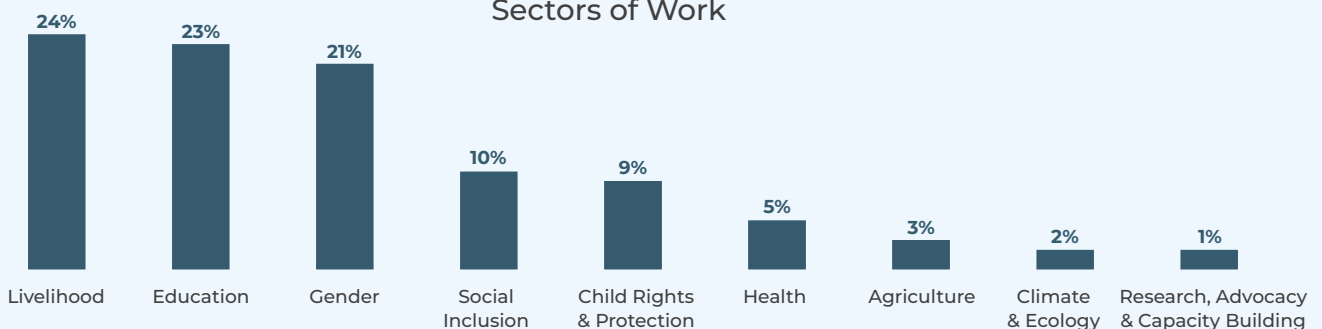
Leadership Structure



Budget Spread



Sectors of Work



## A landscape for movement building

Over **54%** of our portfolio respondents have leveraged the Rebuild platform for almost **2 years**, allowing for deeper engagement and wider impact, while **45%** have joined within the last **6-8 months**, bringing in fresh perspectives and energy into our growing network. This blend of long-standing partnerships and fresh cohort partners strengthens Rebuilds platform with experience, innovation and changing voices, drawing a fresh landscape of possibilities each year.

Emphasizing community-rooted leadership, **60%** of the respondent organization leaders from the community, with women at the helm in **35%** of cases. Operating on a median budget of **1.3 crores**, they address critical areas like livelihoods, education, gender equality, and human rights. Each region's work aligns with unique local needs- from supporting single women, abuse survivors, and informal workers to aiding farmers, pastoralists, artisans, and communities dependent upon fishing.

### Time with Rebuild

> 20 months	41%
<=15 months	13%
< 1 year	46%

### FCRA

FCRA	86%
Non-FCRA	14%

Faith Foundation Health Camp





Yakshi Organizational Development Workshop

# Organizational Resilience-Building



**The good thing about flexible funding is that it helps you budget and pay for things that are not budgeted for in other fixed funding**

- Sappho for Equality, West Bengal

In this reporting cycle, more than 70% organizations reported an improvement in organizational efficiency with flexible funding while 32% were able to enhance and strengthen relationships **with communities and key stakeholders**.

Flexible funding's impacts on organizational resilience building are transformative, from our partner organizations responses, we learnt how organizational resilience is being built at the grassroots through thoughtful and planned investments that leverage the power of multi-year grant benefits.

## **Sustaining a grassroots organization with flexible funding**

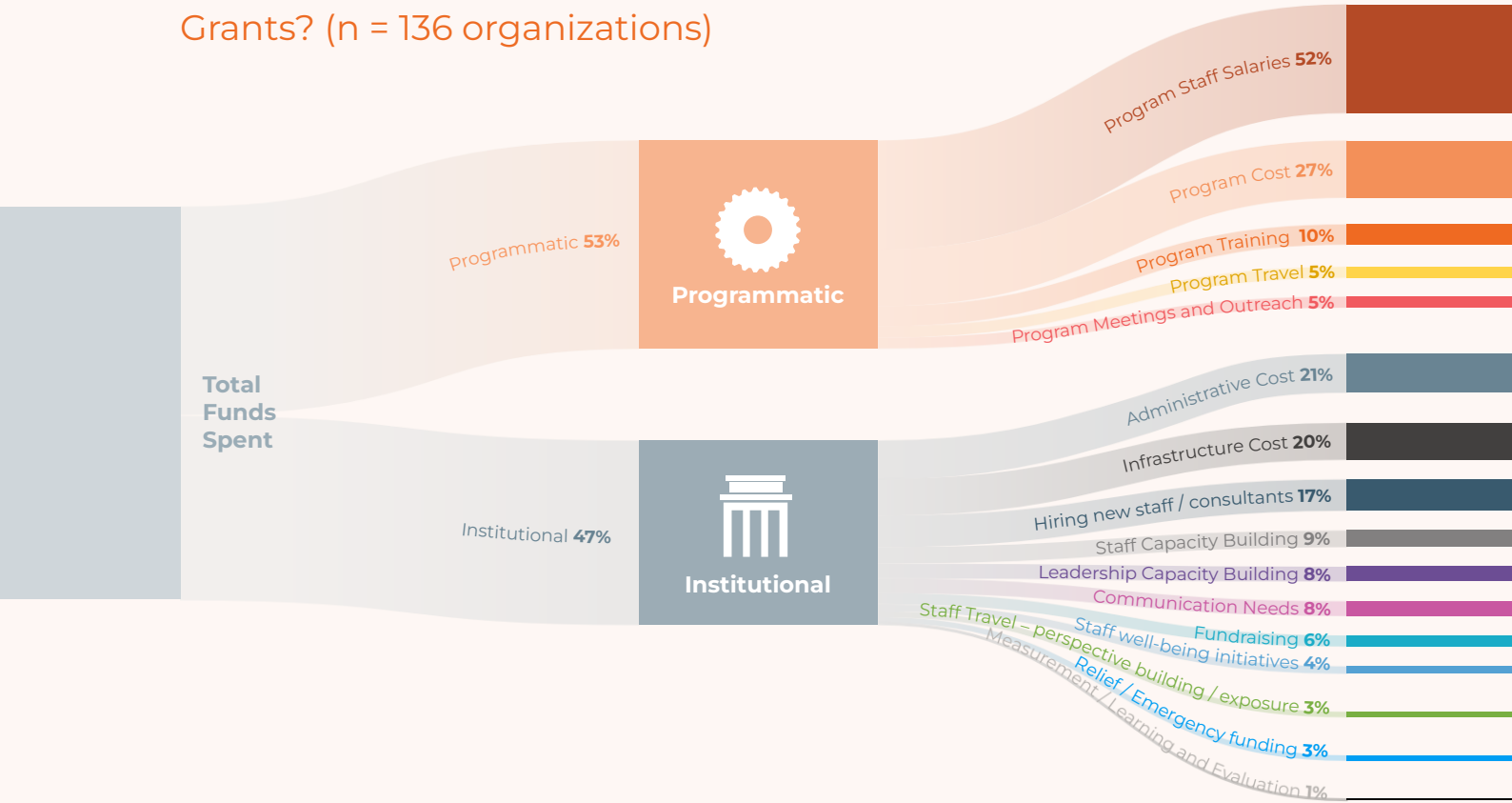
An analysis of fund utilization data indicates that a significant investment has been made in essential operational costs, highlighting the varied needs of grassroots organizations in the non-profit sector. Notably, **82%** of organizations have allocated funds toward administrative expenses, which comprise covering expenses and critical functions like office rent, purchase of organizational materials, desktop and laptop procurement, and internet connectivity.

This foundational support broadly identified as 'administrative costs' is essential for organizations to manage resources effectively while also upholding transparency and accountability.



## Building organizational capacity:

How have NGOs utilized Rebuild’s Flexible Grants? (n = 136 organizations)



## Enhanced community engagement

Flexible funding has also enabled organizations to respond proactively to community needs. For instance, **Prakriti**, based in Nagpur, Maharashtra, has utilized flexible funds to revive its flagship fellowship program for rural women. This initiative empowers a network of community fellows, allowing Prakriti to adapt geographically and address local needs with agility, free from rigid outcome constraints. This fellowship centered model enables Prakriti to experiment and respond to pressing community challenges as they arise, unlocking the potential of unrestricted funding.

## Investing in Human Capital and Staff well-being

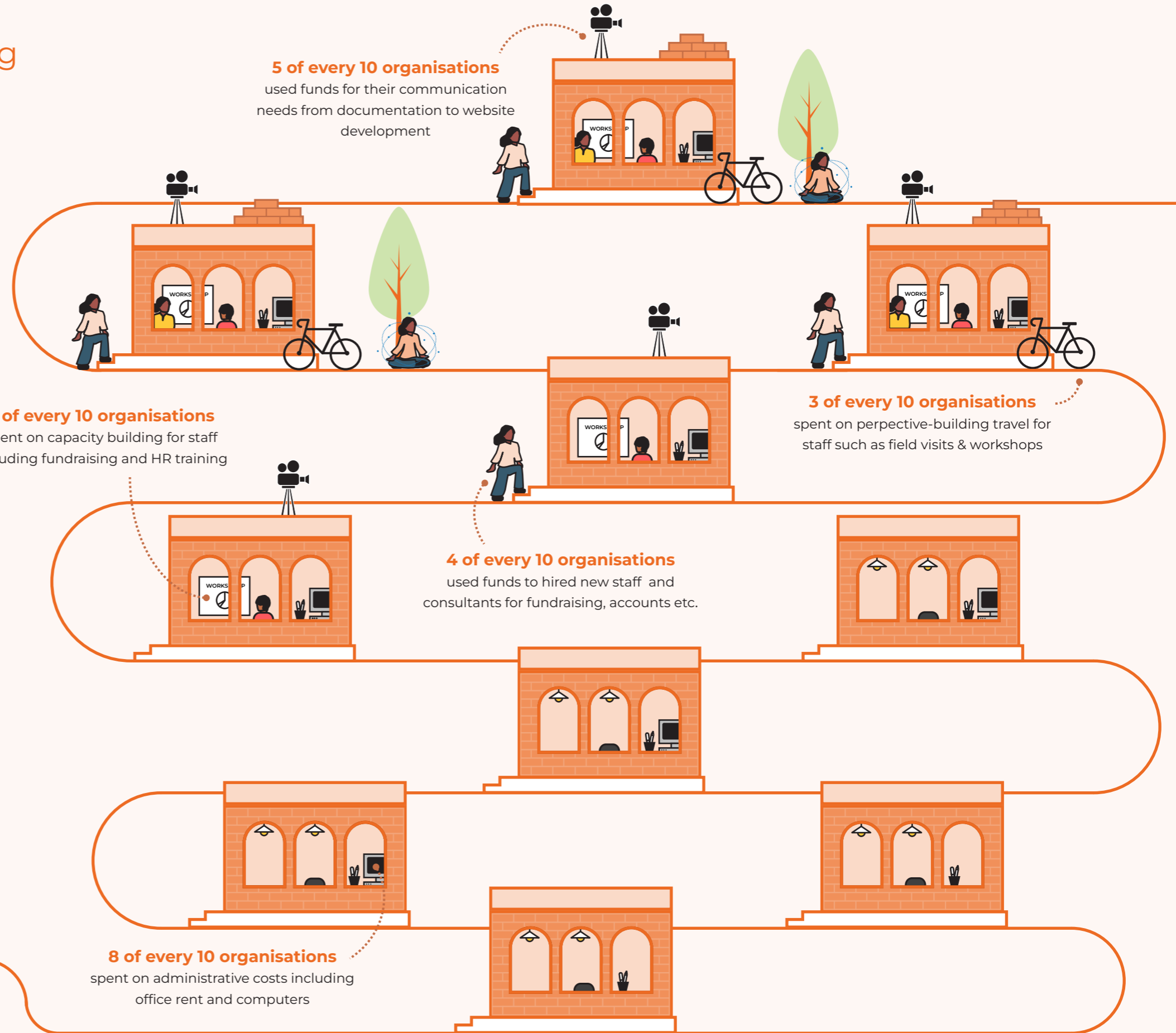
Investment in human capital is another prominent area of impact. With **51%** of organizations focusing on staff development, flexible funding has bolstered a culture of continuous learning, adaptation and knowledge creation. Moreover, **41%** of organizations have used funds to hire new staff or consultants, enhancing their operational capacity and implementation.

# Utilization of Flexible Funding on Institutional Costs

This visualization depicts:

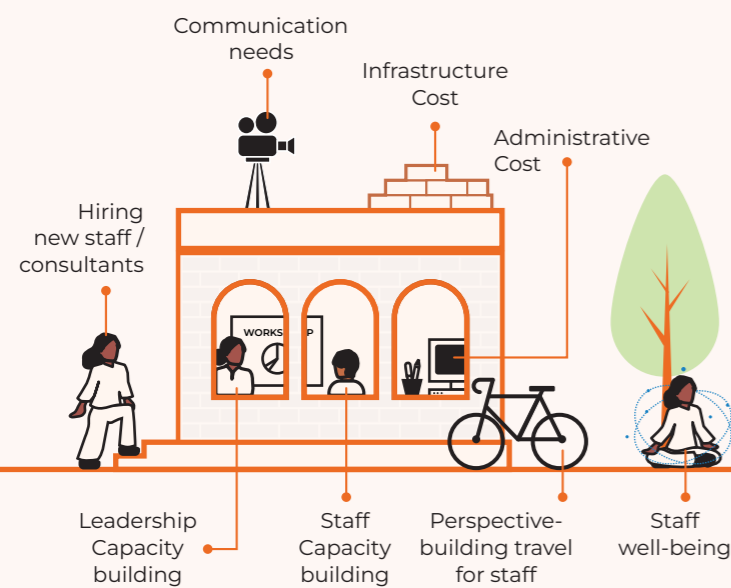
- 1 The most prevalent institutional costs that organizations within Rebuild’s portfolio chose to spend their flexible funding on.
- 2 The percentage of organisations that spent on that institutional cost.

**Note:** Each of the ten structures represent 10% of Rebuild’s total portfolio.



## LEGEND

### Top institutional spends financed with unrestricted funds





Vanavil Trust Staff Retreat

Several organizations have prioritized strengthening their HR practices, employing consultants to build robust policies and systems. Strategic communication (46%) and leadership development (30%) have also been key areas of investment, reflecting a proactive approach to capacity building that not only increases organizational visibility but also ensures that leaders are equipped to navigate complex and changing landscapes.

Although only 12% of organizations directed funds toward measurement, learning, and evaluation, this represents another critical and favoured area for further strengthening, as tracking impact is key to sustained improvement and accountability. Institutional funding not only supports immediate operational needs but also builds long-term resilience, growth, and innovation.

Staff well-being has similarly emerged as a priority, with 18% of organizations using funds to enhance employee welfare through initiatives like gratuity benefits, insurance, and recreation tours. These efforts foster a supportive workplace culture, recognizing that a motivated, well-supported team is essential for achieving program goals.



One organization that exemplifies the impact of flexible funding is the **Women's Education and Economic Development Society (WEEDS)**, a Tamil Nadu-based organization with a modest budget of less than a crore, dedicated to enhancing the socio-economic status of women. Initially, WEEDS operated within a single district due to financial constraints, limiting their reach. To improve access to program locations, WEEDS used their resources to purchase a vehicle, which was essential for facilitating local commutes. As maintenance costs became draining, their work faced challenges. With flexible funding, WEEDS was able to secure a new four-wheeler, a Bolero, enabling them to reach underserved areas more sustainably and deliver critical programs effectively.

With this investment, WEEDS expanded its work under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (PoSH), forming partnerships with five more companies and expanding into new regions. They also established community centers to reinforce local engagement and support, creating a stronger foundation for long-term impact. This example highlights the vital role of flexible funding in empowering organizations like WEEDS to adapt and grow sustainably.

# Programmatic Resilience-Building



With flexible funding, we have been able to adopt a more community-centred approach, allowing us to tailor our programs based on real-time feedback and emerging challenges.

For instance, in our campaign on girls' education, we were able to pivot quickly based on community feedback, adjusting our messaging to address the unique concerns of different groups. Similarly, in our sports initiative, we were able to respond to the demand for additional sports equipment by reallocating funds to purchase more materials.

This ability to be adaptive has not only improved the effectiveness of our programs but has also strengthened our relationships with community members, who appreciate the fact that we can respond to their needs more rapidly and effectively.

- JAGO Foundation, Jharkhand

Jago Foundation - Promoting Equitable Education for Girls



For organizations to build resilient futures, strengthening and diversifying programs as per changing needs of communities is critical. Flexible funding enabled 86% of Rebuild's organizations to strengthen their programs by enhancing their implementation processes (29%), expanding program activities (24%) and increase in lives impacted (48%).

### How were organizations able to strengthen programs using Rebuild Funds?

Organizations strengthened programs using diverse pathways however we learned that investing in programme staff and strategic expansion through core strengthening were critical outcomes for organizations that have invested in strengthening.

#### Rebuild's Support in Strengthening Programs



### Investing in Programme Staff

With guaranteed, multi-year flexible funding organizations are able to retain program staff and also invest in their capacities. The results are being recognized widely by reporting organizations such as Darbar Sahitya Sansad (DSS).

“Two of our field programmes were in verge of closing down due to lack of funds. By appointing the programme staff we could continue those programmes with the help of field level SHGs and FPOs. The staff started creating linkages with Govt programmes and conducted training programmes in the field on organic farming and gender based violence.

These staff also started managing website and social media and ultimately created new networks.

*“Actually the problem with small frontline NGOs is dearth of quality manpower. So apart from project funding, there is a void in core staff strength of the organisation like a fund raiser, a communication person, an accountant, a data analyst. This unrestricted fund helps in many ways to fill that void. if the organisation's key strength increases then there will not be any problem in mobilising project funds” - DSS.*

## Strategic expansion through core strengthening

Organizations have strengthened their programs through strategic expansion, this is especially significant for organizations in remote geographies such as Kashmir.

*“In the last 6 months, we have strategically utilized the grant from the Rebuild India Fund to bolster critical operational areas and invest in initiatives that align with our mission. A significant portion of the funds was allocated to cover the salaries of our communication and fundraising teams, ensuring the sustainability of these essential functions.*

*We also prioritized capacity-building programs for our staff, aimed at enhancing their skills and improving the effectiveness of our program implementation. Another key area of investment was in the organization of para sports events for persons with disabilities. This included hosting the recent Indian North Zone matches, where teams from Uttarakhand and J&K competed, and both the men's and women's teams from J&K successfully qualified for the national championship. These efforts have not only empowered our team but also uplifted the local community through inclusive sports initiatives” - Voluntary Medicare Society, Kashmir.*

## Piloting new initiatives

Nearly half of the organizations (47%) reported launching new programs, 11 organizations expanded into critical sectors including Healthcare (36%), Education (27%), Climate, Agriculture & Ecology (18%). These early steps towards resilience building through program diversification are positive outcomes of flexible funding at the grassroots.

New interventions are spread across a wide range of themes, 38% of the organizations piloting new initiatives focused on gender and a majority of these gender focused interventions (48%) were in North and Central India. It is also important to note that **71% new initiatives in organizational development** were in East and North East India.

Another popular area for investment was building resource centers for serving marginalized communities and facilitating the initial stages of pilot programs, some of which have successfully leveraged funding.

Faith Foundation Workshop held at Umktieh Nongshiliang



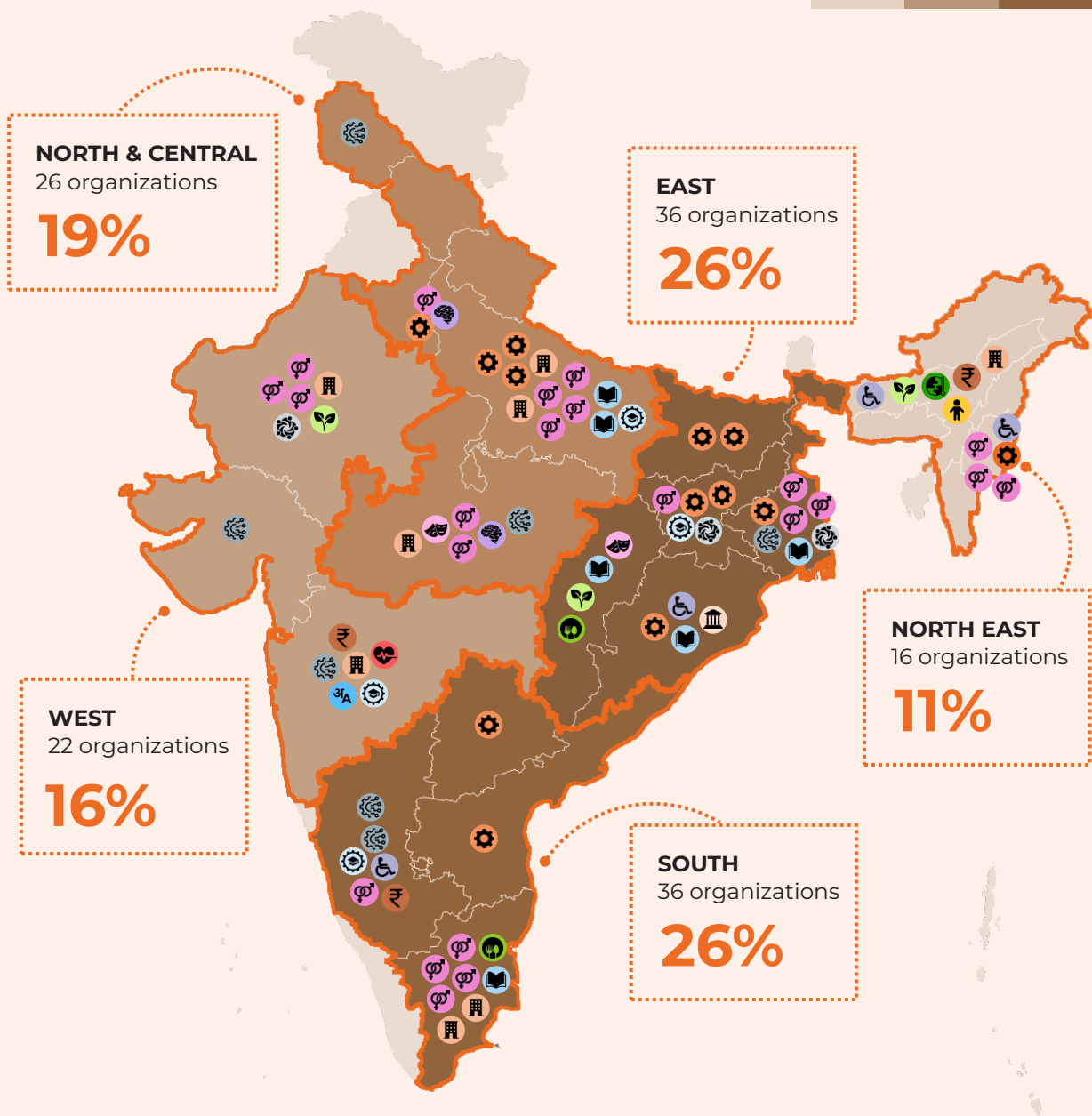
## Regional Spread of Portfolio Organizations

### New Interventions

- Organizational Development
- Gender
- Disability
- Mental Health
- Agriculture
- Education
- Livelihoods
- Technology
- Theatre Workshop
- Health
- Government
- Community Collective
- Climate
- Child Rights
- Fellowship
- Food Security
- Language
- Resource Center

### Map Legend

- <15%
- 15-20%
- >20%



**Note:** Not representative of the exact location of pilot programs within each district

## Building Resource Centers

Goranbose Gram Bikash Kendra is developing a **Resource Centre** for the survivors of gender-based violence, human trafficking and community affected by natural disasters for their capacity building, training, counseling, linkage with government schemes and alternative sustainable livelihoods for rebuilding their lives in West Bengal.

## Facilitating initial stages of a Pilot Program

*“As part of our partnership with the Linsi Foundation, we initiated a Family-Focused Village Development Programme in rural villages across the Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu. The Rebuild India Fund was instrumental in facilitating the initial stages of this program, supporting the baseline study, organizing four consecutive meetings with our partner teams, and enabling crucial networking efforts that laid the groundwork for this initiative”* -Thozhamai, Tamil Nadu

## Peer network and collaboration

Access to peer networks within the Rebuild portfolio has empowered 72% to gain insights into sector innovations, learn from peer experiences, and contribute their expertise. Additionally, 45% have extended support to peers by sharing funding contacts, facilitating exposure visits, and providing valuable resource materials.

### Organizations leveraging peer networks





## Sahaja Samrudha, Odisha



“The Rebuild India Fund has played a pivotal role in helping us expand our network in Odisha and Assam. Krishna Prasad visited Rebuild partners, Agramee and Nirman in Odisha, where he shared insights on connecting small farmers to markets. Nirman staff, along with FPC directors, also visited Sahaja Seeds, Sahaja Organics, and Devdanya. The Agramee team is scheduled to visit Sahaja Samrudha in November.

We’ve also established a partnership with Sanatan Unnayan Sangstha in Assam to link rural artisans to markets. Discussions with NABARD, Assam, have been initiated for publishing a Desi Rice Calendar.

Our Diversity Fairs (including the Desi Rice Festival, Jackfruit Festival, and Leafy Vegetable Festival) are creating markets for neglected crops cultivated by small and marginal farmers, as well as tribal communities. These efforts have led to the formation of a green consumers collective in Mysuru. The Desi Rice Festival in Mysuru provided organic rice farmers with an opportunity to find markets for red rice and other traditional rice varieties.”

## Sadbhavana Trust Community Leadership Workshop



# Financial Resilience-Building

The funding landscape for grassroots organizations has witnessed a shift since the inception of the Rebuild India Fund initiative, breathing new life into communities through the creation of vibrant peer networks and meaningful connections where peers recommend funding opportunities to each other.

## Leveraged funding since joining Rebuild

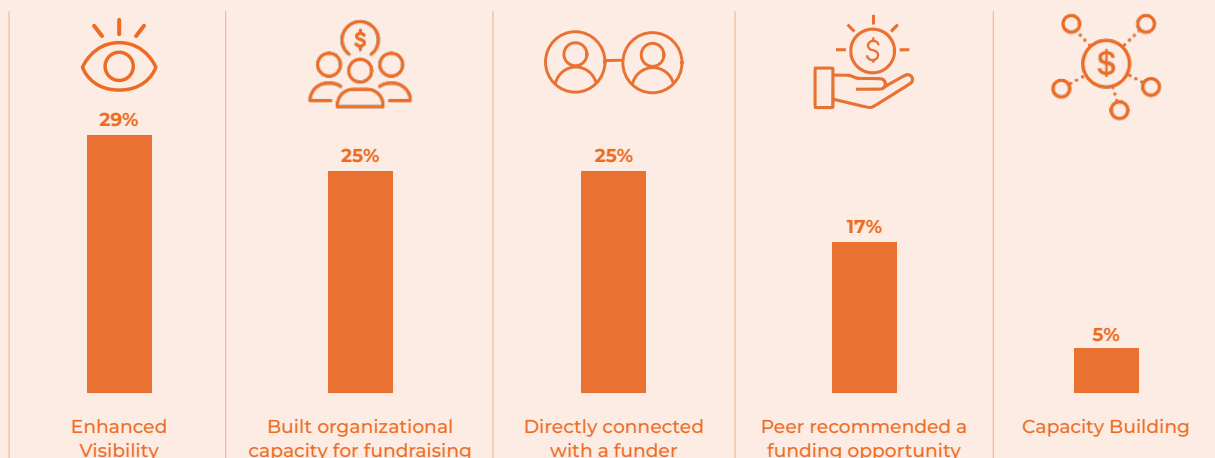
Out of **69** organizations (**51%**) that have successfully leveraged funding since joining Rebuild, **37** are led by women. Together, they have secured a substantial funding of **₹53 crore**, with **₹38 crore (72%)** from domestic sources and **₹15 crore (28%)** from foreign sources. This blend of funding brings to the forefront, the critical importance of local support while also highlighting a growing global commitment to grassroots movements.

Regionally, **Tamil Nadu represents 20%** of the funded organizations, followed closely by **Uttar Pradesh at 16%** and **Madhya Pradesh at 12%**. It is significant that resources are directed where they are needed most, addressing unique regional challenges such as migration due to lack of livelihood opportunities, lack of education opportunities and existing gender inequities.

Sector-wise, these organizations are making strides in **Education (30%), Gender (23%), and Livelihoods (20%)**, tackling pressing social issues and aligning with broader developmental goals of gender equity and diversity. Among women-led organizations, the total funding achieved is **₹21 crores**, with **₹17 crores (81%)** coming from domestic sources and **₹4 crores (19%)** from foreign contributions.

Organizations attribute leveraged funding to Rebuild's support in enhancing their fundraising capacity, increasing organizational visibility, sustaining new programs, and providing exposure to capacity-building sessions that improved the quality of their work.

## Rebuild's Role in Amplifying Funding



## Securing funding for marginalized communities

Over the past six months, organizations like the [Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee \(DMSC\)](#) have made remarkable strides with the support of the Rebuild India Fund. Operating in West Bengal's red-light districts, they have established Education Centres for the children of sex workers, highlighting the power of education to break the cycle of poverty. The success of these organizations in securing funding stems from their commitment to building capacity, enhancing visibility, and leveraging peer recommendations.

### The multiplier effect

The multiplier effect of this funding is significant, with **₹52 crores leveraged against ₹12 crores disbursed**, resulting in a multiplier of approximately **4.2x**. These early achievements demonstrate how initial investments can ignite a ripple effect, attracting further resources and amplifying grassroots impact.

**52 CRORES**  
leveraged  
(~USD 6.5 Million)

**68 NGOs** unlocked additional funds worth **4.2 times** the grants Rebuild disbursed to them

**12 CRORES**  
disbursed

Another Rebuild portfolio organization that has leveraged funding, the [Anubhuti Trust](#), has embarked on a groundbreaking journey by developing a dictionary for the Ghisadi nomadic language—a crucial first step in preserving this vulnerable language and nurturing cultural pride within the Ghisadi community. Through their relentless efforts to enhance visibility, build capacity, and build collaboration, Rebuild's portfolio organizations are not only tackling critical social issues but also advocating for marginalized populations, especially women.

## Organizational capabilities unlock financial resilience




























We analyzed the organizational capabilities and underlying causes that enabled leveraged funding of over INR 10 lakhs for Rebuild's partner organizations. Interestingly, we learnt that 97% organizations that leveraged this funding had clear goals aligned to their mission and vision while 92% have second-in lines, these organizations were proactively considering succession plans. Also, 67% of these organizations had annual plans for fundraising and 64% had a Theory of Change and Results framework to support their decision-making.

It is significant that despite only 37% of these organizations having dedicated fundraising teams including organization leadership, they managed to unlock funding. From these preliminary insights we learnt that early investment in organization capabilities building has positive correlations with financial resilience building for grassroots organizations.

# Sector Spotlight

Rebuild’s partner organizations are addressing challenges across diverse sectors, however the top 5 sectors with our largest number of partner interventions include Livelihoods (24%), Education (23%), Gender (21%), Social Inclusion (10%) and Child rights & protection (9%). Our peer-group led working groups are growing and include Disability, Child Protection, Forest Rights and Livelihoods. We are excited that with Rebuild, 70% of our partners have used Rebuild funds for gender focused interventions and 11 organizations entered new sectors while several are using the Rebuild platform to share ideas and gain exposure to new interventions.

## Our partners impact diverse communities across these top 5 sectors

Top 5 interventions*	Communities impacted			Age group	Lives impacted			
<b>1 Livelihood (24%)</b> <b>33</b>	 Farmers, pastoralists and fishers	 Single women / Widowers / Abandoned women	 Persons with disabilities	 Local communities	 Adolescents and adults	<b>1.3M</b> 16 states 1 UT		
<b>2 Education (23%)</b> <b>31</b>	 Children with disabilities	 NGO Staff and Volunteers	 Community Leaders and Informal workers	 Local communities	 Children, adolescents and adults	<b>0.4M</b> 21 states 2 UTs		
<b>3 Gender (21%)</b> <b>29</b>	 Single women / Widows / Abandoned women	 Survivors	 Women with disabilities	 LGBTQIA+ communities	 NGO Staff, Volunteers, Community Leaders	 Local communities	 Children, adolescents and adults	<b>1.4M</b> 19 states 2 UTs
<b>4 Social Inclusion (10%)</b> <b>13</b>	 Communities living in disaster prone areas	 Single Women / Widows / Divorcee / Abandoned women	 Abuse or Exploitation Victims**	 Local communities	 Age agnostic	<b>0.7M</b> 9 states 2 UTs		
<b>5 Child rights &amp; protection (9%)</b> <b>12</b>	 Children	 Adolescents	 Government stakeholders	 Local communities	 Children and adolescents	<b>1.4M</b> 11 states 1 UT		

\*as of November '24

\*\*including substance abuse victims

## Gender expansive impact

Gender focused initiatives constitute a major part of our grassroots organizations' initiatives, with approximately 30% of our NGO partners working towards reducing gender inequities and disparities in their communities. Organizations have successfully piloted new initiatives and programs focused on adolescent girls and women's capacity and awareness building around themes such as land rights and skill training. Other initiatives support single women and women survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV)- with an emphasis on building a resilient and self-sufficient girls and women community. One such organization is Thendral Movement, a Tamil Nadu based grassroots organization, which established a new skill training center for rural women and developed a Garment Unit to create employment for the widows and single women.

There has also been a strong focus on building financial resilience amongst women, through supporting women and girls' entrepreneurship, livelihoods and skill-training, and SHG or similar women's collectives' formation and support. There was also a strong programmatic emphasis on addressing GBV through community-focused means such as counselling, gender-sensitization and awareness building.

The flexibility to reprioritize and reallocate resources through an unrestricted funding has enabled the grassroots organizations working within the gender space to not just innovate and tailor their programs to the specific needs of their communities, but also provide them the leverage to respond to some immediate and unforeseen needs within the communities.

### Including men and boys for a gender-just society

Efforts were not only directed towards women and girls, but also boys and the community at large, with the aim of building a holistic and sustaining gender just society, and changing essential gender narratives. This was achieved by Society for Women's Action and Training Initiative (SWATI), a Gujarat based organization, who involved community boys in creating safe spaces for girls and women,

**In our work on creating safe public spaces, SWATI had no resources for working with boys. Being acutely aware of the importance of inculcating gender equitable attitudes in boys and young men, we conducted a three-day residential workshop with 42 rural boys from Patdi block. The topics covered were ideas around gender equality, equal sharing of housework, understanding our body and the role that ideas of masculinity play in the behaviour and lives of boys. The boys who attended the workshop are now taking the lead in influencing their peers.**

- SWATI

Another innovative and inclusive approach to targeting GBV was brought up by Sahyogi, a Bihar based grassroots NGO, who realized the need for a community-based and participatory intervention for ending GBV, which led them to experiment with Forum Theatre,

**Given that GBV is deeply woven into cultural practices with long-standing acceptance, we learned that building women's leadership capacity alone was not sufficient. It became clear that engaging men and working with the entire community was also essential. Consequently, we introduced interventions focused on male engagement and social behavior change communication, utilizing Forum Theatre as a tool. It proved to be a highly effective method, and Sahyogi recognized the need to continue using it, further building the team's capacity. Although the project ended in March 2024, sustained support is required for lasting change in the community. To continue this innovative intervention, we sought donor assistance. We utilized the Rebuild India Fund to maintain the Forum Theatre team, which greatly helped us during this transition.**

- Sahyogi

### **Sports and young women**

Sports, especially Football emerged as a means for social transformation in the lives of young girls associated with Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, a West Bengal based partner organization. They share,

**Our organization's own wing, Durbar Sports Academy, has started a re-journey to provide football coaching and materials to girls from the children of sex workers and other marginalized communities. This initiative was previously halted due to a lack of funding, but with the support of the Rebuild India Fund, we have been able to take part in a number of women tournaments. This initiative not only equips these girls with the skills and resources necessary to play football but also aims to break the chains of social stigma and empower them to dream beyond their circumstances.**

## Mental health support and SRHR for transpersons

The programmatic initiatives with transgender and queer community members had a strong emphasis on the Mental Health of the community, in addition to building crucial awareness around Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR).

The manifold possibilities of flexible funding can also be seen through setting up of Community Resource and Support Centres by the some of the organizations, which doubled up as spaces for accommodation, collectivization spaces for women, and more interestingly, as safe havens for ushering new lives into the world in times of distress.

**Considering the high homelessness rate within India's transgender Karna-Subarna Welfare Society is building a commune-based training facility at Baruipur in the district of South 24 Parganas, where trainees can stay during for upto 6 months during the training. With the help of Rebuild Fund, we have developed a program office space through which all the projects and activities under this program are being planned, implemented, and monitored.**

- Karna-Subarna Welfare Society

## Education for all

Education emerged as one of the key sectors for our partner organizations. Our partners are improving access to inclusive, equitable and holistic education, with initiatives supporting children from underserved and vulnerable communities including 2000+ children of women from Dalit community and ex-Devdasi women from Raibag district of Belgaum (Karnataka). Interventions in education also strengthened foundational learning and skills-training for both youth and adults.

Organizations have either expanded their reach to newer geographies and/or communities and diversified their programmatic interventions, or both, with the mission of enabling access to education to learners in the remotest geographies, and from some of the most vulnerable communities.

### New program

The flexibility offered by the Fund enabled our partner NGOs to kick-off programs that were not part of their original budgets, and able to respond to the changing needs of their communities in a real-time manner. One partner organization shares, ***“With the flexible funds, we were able to quickly launch a ‘Learning Quality Education Center Program’ that wasn’t part of the original budget. This pilot program has started to provide quality education to 500 students, and the success of the pilot has encouraged us to scale it further.”***

The potential of flexible funding was utilized by a few of our organizations to invest in research and study to upskill either some of the team members, or of the organization at large. These research studies were aimed at not only developing an enhanced understanding of their communities, but also gathering an in-depth understanding the practices and challenges of newer communities that the organizations sought to work with, which would help them tailor their initiatives to the specific needs of the communities.

One such organization is Jago Foundation, which is based out of Jharkhand's Giridih.



**One of the most impactful uses of the Rebuild India Funds has been our study of the Musahar community in Gawan Block, Giridih District. The study sought to understand the community's needs, the current status of child education, and sources of income. We found that 215 members of the Musahar community reside in the area, facing numerous socio-economic challenges. A significant number of children, both boys and girls, drop out of school after Class 8. Boys tend to migrate to other cities in search of livelihood opportunities, while early child marriage for girls is prevalent. The study also revealed a stark gap in educational attainment—only three girls from the entire community have completed their matriculation exams. Moreover, there is a widespread lack of awareness and access to government schemes designed to support vulnerable communities like the Musahars. To address these findings, we are developing targeted interventions aimed at increasing educational retention, raising awareness about government schemes, and preventing child marriages.**

Proximate leaders are strengthening their communities and enabling access to education while also expanding knowledge about and within their own communities and journeys, Anubhuti Trust shares their experience in this regard, *“Our Founder Deepa Pawar who belongs to the Ghisadi NT-DNT community, has been working on language preservation and revitalization. As part of this, she started the field work for research for the first ever Dictionary of her language Ghisadi, as well as its secret code language of which her generation may be the last speakers.”*



## Livelihoods for sustainable incomes

Organizations could successfully integrate an intersectional lens into their livelihood programs, with targeted support and tailored programs for different vulnerable communities. For instance, organizations worked towards fostering financially resilient women communities, through promoting and supporting women entrepreneurship and skill-building, and skill-based vocational training aimed at income generation.

One such initiative was from Mahiti Trust, a Gujarat based grassroots organization, working in Ahmedabad's Dholera village.

***“Rebuild funds were allocated to expand our Sustainable Livelihoods and Natural Resource Management initiative, focusing on organic farming and water conservation in the Bhal region. Besides, it also ensured continued support for microfinance initiatives, enabling women to access financial resources for livelihood development and small-scale businesses,”- Mahiti Trust.***

Similarly, organizations worked with Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), to enable them to become financially self-sufficient through vocational training. Kenduadihi Bikash Society (KBS), one of our partner organizations based out of West Bengal's Bankura, share their experience,

***“The Rebuild India fund has been utilized to empower persons with disability through generating sustainable livelihood income by establishing a suitable platform named ‘center of excellence’. This platform has been made to promote income through three verticals viz. mobile cafeteria, selling of jute products and readymade garments. Till date the initiative has generated revenue of Rs 1,20,000 through selling different items which not only augmented their family income with an average contribution of Rs 1,000 per month but also making them (differently abled adolescents) economically independent,”- Kenduadihi Bikash Society***

### Freedom to innovate traditional livelihoods

The freedom offered by unrestricted flexible funding has enabled our partner organizations to start unique programs. One such program was started by Sahaja Samrudha, which is an ‘Organic Farmers Association’ based out of Karnataka, called the “Leafy Vegetable Festival”, to promote over 100 uncultivated edible greens. It attracted farmers, consumers, media, and officials. A Seed Festival built Karnataka's Seed Savers Network, and a Bamboo Workshop showcased thornless bamboo varieties suitable for food, craft, and construction. As a result, the Bamboo Growers Network was established, and 300 bamboo saplings were distributed to selected farmers to create demonstration models.

Apart from traditional livelihood streams, organizations pivoted to newer and alternate livelihood initiatives. Rural Development Council (RDC), in Tamil Nadu diversified revenue streams for the marginalized tribal communities they work with, ***“RDC allocated part of its flexible funds to explore social enterprise opportunities, such as marketing non-timber forest products (NTFPs). This investment not only generated additional income but also created a more stable financial foundation for the marginalized tribal population we work for.”***

## Building inclusive spaces

Flexible funding has unlocked more inclusive interventions with the communities through the setting up of Resource and Support Centres to collectivize, discuss their issues, and co-learn income generating skills. Community collectives such as women's collectives or SHGs, farmers' collectives or FPOs (comprising both men and women's groups) and Shaishav, a Gujarat based partner NGO talk about their unique children's collective, *"Rebuild fund is being utilized to sustain our Balsena program in Bhavnagar. Balsena is an independent children's collective facilitated by Shaishav. Through Balsena, children are being empowered to understand and reclaim their rights. Through Balsena we are also working with adolescent boys and girls on issues of Gender equity."*

One of our partner NGOs encapsulate their usage of the Fund to build one such Centre, *"Considering the high homelessness rate within India's transgender Karna-Subarna Welfare Society is building a commune-based training facility at Baruipur in the district of South 24 Parganas, where trainees can stay during for upto 6 months during the training. With the help of Rebuild Fund, we have developed a program office space through which all the projects and activities under this program are being planned, implemented, and monitored."*

Overall, our partner organizations in the rural and urban contexts viewed Livelihoods not as an "end", but as a "means" of empowerment, through keeping in mind the unique needs and vulnerabilities of the communities they work with and crafting their programs accordingly.

Dalit Mahila Kendra Samiti Capacity Building Training





Rebuild Roadshow

## Looking back

In 2024, the Rebuild India Fund set out on a powerful journey across the United States, meeting with stakeholders passionate about a fairer, more resilient India. In two roadshows spanning the months of May and September, from intimate dinner gatherings to global conferences, Rebuild connected with over 70 stakeholder groups—ranging from major foundations to individual supporters—sparking conversations around what real community-led change looks like.

Each meeting was a critical opportunity to share and champion a movement that is built on grassroots resilience- Rebuild is grateful to our funders and supporters for enabling 10 grassroots leaders from India to lead these discussions.

Rebuild's NGO leaders took center stage at the Dasra Philanthropy Forum, where they addressed a crowd of over 300 about the transformative power of women-led grassroots movements. In Boston, a cozy gathering brought together donors committed to grassroots change, while at the UNGA, Rebuild shared insights on locally-led development alongside 80+ global leaders.

With over \$2.35M in funds unlocked and new partnerships blossoming, the journey wasn't simply about raising money—it was about igniting shared purpose to fuel a stronger, more inclusive future for India.

We are so grateful to Rebuild's vibrant community of funders and supporters for enabling this for us!

## A retreat for the Rebuild team!

In a meaningful pause, the Rebuild India team recently gathered for a retreat focused on reflection, growth, and unwinding! We began our retreat by revisiting Rebuild's inception and journey, sparking discussions on the fund's early and growing vision. Shifting our focus to 2024, the team explored insights from similar inspiring global initiatives, reflecting on unique contributions in movement building in the past year.

Our retreat concluded with a session to help us work 'Better Together,' an open dialogue about working styles, aspirations and fostering new pathways for collaboration within our team and the larger ecosystem.

The retreat left the team refreshed, aligned, and inspired to keep driving impact—together, with you, we embrace a bright 2025 that will unlock more for India's largest proximate and women-led movement for grassroots resilience.

Rebuild Retreat





## **About Rebuild India Fund**

Rebuild India Fund supports 100 new grassroots organizations across India each year for five years, committing to five years of flexible funding to them. The Fund also builds the institutional capacity of grassroots NGOs and creates a platform for them to enable direct access to the larger philanthropic ecosystem, helping grassroots NGOs to have a deeper local impact.