

ALL ABOUT

CENTRAL REGIONAL GATHERING REPORT

AUGUST 2025



CENTRAL REGIONAL GATHERING: A SPACE BY THE LEADERS, FOR THE LEADERS



46 leaders from 24 grassroots organizations, working across multiple thematics from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh came together for the very first time to create a space for them, by them. With a participatory approach guiding everything—from shaping the agenda to facilitating conversations—the Central Regional Gathering in Indore became a vibrant space of learning, connection, and co-creation. This report offers a sneak peek into the energy, ideas, and collective spirit that defined the day.



46

leaders and team members

24

grassroots organizations

16

districts from Central India



Education



Climate & Agriculture



Gender and Women Empowerment



Health



Livelihoods



Disability and more!

A PEEK INTO THE SESSIONS: WELCOME ADDRESS



In picture (left to right)

Mamta Kujur, Jashpur Jan Vikas Sanstha; Tara Ahluwalia, Baal Va Mahila Chetna Samiti, Anantvijay Singh, Dasra; Waseem Iqbal, Aim for the Awareness of Society

The gathering opened with a warm welcome from Kavita Dive (Kalp Samaj Sevi Sanstha) and Rajendra Mewada (Yuva Vikas Mandal), who set the tone for the day by highlighting the importance of NGOs coming together to form a strong peer community. Building on this, Rajendra-ji noted that the agenda itself had been shaped in collaboration with leaders—designed to reflect the priorities of the group.

The facilitators then invited a few representatives to light a samai—a symbolic gesture of coming together and setting collective intentions for the day.

Rajendra-ji also walked everyone through the agenda and set simple ground rules to ensure a smooth flow. To help participants get to know one another, he invited them to stand if they worked in particular thematics such as Child Rights, Health, Disability, Livelihood, or Women’s Empowerment. Many leaders stood for multiple themes, reflecting the intersectional approach with which they address the complex societal challenges before them.

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS:

- Gallery Walk: Stories in Action
- Fireside Chat: Demystifying Compliance and Governance
- Tuning In: Wellbeing
- Impact Narrative
- Closing Circle and Way Forward



We come together to grow stronger as a community of NGO leaders—so that whenever there is a call for help, the support can be found within us

Kavita Dive, Kalp Samaj Sevi Sanstha

A PEEK INTO THE SESSIONS: GALLERY WALK



PLAY ME!

The Gallery Walk, facilitated by Lata Netam (Lok Astha Sewa Sansthan) and Rajkumar Ahirwar (Gramin Swavlamban Samiti), came alive as leaders set up charts and displays to showcase their organizations' work. The marketplace-like setting encouraged 1:1 conversations, peer learning, and curiosity-driven exchanges, giving participants a chance to engage meaningfully across diverse themes. On average, leaders were able to explore the work of 3–4 organizations in depth through this activity, while continuing to build connections throughout the day.

Leaders particularly valued discovering innovative, low-cost approaches and creative community engagement models—from a simple shed that boosts livelihoods, to women breaking barriers as mechanics, to a safe shelter for transgender individuals, and a play-based snakes & ladders tool for community learning among many others. Many felt these could be adapted and applied in their own contexts.

The Gallery Walk underscored the power of exposure to peer work. Leaders reflected that seeing and discussing diverse strategies face-to-face was both inspiring and practical in shaping their future directions. Several expressed interest in following up on synergies, such as exploring indigenous seed supply and other potential collaborations, setting the stage for deeper 1:1 connections.



A PEEK INTO THE SESSIONS: LEGAL & COMPLIANCE



In picture (left to right):

Bhupesh Vaishnav, Shikhar Yuva Manch; Manjiri Chande, Pararth Samiti; Bumica Jain, Dasra

The session took the form of a fireside chat with Bumica Jain, Manager at Dasra, an expert in compliance with 10+ years of experience in the sector. The conversation was moderated by two grassroots leaders - Manjiri Chande (Pararth Samiti) and Bhupesh Vaishnav (Shikhar Yuva Manch), with questions sourced in advance from participants. In true participatory spirit, leaders also came in organically with suggestions and additional questions, while the moderators drew upon their own experiences and learnings to make the discussion more relatable and grounded.

Bumica provided a simplified and practical orientation to FCRA, Income Tax, and compliance areas that are often seen as complex and intimidating. She broke down recent amendments and clarified key


requirements such as the 5-year FCRA certificate, designated Delhi account, CA-certified renewals, and the 80-20 utilization ratio.

“The information on FCRA was extremely useful. Such sessions should continue as and when new amendments or updates come in.”

– Rekha Surve, Mahila Shram Sewa Nyas (MSSN)

The conversation also explored the importance of building robust internal control systems through clear policies, segregation of duties, transparent procurement, and active board engagement, to ensure sustainability and clean audits. Leaders also discussed employment-related obligations such as PF and PT, while demystifying practical issues such as TDS, audits (Forms 10B & 10BB), and fund utilization rules, whilst adhering to global and Indian financial cycles.

Leaders left with tangible takeaways on strengthening compliance within their organizations, while also recognizing the need for continued learning. As Indu-ji from Chetana Child & Women Welfare Society reflected, future sessions could go deeper into specific compliance areas, allowing organizations to build even stronger expertise.



**It is our responsibility as
NGO leaders to maintain
accurate data and cross
check before submission**

Manjiri Chande, Pararth Samiti

A PEEK INTO THE SESSIONS: WELLBEING



In picture (left to right)

Bhupesh Vaishnav, Shikhar Yuva Manch; Indu Sahu, Chetana Child and Women Welfare Society

The session on wellbeing, facilitated by Indu Sahu (Chetana Child and Women Welfare Society) and Bhupesh Vaishnav (Shikhar Yuva Manch), created a reflective space for leaders to think about how sustaining external change also requires investing in internal change. Leaders discussed the multiple responsibilities they hold—towards their organizations, teams, the communities they serve, and importantly, their own wellbeing.


The conversation surfaced the risk of burnout and compassion fatigue, which often goes unrecognized in the development sector, as leaders constantly give without pausing. Indu-ji reminded everyone that, *“We as leaders have multiple responsibilities and play many roles that never let us stop or take a pause.”*

The facilitators introduced practical tools to manage stress and energy. Leaders shared their own energy levels in the moment, and explored grounding techniques such as the “54321” practice (naming five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell, and one you can taste). They also reflected on boundary-setting—asking whether they truly had the capacity to take on every request.

Through an “Energy Audit” activity, leaders identified what gives them energy—ranging from food, music, and spending time with family to travelling, helping others, and meeting goals—and what drains them, such as regular travel, lack of recognition, overload of work, and long hours. This exercise underscored how personal drains often ripple across to teams, as highlighted by Indu-ji:

“Jo cheezein as a leader humari energy drain karti hai wo team members ki bhi karne lagti hai.”

The session left leaders with tangible practices to take back—building a culture of appreciation, setting boundaries, and normalizing conversations about rest and fatigue. As Indu-ji noted, *“Wellbeing session is being done to understand that we can also stop or get tired.”*



People in the development sector often face compassion fatigue which we don't recognize

Indu Sahu, Chetana Child and Women Welfare Society

A PEEK INTO THE SESSIONS: IMPACT NARRATIVE I & II



In the second part, leaders split into four thematic groups:

- Youth & Education
- Gender & Empowerment
- Rights & Entitlements
- Climate-responsive Agriculture & Livelihoods

The Impact Narrative session unfolded in two parts. In the first, led by Anantvijay Singh (Dasra), leaders reflected on why impact narratives matter and built a shared understanding of their relevance and components. They highlighted that these narratives are not just for funders but equally for boards, communities, and governments—while the core story remains the same, its telling must adapt to different audiences. Leaders also added that impact narratives can serve as an important tool in keeping organizations accountable.

“First, this is for donors – so that we remain accountable and they can see the impact created through their support and resources. Second, it is for our board members, stakeholders, and community – so they can witness the effect of our interventions. And finally, it is also for the government – so we can demonstrate the impact we are creating within a region.”

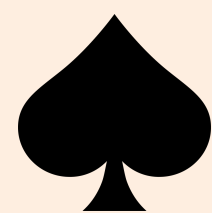
- Prakash Michael, Spandan Samaj Seva Samiti

to co-create impact narratives using the “Why-What-How” framework. Guided by group facilitators, they identified key social challenges that they are collectively aiming to solve, described how their interventions respond to these social challenges, and shared the impact created at an aggregated level. These presentations in the plenary sparked rich discussions and cross-learning.



CLOSING AND WAY FORWARD

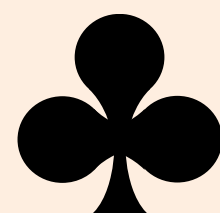
The day came to a close with Waseem Iqbal (Aim for Awareness of Society), sharing highlights from the sessions and threads that had emerged across discussions. To capture reflections in a fresh and engaging way, Priya Chandak (Yuva Vikas Mandal) introduced an innovative feedback tool — the four playing cards representing Fact, Feeling, Finding, and Future.



Fact



Finding



Feeling



Future

Under facts, leaders noted learning about key compliance requirements such as FCRA, 12A, 80G, 10B, and 10BB. Their findings often centered on the innovative work of peer organizations, which provided fresh ideas and inspiration. In terms of feelings, leaders shared that the gathering helped them feel more connected. Looking to the future, many expressed interest in incorporating practices and learnings from the session into their own organizations such as taking the wellbeing techniques to their teams as well.

Leaders shared that the gathering helped them feel connected to the Rebuild community largely by forming a strong peer network, and learning about each other's organizations. The gathering ended on a powerful note of solidarity, as everyone came together for a group hug — a symbolic gesture of the community coming together



Leaders were clear that the regional connection built during the gathering should not end here. Many envisioned regional hubs for knowledge exchange — spaces to share learnings, challenges, and innovations. Alongside this, there was strong support for creating a Regional Core Committee, a small group of leaders who could work with the Rebuild team drive collective action for the region.

Additionally, a few leaders suggested extending future gatherings to two days for more cross-learning, relationship-building, and reflection opportunities.

These ideas reflect a shared commitment to strengthen the regional network, foster peer exchange, and carry forward the spirit of co-creation.

“An important part was the cocreation of the entire gathering! Almost everyone connected through the designated roles

Wasseem Iqbal, Aim for the Awareness of Society

