

Rebuild in Momentum:

A year in reflection

2025-26



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The Rebuild India Fund is a result of collaboration across a wide network of organizations, partners, and leaders whose contributions continue to shape the platform.

We are deeply grateful to the grassroots organizations in the Rebuild portfolio and to the leaders who anchor this work within their communities. Their commitment, insights, and willingness to share learning have been central to how the fund continues to evolve.

We thank the nodal partners and sector experts who helped identify and connect community-rooted organizations to Rebuild. Their knowledge of local contexts and long-standing relationships across regions has enabled us to reach organizations that often remain outside formal funding networks.

Our appreciation extends to the members of the Investment Committee, Joint Steering Committee, and the peer assessors who have contributed their time and expertise to the selection and governance processes. Their participation has strengthened the fund's commitment to participatory decision-making and ensured that perspectives from grassroots leaders continue to shape how the fund operates.

We are deeply grateful to the philanthropic partners who support the Rebuild India Fund. Their commitment to flexible, long-term funding has enabled grassroots organizations to strengthen both their programmatic impact and the institutional systems that sustain it.

We also thank the capacity-building partners who have supported organizations across building and strengthening fundamental institutional capabilities such as communications, fundraising, financial management, technology, leadership development, and measurement & evaluation. Our appreciation extends to the thought leadership partners who have contributed to advancing conversations on grassroots philanthropy and the need to give in a more trust-based and equitable manner.

Finally, we thank the Rebuild team at Dasra whose work sustains the fund each day. From building partnerships and supporting organizations to strengthening systems and generating learning across the portfolio, their efforts have been central to the progress reflected in this report.

This work is made possible through the continued collaboration of grassroots leaders, partners, and funders who support and strengthen community-rooted organizations across India.



Foreword



In a country as diverse as India, uniform models often fall short. Organizations closest to communities are best placed to respond to these contexts yet are constrained by short-term and restricted funding. Since beginning my philanthropic journey, working alongside grassroots organizations, especially those serving marginalized communities, has solidified my conviction. We urgently need funding approaches that are more deeply aligned with on-ground realities.

Our experience of supporting organizations like Sadbhavna Trust through the Rebuild India Fund illustrates the power of flexible, trust-based funding working on the ground. At a time when the organization faced a loss of funding and a reduced team, flexible support enabled them to stabilize, rehire staff, and strengthen internal systems. It also created breathing room to pilot new programs, expand its donor base, and deepen its community work. Today, the organization continues to support women and girls, through last-mile services, leadership development, and behaviour change initiatives, where the community shapes its own empowered future.

Flexible, trust-based funding enables organizations to respond to immediate needs while strengthening their capacity in talent, systems, and processes. These investments are essential for building resilient organizations that can stay agile, make decisions locally, and sustain their impact over the long term.

The impact extends beyond individual organizations. It shifts the relationships between funders and grassroots leaders toward more collaborative, learning-oriented partnerships. When local leaders are trusted as experts of their own contexts, it enables more responsive decision-making and supports more durable change.

Enabling this at scale requires strengthening the entire ecosystem around grassroots organizations. Intermediaries play an important role here by bridging the gap in managing due diligence, building organizational capacity, and making grassroots work more visible to the larger funding networks.

The Rebuild India Fund reflects this approach in practice, strengthening organizations while enabling more flexible capital to reach them. As the sector evolves, centering trust, flexibility, and long-term partnerships will enable grassroots leaders to drive meaningful change and build brighter futures for the communities they serve.



Rati Forbes
Joint Steering
Committee Member,
Rebuild India Fund

There has been growing discussion about trust-based funding over time. However, what this looks like in practice and what it enables for organizations and leaders on the ground often remains less visible.

Rebuild offers a glimpse into this. What began as a small group of conversations has grown into a wider network of relationships across geographies, from Mumbai to Patna, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland, Karnataka, and Kashmir. At its core, this has been as much about building a sense of shared ownership as it has been about expanding reach. Rebuild reflects this shift, where engagement moves beyond transactions and is rooted in trust, relationships, and a shared sense of purpose.

Trust-based funding, in this context, extends beyond flexibility in the use of funds. It creates the conditions for leaders to make decisions based on their understanding of community needs. When leaders are trusted, there is a corresponding sense of responsibility. It allows them to address gaps, strengthen their organizations, and reconnect with the purpose that led them to this work.

A key part of this approach has been investing in proximate leaders. Those who have lived the realities they are working within bring a depth of understanding that is difficult to replicate externally. By creating spaces for listening and dialogue, Rebuild has enabled a deeper engagement with diverse contexts, particularly in regions that remain less visible in

mainstream discourse. This has helped build an ecosystem grounded in empathy and mutual respect.

While scale is often defined by numbers, the larger shift lies in how relationships are being reimagined. Moving away from competitive and fragmented ways of working, this model places emphasis on trust, communication, and shared learning. It also creates space for organizations to strengthen internal areas such as finance, human resources, and communication, which are critical to long-term sustainability and often underfunded.

For funders, this approach offers a simple but powerful insight: systems, including our own, function on trust. When trust is placed in leaders and support is provided meaningfully, the outcomes extend far beyond immediate programs. It is an investment in people and in their ability to shape the communities and systems they are part of.

As the sector continues to evolve, there is value in building on these approaches. Strengthening relationships, centering empathy, and enabling leaders to take ownership of their work will be critical to building more resilient organizations and communities.



Deep Jyoti Sonu Brahma
Investment Committee
Member,
Rebuild India Fund

Executive Summary

Grassroots organizations are often the first point of contact for communities navigating poverty, exclusion, and crisis. They are led by individuals deeply rooted in the contexts they serve and can respond to needs that larger systems often miss. Despite this, they remain among the least resourced actors in the development sector, operating with limited visibility, constrained access to institutional funding, and minimal financial reserves.

The **Rebuild India Fund** was designed as a response to this structural gap.



The Rebuild India Fund brings together grassroots organizations, funders, and ecosystem partners to strengthen long-term organizational resilience.

REACH

342
organizations

This report reflects progress across a growing portfolio of 342 organizations working across India, including in many of the country's most underserved regions.

LEADERSHIP



GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

30 States & Union Territories
527 Districts
56% operate in rural areas

MAJOR AREAS OF WORK

GENDER 51%

LIVELIHOODS 48%

EDUCATION 40%

HEALTH 25%

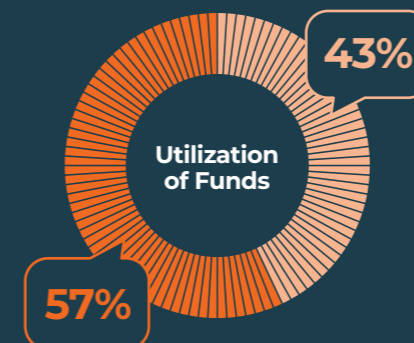
SOCIAL INCLUSION 23%

FUND UTILIZATION

Over the past year, flexible, multi-year funding has enabled organizations to strengthen both program delivery and the institutional systems that support it.

Funding supported:

- Institutional Strengthening
- Program Implementation



This reflects an understanding that sustained program delivery depends on stable teams, effective governance, and the ability to plan beyond short-term project cycles.

KEY SHIFTS EMERGING FROM THE PORTFOLIO

Stronger institutional foundations:

Organizations are investing more consistently in governance systems, leadership continuity, and planning processes. Succession planning and strategic planning have increased, and more organizations are using data to inform program design and decision-making. These developments contribute to greater continuity and clarity in how organizations operate and grow.

Stable and supported teams: Flexible funding has enabled organizations to address compensation gaps, retain experienced staff, and invest in staff wellbeing. These choices support greater team stability, which in turn strengthens continuity in program delivery and relationships with communities.

Greater financial resilience: More organizations are developing financial sustainability plans and engaging with a wider range of funding opportunities. Collectively, the portfolio leveraged **₹124 crores** in additional funding, indicating expanded access to resources beyond the initial grant. At the same time, dependence on a single largest funder remains for many, and diversification continues to evolve.

Expanded networks and ecosystem

engagement: Organizations are engaging more actively with government, peers, and funders. This includes participation in consultations and advisory spaces, stronger peer collaboration, and increased visibility within philanthropic networks. These engagements are shaping how organizations position themselves within the broader ecosystem.

Program responsiveness and reach:

Organizations are adapting and expanding their work in response to community needs. This includes introducing new approaches, strengthening existing programs, and extending into new geographies. These changes are accompanied by increased community awareness, participation, and local ownership of initiatives.

In these developments, the design of the fund has played an important role in enabling change. Participation from portfolio leaders informs how organizations are identified and selected, ensuring that decision-making remains grounded in community contexts. Capacity-building support, peer networks, and dedicated relationship management contribute to strengthening institutional capabilities over time. Systems introduced to support scale are improving consistency and visibility, while maintaining flexibility in how organizations use resources.

The portfolio reflects organizations that are strengthening their internal systems, stabilizing their teams, and expanding how they engage with the ecosystem. These changes are visible in program delivery, in how organizations navigate uncertainty, sustain their work, and access new opportunities over a period.

While progress remains uneven, the experiences across the portfolio suggest that when organizations have the flexibility to invest in both their programs and the systems that support them, they are better positioned to sustain their work and respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

Visibility to Viability: Anchoring Resilience in 500+ Districts

Grassroots organizations are often the first point of contact for communities facing poverty, health crises, displacement, and exclusion.

They are led by people who are deeply rooted in the contexts they serve, responsive to needs that larger systems miss, and trusted in ways that take years to build. And yet, they remain among the least funded actors in the social sector.

The structural gap is stark. Smaller, community-rooted organizations have historically had fewer avenues to access funding with limited visibility with institutional donors, little to no reserves to absorb uncertainty, and insufficient support to build the organizational muscle needed to grow sustainably. Despite their role in reaching India's most marginalized regions, these community-led, proximate leaders frequently operate with significantly lower overhead and resource reserves than their urban or international counterparts.

Today, Rebuild supports a growing portfolio of **342** grassroots organizations across India, steadily progressing toward its goal of partnering with **500** organizations. Multi-year flexible grants give organizations the stability to make decisions rooted in their own realities. Alongside funding, capacity-building offerings strengthen organizations across financial management, communications, measurement and evaluation, and project management. By amplifying visibility and facilitating connections with funders, Rebuild helps organizations access networks and opportunities that have historically been difficult to reach.

This model is shaped by a simple understanding that social challenges are rarely isolated, and that meaningful responses require multiple actors working in concert across communities, civil society, philanthropy, and public institutions. Grassroots organizations are a critical part of that ecosystem. Led by individuals with deep roots in the communities they serve, they are best placed to understand local realities and respond to needs that larger systems overlook. Rebuild's role is to support them financially, expand their access, strengthen their capacity, and enable the conditions that allow their work to sustain and grow.

ABOUT THE FUND

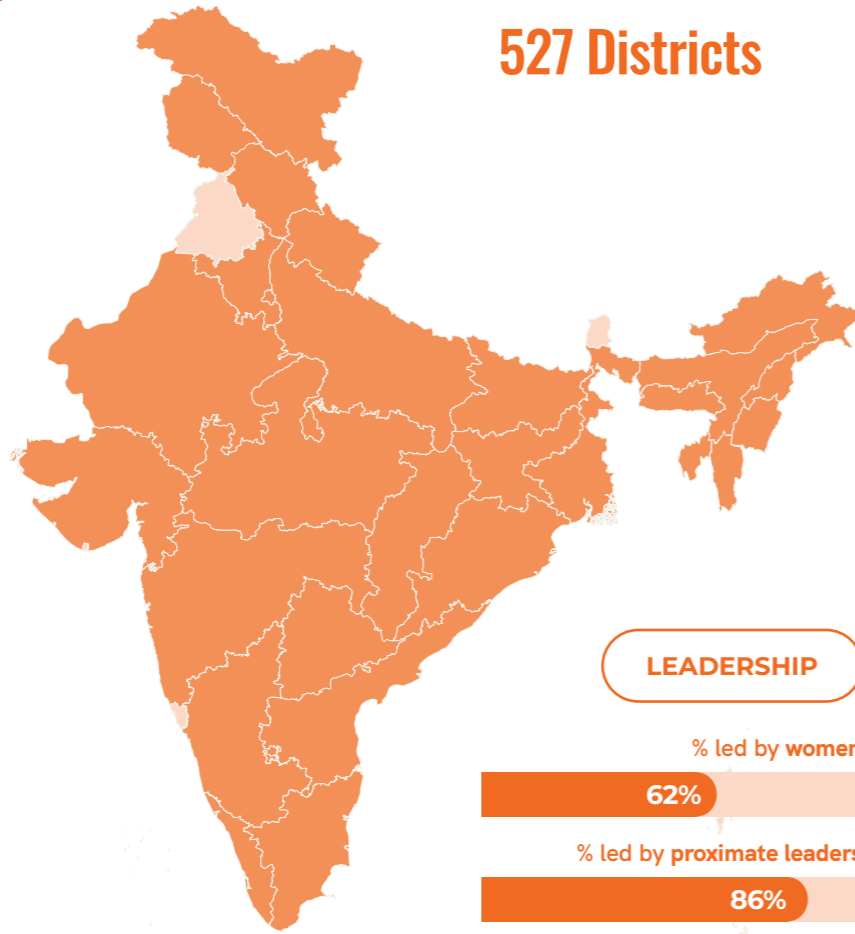
The **Rebuild India Fund** was conceived as a structural response to this gap. Launched in November 2022 by **Dasra** and the **Tarsadia Foundation**, Rebuild is a pooled fund that brings together communities, grassroots organizations, and funders in a shared effort to strengthen long-term resilience. With the ambition to support 500 grassroots organizations across India, the platform is grounded in the belief that lasting change is driven by those closest to communities and that philanthropy plays a role in sustaining that work.



Faces and Forces of Change

The scale and reach of the portfolio provide context for how these efforts translate into practice.

Rebuild now partners with **342** organizations across **30** states and union territories, spanning **527** districts, including **102** Aspirational Districts and regions that account for **60%** of India's poorest districts. A majority operate in rural areas (**56%**), with **62%** led by women and **85%** by proximate leaders. Many organizations operate in areas where public infrastructure remains limited and philanthropic investment has been sparse.



Across the portfolio, organizations work alongside Dalit, Adivasi, Nomadic-Denotified Tribal communities, religious minorities, and LGBTQIA+ communities in contexts shaped by caste, gender, geography, and economic exclusion. Many have built trusted community relationships over decades.

The organizations themselves reflect a mix of long-standing institutional experience and emerging leadership. Some were founded as early as the 1960s, while others were established as recently as 2019. **86%** are led by proximate leaders, and **62%** are led by women or LGBTQIA+ persons. Each organization enters a five-year partnership with Rebuild, enabling sustained engagement.

The average annual budget across the portfolio reflects the scale at which many grassroots organizations sustain significant community engagement.

AVG. ANNUAL BUDGET
₹1.8 crore

BREAKDOWN OF PROGRAMMATIC COSTS



BREAKDOWN OF INSTITUTIONAL COSTS



GRANT UTILIZATION

TOTAL GRANTS DISBURSED

₹48.4 crores



Key Shifts Through the Year:

The year strengthened financial flows, institutional capacity, and the visibility of grassroots leadership:

Grassroots organizations strengthened their ability to sustain programs, access diverse funding, build internal capacity, and expand their networks and visibility:

Increased financial flows to grassroots organizations

Organizations sustained programs, retained teams, and pursued opportunities beyond the grant period, supported by **₹124 crores** raised beyond Rebuild's deployment, a **2.6X** multiplier.

Expanded access to aligned funding

Organizations accessed **₹10.46 crores** in additional funding across relief, programmatic, and flexible needs, enabled through targeted funder introductions aligned to organizational priorities.

Stronger institutional capacity

Organizations strengthened core systems and leadership alongside program delivery. **93%** prioritized capacity building, with **300+ engagements** delivered across communications, fundraising, financial management, technology, and leadership.

Deeper funder engagement and expanded networks

Through deliberate efforts to enable funder engagement, organizations built direct relationships and entered new networks, with **40+ funders** engaging through dialogues, site visits, and partnerships. International exposure opportunities were intentionally facilitated, enabling **4 grassroots leaders** to engage with **100+ philanthropic stakeholders** and bring community perspectives into global conversations while opening pathways for future partnerships.

Increased visibility and narrative presence

Grassroots work reached wider audiences, with **86 organizations** and leaders featured across social media platforms, blogs, and thought leadership spaces, and Rebuild's approach highlighted in leading publications, increasing visibility and recognition of grassroots leadership.

What Guided Us the Past Year?



As the platform expanded, the focus shifted to growing without diluting the depth of engagement and community-led approach that define the model. This brought greater attention to who shapes decisions and how the platform evolves with growth.

Two shifts defined this transition:



Shaping the platform through grassroots participation

Portfolio organizations played a more active role in shaping how the platform evolved over the year. They recommended peer organizations, contributed to regional outreach, and hosted gatherings that brought together organizations working in similar contexts. These engagements strengthened how the platform connects with grassroots networks and ensured its growth remained informed by those closest to the ground



Systems evolved to support scale

As the platform grew, systems were strengthened to enable consistency and transparency. Grant management was digitized, improving visibility and efficiency, while engagement with philanthropic partners expanded, bringing more aligned funders into the ecosystem.

These shifts enabled the platform to scale with stronger systems while remaining rooted in community-led approaches.



Voices of Change - Stories From the Ground Up

Understanding who the organizations are and where they work also helps explain how their programs take shape. Grassroots organizations design their work around how communities experience their lives. Social challenges rarely appear in isolation. A girl navigating child marriage may also be a first-generation learner whose access to education is at risk. A farmer building a climate-resilient livelihood may also be confronting caste-based exclusion in local markets. A transgender person seeking healthcare may also be navigating the absence of basic legal recognition.

Given that these challenges intersect, the work does as well. Gender runs through the portfolio as a cross-cutting lens, encompassing work on violence prevention, child marriage, LGBTQIA+ safety, women's land rights, and participation in local governance.

Livelihood programs include climate-resilient agriculture, strengthened Self-Help Groups and Farmer Producer Organizations, and vocational pathways that support sustainable income. Education efforts include funding teacher salaries, running informal learning centres, and working with families over time to keep children connected to learning.

Child protection, health access, and social inclusion run alongside these efforts by building awareness around child abuse, reaching communities outside India's formal health systems, and supporting families in securing identity documents and welfare entitlements that connect them to state services.

Across the portfolio, this results in approaches that respond to community realities rather than sector boundaries. The examples that follow illustrate how these approaches take shape across different regions and communities

Community-led, integrated work in practice

The organizations in the portfolio operate in varied contexts, but a common thread runs through their work. Programs are shaped through close engagement with communities and respond to multiple, interconnected needs at once. Rather than addressing issues in isolation, these approaches bring together livelihoods, education, gender, and access to entitlements in ways that reflect how challenges are experienced on the ground.

Examples from our portfolio illustrate how this integrated, community-rooted approach takes shape in practice



THE NILGIRIS



Action for Community Organisation Rehabilitation and Development


Community-Led Housing Improvements in the Nilgiris

For Adivasi communities in the Nilgiris, housing reflects daily life and livelihoods. Traditional homes included verandas for social interaction, open kitchens for firewood cooking, and outdoor spaces used for drying coffee and spices. Government housing schemes introduced standardized units that were often small, poorly constructed and disconnected from these needs.

Housing Retrofit & Improvements

14 HOMES
RETROFITTED

2X PER-HOUSE ALLOCATION DOUBLED
BY THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

 **Kitchens adapted** for
firewood cooking

 **Living spaces recognized** based
on how families use them

ACCORD is now working with the district administration to expand the model across the Nilgiris to incorporate housing schemes that bring together local construction practices and vendors.

BIHAR




Gram Jagat


Expanding Educational Pathways for Rural Girls


In five districts of Bihar, girls from Dalit, Adivasi, Muslim, Nomadic and De-Notified Communities often face limited educational opportunities beyond secondary school. While some complete Class 10, affordable higher education options remain scarce and early marriages remain common.

Fellowship Program

100 GIRLS SUPPORTED **3-4 YEARS OF ENGAGEMENT**

 **Vocational training** linked to
employability

 **Structured mentorship**
through peer learning spaces

 **Sexual and reproductive
health education** provided

Rather than operating on a fixed timeline, the fellowship continues if support is needed.

As a result, participating girls are remaining in school longer, delaying marriage, and increasingly becoming role models for younger girls in their communities.

TAMIL NADU



3

Institute for Self-Management

Collective Action through Dalit Women's Federations

In Tamil Nadu, the Institute for Self-Management has supported the formation of the Federation for Dalit Women Empowerment, a collective of Dalit and tribal-led organizations headed by women. The federation is building a statewide network to engage directly with government institutions and other decision-making bodies.

70+ MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

3000+ HOMES REGISTERED IN WOMEN'S NAMES

218 BONDED LABOURERS' RELEASE FACILITATED

Member Participation in Local Governance

Members of the federation are also increasingly participating in local governance processes, with several women contesting and winning local body elections. In one recent instance, a tribal woman filed a Gram Sabha petition that resulted in additional housing allocation in women's names.

NAGALAND




4


Sisterhood Network


Integrated Community Support in Nagaland

In the hill districts of Nagaland, Sisterhood Network works through community-based groups addressing gender-based violence, livelihoods, and education. The organization engages both youth and adult men through household surveys and community dialogues that examine gender norms and violence.

 **Temporary shelter** provided for survivors of violence where formal shelter homes are not accessible.

 **Livelihoods** supported by women's collectives weaving, tailoring, farming, and bamboo basketry.

 **Livelihoods training** provided in tailoring and bookkeeping for adolescent girls who have left school

 **Handicraft retail store** that promotes traditional Naga art and culture while creating employment opportunities for young women.

These initiatives form a locally grounded support system addressing multiple aspects of women's lives simultaneously.

How does the Rebuild India Fund Enable Change?

The organizations Rebuild India Fund works with contribute to shaping the direction of the fund by contributing to multiple aspects such as who gets selected into the fund, participation in capacity-building and learning spaces, and by sharing perspectives that inform grassroots work is understood by funders. This ensures that the fund is rooted in the realities of the communities we serve and stays true to the communities' needs. Grounding decision-making through participation

~70% of assessments were carried out through peer assessors

1 SOURCING

through **nodal partners, grassroots leaders, portfolio networks**

Rebuild brings participation from those closest to the work into how organizations are identified, assessed, and selected into the portfolio. It reaches beyond standard application processes and grounds the pipeline in local context and credibility.

2 ASSESSMENT & SELECTION

by **The Investment Committee (IC)**

Proximity carries into selection. Portfolio leaders make up **80% of the IC**, which is responsible for collectively reviewing applications and taking final decisions on which organizations become part of the portfolio. Peer assessors bring community insight and contextual judgment into how organizations are evaluated and have, over time, shaped how the fund understands leadership, proximity, and women's leadership in practice.

3 PARTICIPATION

Participation also creates opportunities for leaders to engage more closely with funding and governance processes, with this experience carrying into their own organizations and broader ecosystem spaces.

4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

by **The Joint Steering Committee (JSC)**

The **JSC** plays a complementary role, bringing together funders, ecosystem leaders, and grassroots representation to provide strategic direction, rather than making portfolio selection decisions. In doing so, it helps connect community-led decision-making with broader ecosystem priorities, strengthening both the relevance and accountability of how the fund operates.

Connecting funders with grassroots organizations



A significant share of philanthropic funding continues to be directed towards organizations that are more accessible and visible, often based in urban centres. Alongside this, there has been a growing interest in understanding where needs are acute and how community-rooted organizations operate.

Rebuild Dialogues

Rebuild Dialogues reflected this shift, bringing funders and grassroots leaders into direct conversation. Designed as an awareness building series (virtual), these exchanges created spaces for listening, reflection, and a deeper understanding of on-ground realities, contributing to a more informed engagement with organizations working in less visible contexts.

100+ participants

OUTCOMES

- 1 Tangible fundraising opportunities
- 2 Stronger funder relationships
- 3 Funder interaction with organizations and communities on field visits
- 4 Clearer pathway for continued support

Strengthening institutions through networks and capacity support



Stronger peer connections and support systems enabled leaders and teams to navigate funding uncertainty, leadership transitions, and operational challenges with greater confidence. Peer engagement became more locally anchored, with connections forming across similar geographies and contexts.

Regional Gatherings

Regional gatherings created more relevant spaces for exchange, and in some regions, groups began convening independently, indicating growing ownership of these networks.

Engagement reached **200+ leaders** through regional and virtual interactions created a space for shared learning, problem-solving, and solidarity across organizations.

200+ LEADERS REACHED



Relationship management



Each partner is supported by a dedicated relationship manager, providing continuity through periods of growth and operational challenges. This support enables stronger connections with peers and local networks while building the ability to sustain these relationships independently. Networks increasingly carry forward through shared ownership and continued collaboration beyond the partnership.

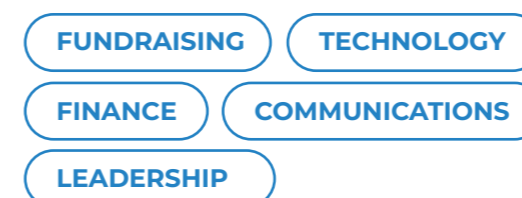
Supporting the Rebuild Ecosystem

Support was further strengthened through engagement from ecosystem partners, including capacity-building organizations and aligned funders, who contributed resources and expertise across areas such as fundraising, systems, and leadership. This expanded the depth of support available and reinforced pathways for long-term institutional growth.

Organizations strengthened core systems and leadership capacity, improving how they manage funding, make decisions, and plan for growth. This includes clearer financial processes, more consistent fundraising efforts, and stronger clarity on roles and responsibilities within teams.

Support aligned with organizational priorities, enabling teams to address immediate needs while building toward longer-term direction such as leadership development, systems strengthening, and strategic focus.

300+ ENGAGEMENTS WITH 21 PARTNERS



Systems supporting engagement at scale

The quality of support each organization receives remained a priority as the portfolio scaled.

SYSTEMS

Fluxx was introduced as the grant management platform to simplify and digitize processes through the five-year partnership cycle, enabling longitudinal patterns to surface more consistently across the portfolio, with the larger vision of enabling data-driven decision-making at scale.

Apurva AI, Rebuild's internal large language model, was being piloted to engage more systematically with narrative data, identify cross-cutting themes, and feed signals into strategic reflection. These contributed to building a more structured approach to capturing institutional knowledge and strengthening the fund's understanding of its portfolio over time.

While these systems help the platform manage engagement at scale, the flexibility of the funding itself determines how organizations can use that support on the ground.

These elements shape how organizations can strengthen their work overtime. The following section reflects how this translates into changes across the portfolio.

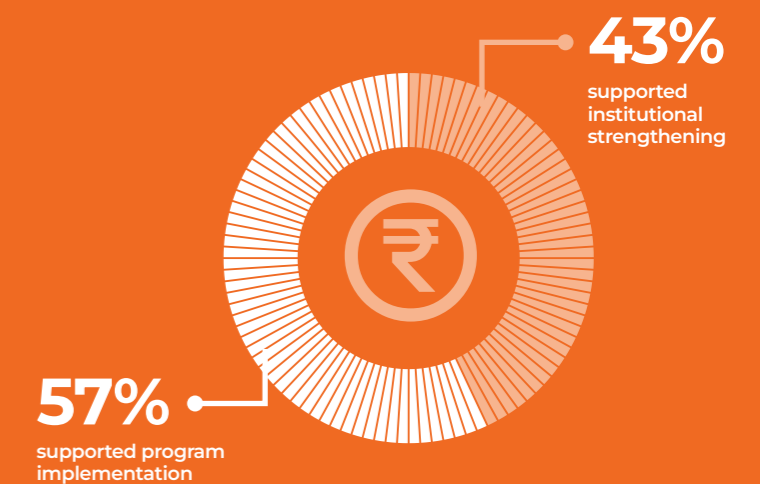


Emerging Impact and the Use of Flexible Funding

Flexible funding supported organizations across the Rebuild portfolio in strengthening both program delivery and the institutional systems that sustain their work. Program implementation and institutional capacity were treated as connected priorities, enabling organizations to strengthen both simultaneously towards driving stronger impact on the ground. Organizations invested in both field teams and the systems required for continuity.

Prior to joining Rebuild, **only 7%** of organizations had the flexibility to adapt budget allocations; **48%** now operate with very flexible budgets.

UTILIZATION OF FUNDS



TOTAL PEOPLE REACHED

21.4 million

1 Strengthening Institutional Foundations:

Flexible funding created the conditions for organizations to invest in governance, leadership continuity, and staff stability, areas that are difficult to resource through project-based funding but are critical to sustaining and growing organizational work.

Governance investments are directly visible in how leadership transitions have been managed across the portfolio



Succession planning increased from **43%** to **88%**, and strategic planning from **41%** to **81%**. Governance policies covering safeguarding, data protection, and redressal mechanisms became more formalized, strengthening accountability to both communities and staff. The proportion of organizations using data to inform program design increased from **9%** to **50%**, and **72%** hired specialized or permanent staff, distributing institutional responsibility more broadly across teams.

Financial planning is strengthening across the portfolio at different budget levels



Around half the portfolio operate with budgets between Rs. 40 lakhs and Rs. 1.5 crore, many are women-led, and **48%** now have a financial sustainability plan, up from **19%** before Rebuild. Structured planning is taking root at this scale; an outcome that remains uncommon for organizations of this size without flexible, long-term support.

Staff stability is a precondition for program continuity, and the portfolio invested in areas that are often deprioritized in program budgets



Around **50%** report significant attrition, and staff turnover directly affects program continuity and community relationships. Investments in staff wellbeing and emergency support, categories that rarely appear in project grant budgets came to be a deliberate choice. **11%** invested in mental health support, medical allowances, and team retreats, while a similar proportion used flexible funds to address housing needs, medical crises, and income gaps for staff who are primary earners in their households.

While this represents a smaller share of organizations, these investments reflect a deliberate prioritization of staff stability in contexts where such support is typically under-resourced.



*Before joining Rebuild **After joining Rebuild

At **Viswa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust** in Tamil Nadu, succession planning enabled a second-line leader to step in without disruption when the managing trustee passed away.

At **Thozhamai**, second-line leaders now manage field implementation and operations independently.

At **Goranbose Gram Bikash Kendra (GGBK)**, flexible funding supported key staff salaries during a funding gap, allowing the team to stay intact.

2 Investing in People For Stronger Program Delivery:

Program delivery across the portfolio is largely sustained through investment in people. The bulk of program spending went toward staff salaries, direct program costs, and training, with the remaining share supporting community outreach, meetings, and travel. Teams that are present, consistent, and well-resourced continue to be the driving force for building lasting change and shows in the results strongly when invested upon.

Program responsiveness to community needs is directly visible in how work shifted and expanded across the portfolio.



65% made programmatic changes in direct response to community needs, expanding thematic areas, introducing new services, and testing approaches within existing geographies. **75%** expanded or strengthened existing programs, and **56%** piloted new models in areas that had received limited attention in traditional funding cycles, including climate-resilient agriculture, Dalit women's leadership, community nurseries, and early intervention for children with disabilities.

Geographic reach expanded alongside deeper community engagement across the portfolio.



More than 50% extended work into new blocks, with the proportion covering multiple districts within a state increasing from **47%** to **52%**. At the community level, **69%** reported increased awareness, **62%** increased volunteering, and **56%** greater local ownership of initiatives.

Salary and training investments built, retained and strengthened teams.

Staff salaries accounted for **47%** of program spending, the single largest line item, reflecting how central people are to how this work gets done. Salary support enabled organizations to hire frontline staff in new geographies, address long-standing compensation gaps, and retain experienced teams through funding uncertainty, ensuring continuity in program delivery.

Training extended beyond technical skills to include mental health support, exposure visits, and team-based learning. At **Anubhuti Charitable Trust**, this included **wellness allowances** alongside **leadership exposure** at international forums. At **DEHAT**, staff participated in a **well-being retreat**.



At **Association for Rural Planning and Action (ARPAN)**, flexible funding supported both an immediate health response in a remote village and a land rights initiative for single women.

At **Vikalp**, it enabled continued legal assistance across districts for a couple facing family violence.

At **Ashadeepa Angavikalara Sarva Abhiwruddhi Seva Samsthe**, it supported the establishment of a community-based early intervention centre for children with disabilities in a region where such services had previously been unavailable.

3 Building Financial Sustainance:

Improved financial systems and expanded visibility enabled organizations to move beyond immediate grant cycles and begin planning for longer-term sustainability. A growing number are developing financial sustainability plans and engaging with a wider range of funding opportunities, although progression across funding stages remains uneven across the portfolio.

Financial sustainability planning is growing among those that have historically had the least access to long-term institutional funding.

% with a sustainability plan



% that are planning budgets with greater flexibility



Many are women-led, operating with budgets between Rs. 40 lakhs and Rs. 1.5 crore, the segment that has consistently faced the greatest barriers. **48%** now have a sustainability plan, up from **19%**, and **59%** report planning budgets with greater flexibility.

Fundraising capacity is being built deliberately, though many organizations continue to depend on a single largest funder.

% that hired dedicated fundraising staff



13% hired dedicated fundraising staff and built systems to sustain funder relationships. At the same time, **44%** of budgets continue to depend on a single largest donor, and diversification remains a work in progress across much of the portfolio.

At **Shaishav**, fundraising investments included donor scoping software.

At **Under The Mango Tree (UTMT)**, it involved hiring a program officer focused on fundraising alongside participation in donor convenings.

At **Rural Aid Service (RAS)** in Manipur, flexible funding enabled rapid mobilization across programs to support displaced families and transition from emergency response to early recovery.

Greater visibility within philanthropic networks translated into resources at scale.

2.6X of original grant amount leveraged collectively in additional funding

Through participation in funder forums, learning spaces, and introductions facilitated through the platform, **₹124 crores** in additional funding were collectively leveraged, a **2.6x** multiplier on the original grants. **76%** are now applying to more funding opportunities, though access remains uneven across sectors and geographies.

Flexible funding enabled continuity through disruption across the portfolio.

Of those that experienced crises including conflict, natural disasters, or sudden staff attrition, **80%** organizations, sustained operations using available resources. **43%** attribute recovery to Rebuild funding, while **36%** drew on a combination of sources. The ability to respond without waiting for a new funding cycle directly affects whether programs and teams hold together during periods of uncertainty.

4 Expanding Networks And Institutional Engagement:

Participation in Rebuild expanded how the portfolio connects with peers, institutions, and funders, strengthening access, visibility, and opportunities beyond immediate program work.

A shift in how the portfolio engages with government is visible in the data.

% contributing research inputs



Before joining Rebuild, most engaged with government primarily as delivery partners. Over time, some began contributing research inputs and participating in policy consultations. **36%** now do this formally through advisory processes and consultations, compared with a baseline of primarily implementation-focused engagement.

Peer collaboration generates outcomes that extend well beyond knowledge sharing.

% now collaborating with other NGOs



The relationships reported as most meaningful combined program collaboration, technical guidance, and financial support, often formed during moments such as donor exits, FCRA challenges, and stalled projects. **87%** now collaborate with other NGOs and **94%** report that network participation supported their growth.

For those at early stages of engaging with funders, peer networks open access that would otherwise take significantly longer to build. Connections within the Rebuild network have supported visibility and credibility with new funders, supporting progress toward more stable and diversified funding relationships over time.

Investment in documentation and knowledge building is how work becomes visible and credible beyond immediate networks.

For those working in geographies and on issues that receive limited philanthropic attention, the ability to articulate and evidence their work is directly linked to accessing funding and partnerships. **14 organizations** invested in community surveys, language preservation projects, and publications toward this end.

Anubhuti Charitable Trust, working with NT-DNT communities developed a dictionary to document and preserve a language that has largely remained oral, while others began translating years of community work into written formats despite limited familiarity with formal documentation.

In several cases, these efforts required building new skills within teams and navigating language, literacy, and resource constraints. These investments are reflecting of an attempt to make grassroots work visible, particularly in contexts that have remained historically outside formal knowledge systems.

Society for Womens Action and Training Initiatives (SWATI) signed an MoU with the District Collector of Mahisagar to support a safe block for women and girls.

Darbar Sahitya Sansada now convenes a grassroots NGO network across East India and participates in cross-sector convenings and advisory processes, reflecting a growing engagement with institutions and contribution to the broader ecosystem.



Looking Ahead

In an era defined by fragmenting global stability and cascading unrest, the myth of the solitary hero has never been more obsolete; our survival and capacity to flourish now hinge entirely on the power of collective thinking. We are finding that true security is built through the deliberate cultivation of community resilience—that invisible, unbreakable web of mutual reliance that holds when systems fail. This resilience is born in the fertile soil of grassroots action, where local communities transform shared vulnerability into shared agency.

To truly address the staggering socio-economic challenges of our time, our role must shift from distant observers to catalysts. We must pivot our resources and our hearts to support these local pioneers, recognizing that the most enduring solutions are those designed by the people who live the problems every day.

The Rebuild India Fund is immensely proud to have stood behind **300+ grassroots changemakers**, and we are already witnessing the transformative power of this network as it unfolds across the landscape of our nation. These leaders are the architects of a more equitable future, proving that when local wisdom is met with unwavering support, the impossible becomes inevitable. We remain inspired by them— those we have been able to support, and the many others we have not yet reached but who remain equally critical to India's development. Our commitment to reach at least 500 organizations over the next two years remains firm.

If the past year focused on growing the platform while building engagement, the coming year will focus on deepening how we engage with on-ground change in more meaningful ways. It will also be about strengthening trust and connection across the ecosystem, something that remains essential to sustaining this work overtime. As we move into the next year with heightened determination and ambition, we are reclaiming our shared humanity and proving that a community that dreams together is an unstoppable force for change.



Anantvijay Singh and Sangeeta Bhattacharya,
Co-leads, Rebuild India Fund

What Are We Learning?

1 Across the portfolio, organizations are building stronger institutional foundations alongside program delivery and outcomes.

Flexible funding, used with autonomy, has enabled investments in areas that are often difficult to resource through restricted grants, such as governance systems, staff stability, fundraising capacity, and the structures that allow programs to function over time. These investments shape how organizations sustain their work, navigate transitions, and respond to community needs without waiting for the next project cycle.

These changes are particularly visible among smaller, women-led organizations operating in non-metro geographies, groups that have historically had the least access to long-term institutional funding. The emergence of more structured governance and financial planning at this level reflects how flexible funding is enabling organizations that typically operate with limited reserves to invest in their institutional foundations.

2 Organizations are also engaging differently beyond the grant.

There is greater participation in consultations and advisory spaces with government, more active partnerships during periods of disruption, and increased investment in documentation and knowledge building. Together, these indicate a broader role for organizations within the ecosystem.

The portfolio offers a view into how changes in funding structures can influence how organizations build, sustain, and engage over time. While these shifts remain uneven, they point to the role of flexible, long-term support in shaping stronger and more connected organizations within the sector.





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.

To learn more, reach out to rebuild@dasra.org