

Climate Action through Intergenerational Solidarity in India: GRAVIS approach



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Climate crisis in the Asia-Pacific

- The Asia and Pacific region is more susceptible to effects of climate change than other regions, because of its substantial dependence on natural resources, agriculture, densely populated coastal areas, insufficiently climate resistant infrastructure and services, and poverty.
- Over the past 60 years, temperatures in this region have increased faster than the global mean.
- Numerous hazards impact the region such as floods, cyclone in addition to droughts.
- Droughts remain less attended and less prioritized within the policies and resource allocation.
- Older people are significantly and disproportionately impacted by climate change in the region.
- There is a large resource of untapped knowledge and experience within the local communities, across the region, who know how to cope with climatic variations.

The India Context

- India has severe climate change impacts (economic, health, social) and is ranked the fourth in climate risk index of 2015.
- Due to its geographical diversity and climatic variations, India is prone to numerous climate change manifestations and to natural hazards
- Over the years, climatic variations have been very visible in India such as rainfall uncertainties and warming of weather including heatwaves
- In 2008, India worked out its National Action Plan on Climate Change
- An estimated 140 million older people live in India, about 70% of those live in remote and rural areas.
- Older people are victims of climate change impacts as well as are key sources of knowledge and wisdom towards mitigation

India : the arid zones

- About 12% of India's land mass is classified as arid zones or about 31.8 million hectares spread in various States
- The Thar Desert, which is the largest desert in the Indian sub-continent, is one of the most challenging climatic zones worldwide.
- One of the smaller deserts in the world geographically, Thar is the most densely populated desert eco-system in the world.
- In arid zones of India, the effects of climate change in the water scarce regions are largely seen in terms of erratic rainfalls and enhanced variability in the temperatures and rains.
- Whereas extreme weather conditions are not new to the deserts/arid zones, the occurrence of climate change has aggravated the extremities
- Older people are severely impacted by droughts and climate change in the desert.
- They are confronted with an array of challenges including chronic health problems, lack of access and control over productive resources, social isolation and reduced ability to contribute financially to their households.
- Older women are more severely impacted due to socio-economic and cultural reasons.



GRAVIS

- GRAVIS is an NGO, a CSO, working in rural India for the last four decades with a focus on arid zones of the country
- Has a strong focus on rural populations with greater focus on older people living in rural parts of arid zones
- Works through active participation of local communities by forming and strengthening of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) – to ensure local ownership and sustainability.
- Over 2 million villagers are covered by GRAVIS, interventions in rural India,
- GRAVIS has also supported replication of its interventions on droughts and climate Action in parts of East Africa and South Asia.
- Member of the Help Age network and of Alliance for Longevity in the Asia Pacific (ALAP).

GRAVIS' work

GRAVIS has programmes in the following spheres

- Water security – rainwater harvesting, water quality, capacity building
- Healthcare – service delivery, public health, research and advocacy
- Agriculture and animal husbandry – rainfed farming, nutrition, capacity building

Cross cutting areas of GRAVIS work approach:

- Research and advocacy
- Education and community mobilization



GRAVIS' Inter-generational approach for drought mitigation and climate change adaptation (CCA)

- In the face of climate change, between the slow-onset impacts and intensifying droughts, GRAVIS has been working to improve the lives of communities residing in the remotest regions of Thar desert
- It adopts integrated community-based approaches towards development programmes devised specifically for different age groups
- The aim is to enable the communities to take leadership roles for self and for community development by promoting intergenerational communication and knowledge exchange between them
- As such, Inter-generational Learning Groups (ILGs) comprising of older persons and youth and adolescents are being formed, trained and promoted.
- Through these groups, critical thinking on issues such as drought and climate change, in addition to others, takes place. Traditional wisdom and new ideas are blended.
- The ILGs take leadership role in planning and implementing of various GRAVIS supported climate change adaptation projects.
- A greater focus is put on creating ILGs of older women and younger women and girls.

Key components of the approach

1. Community mobilization through ILGs

- Shared platforms - ILGs have been created in the desert villages of GRAVIS' operation areas while ensuring inclusion of older people and younger people and to organize training and other capacity building events, followed by regular ILG meetings
- ILGs are a group of both young and old people (males and females) and each group is about 15 to 20 members.
- ILG members come together for inclusive community development that actively engages them as agents of change not only for themselves but also for the benefit of community at large
- ILGs are given important roles in planning, implementation and monitoring of various project.
- GRAVIS is currently implementing a number of ILGs led projects such as:
 1. Enhancing Women and Girls Leadership in Climate Change Adaptation (EWGL)
 2. Water Nutrition and Health in Thar (WNHT)
 3. Expanding Older People led Climate action (EPOC)



Components

2. Implementing Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Interventions

2.1 Fostering rainwater harvesting systems to enhance water security

- Renovation of water bodies (village ponds)
- Setting up underground water storage tanks to harvest rainwater
- Training on water conservation and on water quality



Components

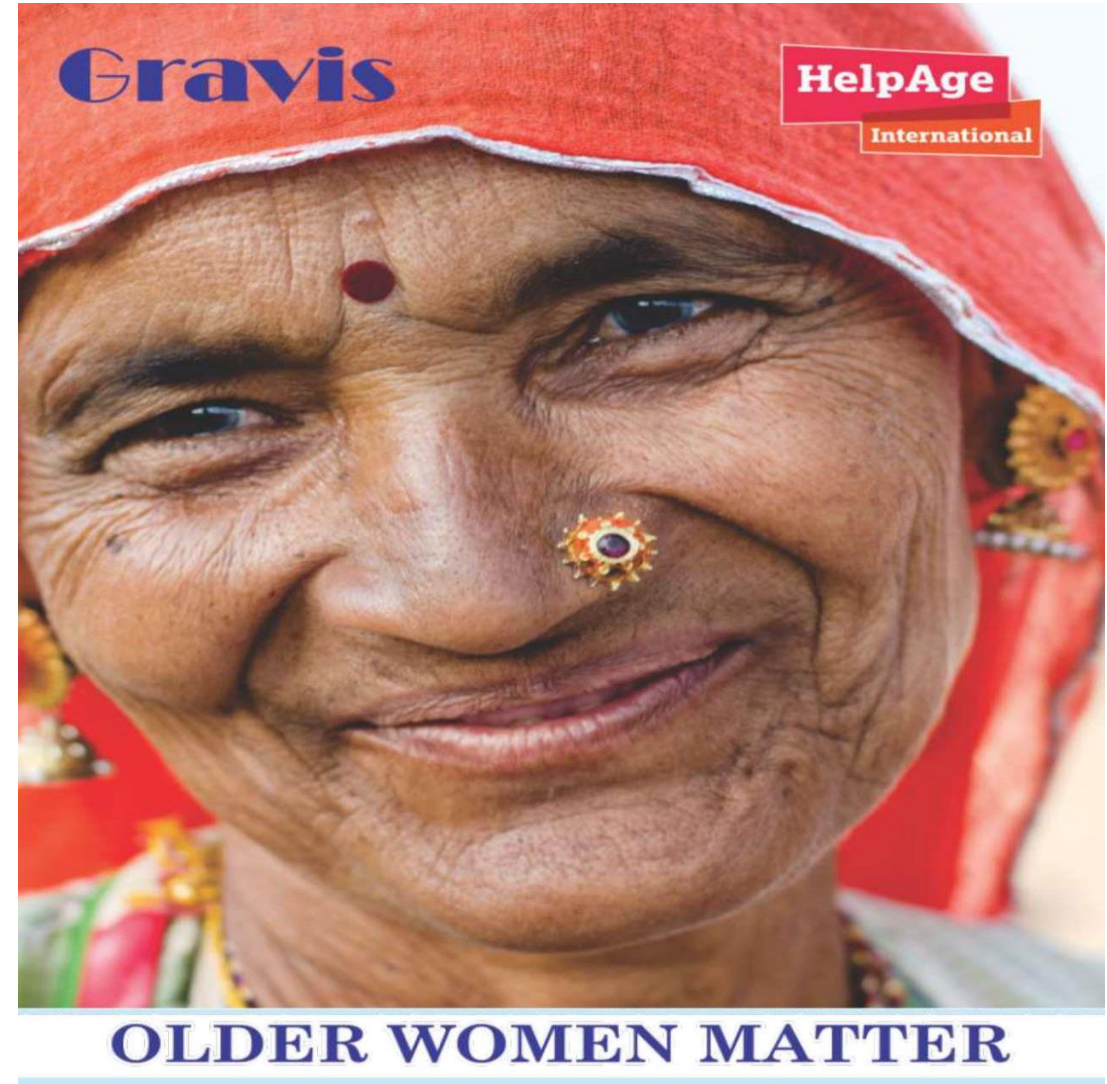
2.2 Enhancing food and nutrition security

- Relying extensively on traditional knowledge, wisdom and techniques of older people to ensure food security, GRAVIS has promoted the construction of modified farming dykes
- A farming dyke *is a structure* that serves as a method of collecting water by building an earthen embankment made at the end of an upland plot of land to prevent water run-off
- Another important component of this multi-dimensional strategy is the establishment of Arid Horticulture Units (AHUs) that grow fruits and vegetable crops
- A typical AHU promotes the use of local variety of seeds, which is crucial to climate adaptation and building climate resilience.
- GRAVIS also promotes farm forestry practices that involves integration of trees into farming systems. GRAVIS supported ILGs, for example, are participating in USAID funded Tress Outside Forests in India (TOFI) programme



Results/outcomes

- GRAVIS has supported the formation and strengthening of over 4,000 CBOs including about 200 ILGs
- Over 15,000 rainwater harvesting structures have been created and over 50,000 hectares of land has been covered by upgraded farming
- A rural population of about 2 million has been impacted by drought mitigation and CCA interventions
- The learning has been shared along various organizations and has been replicated in India and in other countries.
- GRAVIS has extensively [published](#) its work



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The learning

- The ILG approach has been very effective in enhancing intergenerational solidarity and in ensuring local ownership of community development programmes
- ILGs play important roles in bringing innovative ideas in aspects like water conservation and dryland farming.
- ILGs of women and girls have also been very effective and need greater attention with gender inequality issues
- There is scope and need for expanding the ILG model

Future ideas

- Continued focus on forming and strengthening more ILGs
- Gender equality to get more attention within ILG model
- Sustained advocacy on prioritizing drought mitigation
- Replication of the model within arid zones of India and elsewhere
- Robust knowledge exchange



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