

EMPOWERING PANCHAYATI RAJ

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF PANCHAYATS
THROUGH PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION



MULLANKOLLY, CHUNGATHARA AND
KODENCHERY GRAM PANCHAYATS



**INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF PANCHAYATS
THROUGH PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

A brief report of the project

by

**Chungathara, Mullankolly and
Kodenchery
Gram Panchayats**

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PARTNER PANCHAYATS

CHUNGATHARA GRAM PANCHAYAT

The Chungathara Gram Panchayat is in Malappuram district. During 1950s, many people migrated from Thiruvithamkoor to this place and the majority depends on agriculture for livelihood.

It has a total population of 35,079 which include 17,128 men and 17,951 women. The main crops grown are coconut, rubber, pepper, arecanut, banana, cardamom and paddy.

KODENCHERY GRAM PANCHAYAT

The Kodenchery Gram Panchayat is one of the oldest Panchayats in Kozhikode District, formed in 1961. Most of the inhabitants work in the agriculture sector.

It has a population of 33,130 with 16,647 men and 16,483 women. The main crops grown include coconut, rubber, pepper, banana, vanilla, coco, arecanut and ginger.

MULLANKOLLY GRAM PANCHAYAT

The Mullankolly Panchayat is located in Wayanad District. It is close to Karnataka state. A good number of the inhabitants are tribals. It has a population of 33,891 with 16,887 men and 17,004 women. The main crops include pepper, coffee, coconut, ginger, rubber, arecanut, banana paddy and cardamom.





SHREYAS

The Shreyas Social Development Organisation, Sulthan Bathery, Wayanad was founded in the year 1979 by the Malankara Catholic Diocese of Bathery, dedicated to the development and empowerment of the marginalized, irrespective of their religion, gender, colour and political affiliation. It operates in five northern districts of Kerala, Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu and the Dakshina Kannada, Uduppi, Chikmangalore and Shimoga districts in Karnataka. The present operational area is divided into 10 regions consisting of 100 village level units, for effective management and active participation.

Entering the 29th year of dedicated service Shreyas could promote 2,710 CBOs, covering 45,379 families, and a total population of two lakhs. We collaborate with different development actors, Government and Non Government, national and inter national agencies, in order to support the initiatives for self-reliance of the primary stakeholders.

The **Mission** of Shreyas is to create a more humane and just society based on human values, irrespective of religion, sex and colour.

The **Vision** is to become an excellent facilitating organisation for social development through participatory approach.

Its **Objectives** include formation and empowerment of Community Based Organisations, promoting decentralisation and institution building process, initiating development movements and protection of environment.

Partner groups consists of marginal farmers, agriculture labourers, women, youth, children, senior citizens, disabled and tribals.

I

INTRODUCTION

Shreyas, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based at Sulthan Bathery, Wayanad is an active partner of SDC-CapDecK since 2004. The first phase of this partnership focused on tribal empowerment, supporting the Panchayati Raj system. The second phase was specially focused on building up of specific models among Gram Panchayats. Accordingly we concentrated on capacity building of the Panchayats through exposure visits, besides developing a master plan for the participating Gram Panchayats. This was totally a new experience as there were lots of apprehensions about the feasibility of NGOs collaborating with the Gram Panchayats. The experiment was found to be very successful as the joint platform of NGO and Panchayats could make a positive change in the area.



One day training of elected representatives

The message was passed on to the common people that development requires participatory efforts and the result will be more fruitful if everybody joins hands. The project 'Integrated development of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) through people's participation' was implemented in three Gram Panchayats: Mullankolly (Wayanad District), named Gramadharsan, Kodenchery (Kozhikode District) named Gramajyothe and Chungathara (Malappuram District) named Margadheepam from February 2006 to June 2007.



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II

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

General Objective

To create model Gram Panchayats (GP) for promoting good governance

Specific Objectives

- To capacitate the weaker sections of the society for active involvement in the decentralisation process especially through the Gram Sabha.
- To strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and transferred institutions through integrated trainings.
- To promote participatory methodologies for local need assessment and project planning.
- To facilitate the network and networking of all development actors within the area.
- To develop an accurate data bank of partnering Gram Panchayats.

Participatory Resource Mapping



III

METHODOLOGY IN GENERAL

The project was implemented in a participatory manner. The main components of the project were training programmes, resource identification through survey and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and preparation of a Master Document to facilitate the formulation of different development projects. The participants were PRI members, working group members (WG), leaders of community based organisations (CBO), staff of transferred institutions and representatives of NGOs. Exposure visit was one of the main methodology used for capacity building. The vision was clear to all the stakeholders as to what the project aims at for making a model Panchayat, where the people receive timely service and are actively involved in the development process.



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Training of data collectors of Mullankolly Panchayat





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IV

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

1. Orientation to GP Members/Officials, Working Group Members

a. Objectives

- To create awareness about the proposed project
- To provide awareness of the GP & WG members regarding their role in local level planning
- To develop the capacity of GP / WG members and officials

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements



Training of elected representatives

Participatory methodologies were used in the orientation programmes. Classes were taken besides explaining each component of the programme including the budget. Discussions were also held with the participants regarding the necessity of participatory approach. The objectives of the project, its supporters and the role of the GP in the project were some of the major points discussed in the orientation exercise. Since the project aims at the empowerment of the Panchayat in terms of improving the service delivery system, clarity on the project activities was a basic requirement. The GP/WG members and officials offered their whole hearted cooperation in the programme. We could ensure the participation of all GP members, 80% of the working group members and key officials in the orientation programmes, which in itself is a major achievement of the project.

c. Learnings

The participatory methods were found to be more effective for the members. There is often a feeling that the GP members



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are very busy with the routine work and have no time for creative thinking and action. But the orientation programme could change their attitude to a considerable extent. The working groups in some Panchayats were, however not functional and about 20% of the members did not participate.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The facilitating factor was the full time participation of all GP/WG members irrespective of their political application. A good number of officials also participated in the orientation programmes.

e. Programme Details

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	Orientation to GP Members/ Officials	04	103
2	Orientation to Working Group	04	536

2. Exposure Visits

a. Objectives

- To understand different innovative initiatives of PRIs
- To acquire first hand knowledge on different development initiatives
- To replicate good models and practices

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements



Exposure visit to GPK

The programme was organised to expose the GP members and officials to innovative ideas so that they can replicate



the same in their Panchayats. During the project period, five exposure visits were organised for the primary stakeholders, to Karakulam, Palakkad and Chennai. They understood the ways in which people's participation is ensured and how the people own up the programme. Also the team learned the ways in which timely services are given to the public, making the institutions people-friendly. The exposure visits were of different durations, ranging from 2 to 4 days. The major achievement of the programme was the promotion of team spirit among the members. After returning to the respective areas, the team made earnest efforts to replicate the good practices like preparing the citizens' charter, service boards, establishing help desks etc.

c. Learnings

It was a good experience for the GP members as they seldom get chances to go outside and interact with others. "Seeing is believing", thus the team could really see and understand the practical application of themes they learnt in the training programmes. Also, once the members are outside their territory they are more free and capable of learning new things. The main failure of the program was that we could not ensure cent per cent participation of the members in the exposure visit. Further, though positive decisions were taken at the time of the visit, they were not implemented fully in the respective Panchayats.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The active interest of the members was the main facilitating factor in the program. They were keen on analysing the methodology of implementing new programmes. The major hindering factor was the hesitation of some of the members to join the exposure visits for want of spare time.

e. Programme Details

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	Exposure visit to Karakulam panchayat	03	69
2	Exposure visit to Palakkad	01	21
3	Exposure visit to Chennai	01	10



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3. Training / Capacity Building

a. Objectives

- To capacitate the PRI representatives and the core team including CBO leaders to conduct PRA in the Panchayats.
- To provide awareness to the PRI members and CBO leaders, about the Right to Information Act (RTI).
- To capacitate the core team members for the successful completion of household survey.

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements

As part of capacity building, four different training programmes were conducted including PRA, survey and RTI. The first two were on PRA and household survey. They focused mainly on scientific data collection.

Participatory training methodologies were used in the training programme. The PRA training was for two days while the other two trainings were for one day each. Classes, experience sharing and discussion were used for awareness generation. Each training programme had a planning session for follow up action.

The trained leaders actively participated in the data collection process as well as in the PRA. The training in data tabulation helped the members to code the data scientifically. The training programmes helped the trainees



Training for working group members

to understand the developmental issues of their Panchayats. The major outcome of the training was that the participants had greater clarity of the topic and understood the importance of resource based planning.

The training on RTI Act has immensely helped the members to appreciate its wide application and how common people can make use of it to curb corruption and red tapism.

c. Learnings

The PRA and survey helped to realise the strength and weakness of the Panchayat. It revealed a new approach to development, for the leaders and people's representatives. They became aware of the resource of the Gram Panchayat.

The failure of the programme was in the drop out of the trained leaders to participate in the field level data collection. The trained core team members' participation in the PRA was only around 60%. So also some of the participants, especially the PRI members, were unable to have full time participation.



Training session

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The active interest of the members was the main facilitating factor in the program. They were keen to understand the methodology of PRA and survey. They appreciated the methodology of implementing new programmes and the usefulness of the findings.

The hindering factor was the irregular participation of core team members in the training and follow up programmes. So also the low literacy level of some of the core team members was a drawback, especially in the tabulation training.

e. Programme Details

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	PRA training	03	345
2	Household survey training	03	416
3	Data tabulation training	03	154
4	RTI training	09	658



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4. Household survey and Secondary data collection

a. Objectives

- To collect accurate data of all members of families to enable identification of resources
- To collect available secondary information for preparing the master document

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements

Under the guidance of the PRI members, the core team visited all the households in the Panchayat and collected the details of families. The data collection team held personal discussions with the head of the family and collected reliable information. The team also used observation tools besides cross checking the information.

Similarly, under the leadership of the PRI members, secondary data collection was done which helped in the development of a Master Document for the Panchayat. This was completed mainly by collecting previous plan documents, development guides, reports of previous studies and other documents from the Block and District Headquarters. The major achievement of this activity is the ready availability of accurate data which will ultimately help in the preparation of a Master Document of the Panchayats.



Group work

Training for data collection in Kodenchery Panchayat



c. Learnings

Though many surveys were conducted in the Panchayats, reliable information was always found lacking. But the present data collection bridged this gap. The main drawback related to secondary data collection which revealed poor documentation in the Panchayat Offices as well as the Block and District Offices.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The facilitating factor was the whole hearted cooperation of the core team members in conducting the household survey and in secondary data collection. The team was very active to complete the task in time. The hindering factors were the hesitation of some of the PRI members to participate in the survey due to political reasons. So also the inaccurate data provided by some of the families were also a hindrance.

5. Participatory Rural Appraisal

a. Objectives

- To know about the resources of the Gram Panchayats through participatory learning and action
- To ensure peoples' participation in the local development process
- To capacitate the CBO leaders for local level planning

Participatory Resource Mapping



b. Methodology, Processes, Achievements

A total of 12 PRA exercises were conducted in the three partner Panchayats. The main tools used in the PRA studies were resource mapping, venn diagram, time line, inflow / outflow, pair wise and matrix ranking and transect walk.

The active participation of PRI members and core team ensured the successful conduct of the programme under the guidance of experts. The major achievement of the program was that it enabled the people realize the possible development interventions with the available resources. So also the PRA helped to have meaningful deliberations on development and thereby a clear picture of their village development plan.



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c. Learnings

The best learning of the programme was the appreciation of PRA as a very useful exercise to initiate any development plan. The importance of peoples' participation in social analysis was also realised by the participants. Further as people started involving more in the programme; their interest also increased. We could not however, ensure the participation of all categories of people, especially officials, which was a drawback.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The active involvement of the people in the exercise was the main facilitating factor. The Core team members as well as the PRI members actively participated in the process which was a motivating factor for the full time participation of other members. The PRA was fully owned up by the participants which helped in the successful completion of the programme. The indifference of some people in few places on political grounds was, however, a hindering factor.

e. Programme Details

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	PRA	12	2255



Entrepreneurship training

6. Training in EDP (Entrepreneurship Development Programme)

a. Objectives

- To promote feasible micro enterprises in the partner Panchayats
- To revive the sick IGPs (Income Generation Programme) by providing information on entrepreneurship development
- To capacitate the potential entrepreneurs for successful marketing

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements

In order to promote the IGPs, six Panchayat level training programmes each of three days duration were organised. They comprised of input sessions, discussions, experience sharing, and market study. The aim was to promote new entrepreneurs besides reviving the sick units. The participants were from different CBOs including Kudumbashree. The sessions were facilitated by experts from District Industries

Centre, banks and Shreyas. About 70 % of the participants in the training were women and a good number of them could initiate successful enterprises. The entrepreneurs had a new outlook on marketing possibilities. Information on collecting quality raw materials was also provided to the participants which also helped them to run their ventures successfully.

c. *Learnings*

Any new venture should be started only after proper training covering specific topics like procedure for purchase of raw materials, market, marketing, customer relation, record maintenance and management. The entrepreneurs should be given proper support services and they should be linked with the marketing networks.

d. *Facilitating and Hindering Factors*

The active participation and interest of the participants was a facilitating factor of the programme. The support of the PRI members and the financial support by Kudumbashree for initiating IGPs were also positive factors.

The educational disparity among the participants was, however, a major hindrance. Another hindering factor identified was the inability to compete with the bigger players in terms of quality and price. The high cost of production was another major hindering factor.

e. *Programme Details*

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	EDP training	06	493

7. Review Meetings, External Trainings/ Meetings

a. *Objectives*

- To promote mutual learning and clarity on development issues
- To capacitate the concerned for the successful completion of the project
- To promote participatory monitoring
- To share the expertise of partners



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b. *Methodology, Process, Achievements*

There were different programmes including state level review meetings, trainings and discussions. The methodologies used were input sessions, group discussions, sharing of expertise and case studies. Each partner organisation was given an opportunity to share its experience in the field of Panchayat empowerment. These programmes have immensely helped in the successful implementation of the programmes. The partners could replicate the good models and practices for strengthening the Panchayati Raj system.

c. *Learnings*

The programmes gave lot of insight for the successful completion of the partner interventions. The capacity building of the PRI members and staff helped in making the programme more effective. The participation of PRI members and NGO representatives in such meetings helped to ensure a participatory approach in the development process. The only lacuna was that many subjects like environment and gender could not be considered in detail.

d. *Facilitating and Hindering Factors*

The expertise of the resource persons was the man facilitating factor of these programmes. The programmes were well organised and supported. There were no hindering factors except the irregular participation of the PRI members.

e. *Programme Details*

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	PCU level Review Meetings	03	32
2	Training on XI th plan	01	10
3	Meeting on RIF	01	05
4	Training on Documentation	01	02



Training of Working Group members

8. GP level Review Meetings

a. *Objectives*

- To promote mutual learning and sharing
- To capacitate the concerned for the successful completion of the project
- To promote participatory monitoring and evaluation



Panchayat meeting in session

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements

As part of the Panchayat Empowerment Programme, a GP level monitoring committee was formed with PRI members, core team representatives and NGO staff. This committee used to meet once in two months and plan programmes, monitor and evaluate the ongoing programmes. The GP President is the Chairman of the committee while the Coordinator acts as the Convener. The role of the committee was very crucial during the implementation of all programmes especially the survey and PRA. The main achievement of the regular monitoring meeting was that it could ensure transparency throughout the programme.

c. Learnings

The functioning of the committee served as a model for other programmes, as it ensured full transparency during the entire process. So also the active involvement of the committee has immensely helped timely monitoring. Some of the committee members were not very regular in attending the meeting, mainly due to political differences, which was a setback for the programme.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The active involvement of PRI members - especially the President - was the main facilitating factor in this programme. The hindering factor in one Panchayat was the committee's failure to meet regularly.

e. Programme Details

Sl. No.	Type of programme	No. of programs	No. of participants
1	Monitoring Committee Meeting, Mullenkolly	5	64
2	Monitoring Committee Meeting, Chungathara	6	79
3	Monitoring Committee Meeting, Kodenchery	5	69

9. Preparation of Master Document

a. Objectives

- To prepare an authentic development guide for Panchayats
- To identify and record the available data relating to potentials and resources

- To find out the retarding factors of development
- To support the future planning of the Panchayat

b. Methodology, Process, Achievements

For the preparation of a Master Document at GP level there were three types of data collection: family survey, PRA and secondary data collection. As mentioned earlier, they were carried out with the help of the core team covering the entire Panchayat. The tabulation of the data was taken up by the core team, with the help of experts. As part of this, special coaching was given to the core team, giving emphasis on data tabulation process. The outcome of this exercise was a draft document which was presented before the Panchayat Committee for its feed back. Similarly, presentations were done in the Gram Sabhas and working groups. Based on the suggestions and modifications of all the stakeholders, the Master Document was finalised. The greatest achievement of this exercise was the preparation of a master document with sufficient data for future planning.

c. Learnings

Concerted efforts in documentation can generate quality documents. The interventions could promote people's participation in development programmes. Once people are directly involved in the designing of the programmes they have better sense of ownership and responsibility. But cent percent accuracy of the data could not be ensured as there were semi-literate members in the core team.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The availability of the experts and the whole hearted cooperation of the Core team including the PRI members was the main facilitating factor. Similarly the support from government agencies especially from CWRDM (Centre for Water Resources Development and Management) for mapping was also a facilitating factor. The hindering factor was the long time taken for the preparation of the document and the difficulty in getting the document validated by the Gram Sabha as the schedule was different.

10. Study on Water Scarcity

a. Objectives

- To find out the basic reasons behind water scarcity, climate change and crop failures
- To suggest measures to mitigate the difficulties



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Development reports



KODENCHERRY



CHUNGATHARA



MULLENKOLLY



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b. Methodology, Process, Achievements

As part of water scarcity study, several consultations were held with the scientists from CWRDM, Calicut as it involved a lot of technical work. The resource team under the leadership of Mr. C M Sushanth, CWRDM visited the Panchayat several times and took stock of the situation by physical verification and interaction with the people. Similarly a household survey was conducted to study the problem in detail. Secondary data collection was done from the Panchayat office, Soil Survey Department, Agriculture Department and CWRDM. We could also install a rain gauge at Seethamount to record rainfall. Different water awareness programmes were organised for the PRI members and CBO leaders. The major achievement of the programme was the increased awareness level of the people on water management. Also, a few innovative measures were taken by the Panchayat, especially for the Kabani lift irrigation project. A scientific document could be brought out in the local language which is helpful to the local people.



c. Learnings

This was an important study as it provided many facts and figures which are helpful for the future course of action. The increased awareness of the people prompted them to take steps at their end. As the rain gauge is already installed, the water availability is scientifically measured for proper follow up measures.

d. Facilitating and Hindering Factors

The facilitating factor of the study was the full time dedicated involvement of the Scientist in the study and the whole hearted cooperation of the Panchayat President as well as most of the members. Similarly many of the CBO leaders were very keen on understanding the issue in detail. The hindering factor was the short period of the study (nine months) as we could not assess the seasonal factors properly.



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11. Social Auditing

a. *Objective and scope*

- To understand the success and failure of the project
- To ensure transparency and social accountability of the project
- To understand the different perspectives of the stakeholders

b. *Methodology, Process, Achievements*

As the first step in social auditing, we invited the representatives of different stake holders including PRI members, government officials, core team members, self help-group leaders and NGO representatives. The relevant details of the project like date, venue, participants, budget, actual expense and results were presented. Clarifications were sought by the participants and given by the PRI and NGO representatives. The major achievement was that we could ensure full transparency in all the activities which made the people own up the programme. The programme also helped in the follow up of the initiatives taken during the project period.

c. *Learnings*

Social auditing was a successful exercise of this project as it could ensure transparency and accountability. The method of presentation was very effective and people could recollect the events on seeing the photos. So also the programme was innovative and became a model for other Panchayats and projects. Poor participation of Government Officials was, however, a setback.

d. *Facilitating and Hindering Factors*

The active involvement of different stakeholders in the process was the main facilitating factor of the programme. Similarly the support given by the SDC-CapDecK team during the process was also a facilitating factor.

Social audit in Kodenchery Panchayat





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V

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The achievements of the project are many, through a process of different activities over a period of 15 months. The major ones are given below:-

- Collective efforts for development
- Attitudinal change of PRI members
- Shift from conventional to scientific approach
- Better collaboration between NGOs and PRIs
- People friendly environment in the Panchayats
- More clarity and development vision to PRI members
- Increased development initiatives among working group members
- Effective participation of CBO leaders in Panchayat level programmes
- Ward level/ Panchayat level data of available resources
- Revived micro enterprises
- Clarity on burning problems like water scarcity
- Ready availability of data on social issues
- Increased knowledge on current subjects like Right To Information, Citizens Charter & Jaagratha Samithi
- Less political conflicts
- Greater awareness among local people
- More consciousness regarding the local resources
- Better coordination among transferred institutions
- Replication of successful models
- Micro level planning for Gram Panchayat as one unit
- Evolution of need based projects
- Panchayats developed as models

VI

CONCLUSION

On the whole we feel happy that we could actively intervene in the development activities of the Panchayats with people's participation. We sincerely believe that to a great extent we could achieve the objective of creating model Panchayats in the districts concerned. The entire implementation process was transparent and it was monitored by a committee presided over by the GP President. Hopefully this project will be an inspiration for other development projects in the coming years and promote awareness among people about their rights and duties. The service delivery system of the partner Panchayats improved to a great extent to make them people friendly Institutions.



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SDC CapDeck

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency, under the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SDC supports sustainable development and seeks to improve the living conditions and quality of life of disadvantaged people in the South and East.

In India, starting with technical collaboration in livestock improvement in Kerala in 1963, SDC progressively expanded its activities to other geographical areas and to other fields such as natural resource management, rural finance and employment, rural energy and housing, decentralisation and local governance, empowerment and social justice, human and institutional strengthening and humanitarian aid.

SDC has been cooperating in these fields with a variety of partners, notably community based and non-governmental organisations, research and education institutions, central, state and local governments.

The Programme on Capacity Development for Decentralisation in Kerala (CapDeck) of SDC was conceptualised to support capacity building for the democratic decentralisation process in Kerala.

As part of this, SDC collaborates mainly with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA). Starting with support for the transition from a campaign mode of capacity building to an institutionalised form, the KILA-CapDeck project developed a decentralised training system under the leadership of KILA and platforms for sharing of experiences on decentralisation and for co-ordination of activities.

The CapDeck Programme also supports people-driven and people-centred decentralised democratic governance by empowering the citizens and their democratic bodies to play a more pro-active role in local development. Strengthening Gram Sabhas, developing Panchayats as real institutions of local governance, motivating Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other institutions for strengthening Panchayati Raj, mainstreaming gender in decentralisation and empowering the marginalised through Panchayati Raj, form the broad framework on which the local initiatives under the CapDeck's Panchayati Raj Empowerment component are designed and implemented. These interventions are carried out through Panchayats, NGOs, academic institutions, local government associations, Kudumbashree, State Women's Commission and other civil society organisations.