

Annex 1 Case list

(Roughly Categorized And Sorted By Country)

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One Drop Store

KeYiHui Social Lab Series Project – A collaborative project empowering people with disabilities

📍 Wuxi City, Jiangsu Province, China

🕒 From 2015 to present



Case introduction

The Water Drop Store aims to integrate resources from malls, universities, and public welfare organizations. Using a 'store' format as a carrier and platform, it conducts activities such as story-based displays, self-service honest sales, participatory experiences, and value co-creation to achieve multi-dimensional growth, community integration, and social impact for people with disabilities, volunteers, citizens, and other groups.



Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- Managers: people with intellectual disabilities. Trained to have basic communication and manual skills, they sell goods and organize activities.
- Customers: children and parents. They buy goods and join activities, and can do charity while doing so—making kids happy and easing parents' worries.
- Volunteers: Students and social members. With good manual/communication skills, they help the disabled, act as day managers, develop skills, and grow personally.

Enabling system

The Space Foundation has physical spaces (for offline collaboration between the disabled and one-day managers), a WeChat platform (for scheduling and resource coordination), and communication platforms (social media, online mall). Its core services are adaptability training (for the disabled and one-day managers) and resource coordination (matching partners' resources to project needs).



Trust building

The roles include managers, customers, and volunteers: managers are people with intellectual disabilities (trained in basic communication and manual skills) who sell goods, organize activities, boost disabled awareness, improve their social skills, and earn stable wages; customers are children and parents in the mall who buy goods, join activities, engage in charity, make kids happy, and ease parents' worries; volunteers are students and social members with good manual and communication skills, who help the disabled, act as day managers, develop their own skills, and achieve personal growth.



Nanjing Time Bank

Elderly Care Mutual Service Platform

📍 Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

🕒 Scaled citywide from 2019; active nationwide by 2025



I Case introduction

The Nanjing Time Bank was launched to tackle rapid population ageing and elderly care resource shortages, relying on community mutual aid rather than just state-funded services. It offers daily assistance (meals, cleaning, bathing), companionship, medical escorts and professional nursing. Since 2019, it has expanded citywide, with over 11,000 registered volunteers serving 300,000 elderly and fulfilling over 1 million orders. Its impacts are notable: cutting fiscal burden (18% estimated savings in elderly care spending), revitalizing communities, and building a "low-cost, high-participation" social care model. Its exchange mechanism also connects with local businesses (time credits for groceries or property discounts), linking public welfare and market incentives. The Time Bank shows how cross-generational and cross-sector collaboration can create a sustainable ecosystem for aging societies.



I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- Volunteers: young citizens and younger seniors, motivated by social responsibility and the prospect of securing future care through time credits.
- Elderly service receiver: primarily frail or isolated seniors seeking daily support and companionship.
- Community workers: neighborhood committees coordinating service points and mediating trust.



Enabling system

The "My Nanjing" APP records and matches services through AI skill-tags; blockchain ensures authenticity; community spaces and training programs support in-person interaction. Time credits can be stored, transferred to relatives, or redeemed for services and goods, reinforcing long-term commitment.



Trust building

Trust emerges through familiar community relations ("younger seniors serving older seniors"), government's credibility (municipal funding, guarantees), and transparency (GPS, digital photos, blockchain-based records).





Shared Mom

A Community-based Mutual Aid Practice for After-School Childcare

📍 Hefei, Anhui Province, China

🕒 From 2023 to present



I Case introduction

Currently, dual-income families commonly face the challenge of having no one to look after their children after school, while traditional commercial childcare services are not only expensive but also lack the warmth characteristic of community care. To address this, the project has established a "Shared Mom" collaborative network through the "Five Community Linkages" model (integrating community resources, social organizations, social workers, volunteers, and social resources) and adopted a "low-cost + volunteer points" operational model to provide diversified after-school services for families. Now covering 11 communities in Hefei, the initiative has formed multiple volunteer teams, serves hundreds of households, and continues to operate and iterate to optimize its service model. This approach has effectively reduced safety risks for children, activated a community mutual-aid ecosystem, and offered a replicable example for urban community childcare practices.



I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- Full-time/Retired mothers and Childcare/Education professionals provide after-school services including supervision, homework tutoring, and interest-based courses.
- Dual-earner families and their children benefit from this program by accessing childcare at subsidized rates below market price.

Trust building

Complementary skills among Shared Moms, communities, etc. ensure smooth division of labor. Real – time service information sharing via WeChat groups and other channels enhances two – way trust. Disclosing service schedules and Shared Moms' backgrounds makes the work transparent and reassuring for participants. Encouraging families to offer suggestions and adopting them boosts their sense of recognition for the project through diversified participation.



Enabling system

The community provides physical spaces equipped with study and craft supplies. The project utilizes digital platforms—including an intelligent matching system to connect needs with volunteers, WeChat groups for communication, and the "Xiaodu at Home" App to display real-time updates and live childcare status. To ensure safety, all participants are required to purchase unified child accident insurance and sign childcare exemption agreements. The program also provides volunteers with standardized pick-up signs.





With You for Our Parents

Mutual Assistance Agreement for Parents Away from Home

- 📍 China, nationwide
- ⌚ From 2014 to present

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位置



I Case introduction

The "Mutual Assistance Agreement for Parents Away from Home" is a youth-led social innovation in China that translates online initiatives into offline elderly care mutual aid. The program embodies the idea of "You help my parents, I help yours." It establishes a peer-to-peer mutual aid system through internet mobilization, volunteer agreements, and symbolic materials, creating a network of intergenerational support. Through the "With You for Our Parents" program, young participants provide familial care to each other's parents. Within months, the initiative has generated 6 million engagements, mobilized thousands of certified volunteers, and benefited nearly 10,000 elderly people. This low-threshold, high-participation model integrates traditional filial piety with digital collaboration, establishing a new intergenerational support system. Its simple volunteer tools and online coordination effectively enable broad civic engagement while demonstrating potential for integration with formal elderly care systems and AI services — offering a replicable local solution for aging societies.

I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- **Volunteers:** Young and middle-aged citizens (18+) motivated by social responsibility and empathy.
- **Elderly recipients:** Parents living in cities, especially those from rural backgrounds, often facing difficulties such as navigating transportation or daily activities.
- **Community supporters:** Shops, private drivers, and public spaces providing assistance points marked with stickers and signs.

Trust building

The initiative employs volunteer agreements along with "Pat-Pat Cards" and "Heartfelt Voice Cards" to formalize recognition and ease communication with the elderly. Volunteers enhance transparency by documenting activities through photos and videos, minimizing misunderstandings while amplifying positive outreach. Emotionally, the program builds trust by framing care for strangers as an extension of caring for one's own parents.

Enabling system

Material package: Pat-Pat Cards (volunteer ID), Heartfelt Voice Cards (elderly's voice and anti-lost info), Car Stickers, and Station Signs. Online platform: Registration → signing agreement → receiving volunteer kit → offering assistance → documenting and sharing online. Social mobilization: Relies heavily on self-media and viral campaigns to attract mass participation.





Raptors Monitoring

Citizen science focused on raptor monitoring and protection

📍 Chengdu, Sichuan province, China
🕒 From 2019 to present



I Case introduction

Based on community involvement and multi-stakeholder collaboration, this project seeks to establish a volunteer team dedicated to monitoring raptors in the Chengdu area through ongoing public science initiatives. It aims to systematically document the migration routes, species composition, population dynamics, and poaching pressure affecting raptors in the region. By engaging deeply with local communities, the project also works to identify the root causes of raptor poaching while raising public awareness and fostering a culture of raptor conservation. Building on monitoring data and community insights, the initiative will facilitate cooperation among law enforcement agencies, government authorities, and social organizations to establish an effective community-based, multi-party protection mechanism for migratory raptors.

I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- Observers are motivated by protecting raptors and a genuine interest in bird watching. They should use telephoto cameras to shoot raptors and systematically recording bird species.
- Locals aim to safeguard local environment and increase income via raptor monitoring and related activities. They provide guidance and support
- Researchers and trainers are driven by collecting data for research and protecting raptors. They need to impart professional knowledge to observers helping them monitor effectively.

Trust building

Trust emerges through Complementary skills (Trainers impart knowledge, Local villagers are familiar with the terrain.) Information sharing (Real time sharing, improving the value of cooperation) Transparency (demonstrating work transparency summarizing monitoring work and publicly disclosing plan details) Diversified participation (Villagers participation, integrating their opinions)

Enabling system

Tourist viewing platforms are used as monitoring platforms, and dormitories are rented from local farmers. Bird species are identified using apps like Dongniao (Bird Identification App), and the collected data is uploaded to the China Bird Watching Center. Daily data statistics are shared and discussed through WeChat groups. Training on bird monitoring is provided to volunteers, and collaborative activities with enterprises—such as camera experience sessions—are organized to secure small sponsorships and enhance the volunteer experience. The equipment used includes observation tools like telephoto cameras, infrared cameras, and telescopes, as well as recording devices such as paper, pens, counters, hygrometers, and walkie-talkies. Additionally, popular science materials like «bird-watching guides» are utilized.





Porta Moneta

Neighbourhood – residents association

📍 Milan, Italy
🕒 2022 – ongoing



Case introduction

“Porta Moneta” is one of the 56 social ventures of “The School of the Neighbourhood” a social innovation project launched by the Municipality of Milan and emerged within the context of a co-housing complex. It is a residents’ association, officially founded in 2022, but its informal activities began in 2019 with the support of the Social Housing Foundation. The foundation supported the establishment of various interest groups and activities, such as community gardens, creative workshops, and play areas, within the co-housing development on Moneta Street, which comprises 300 apartments in Milan’s Affori district. Through its training courses and funding, “The School of the Neighbourhoods” enabled the most active residents to establish an association and create a real service offering. Today, “Porta Moneta” unites a diverse group of people who engage in a wide range of activities, such as after-school help, co-working, financial education, sports courses, creative workshops, a community garden, and a variety of events. These activities are periodically refreshed (around every 4–6 months) to include new use co-housing spaces like common rooms, courtyards, and gardens that are opened not only to residents but also to the broader neighbourhood.

Form of collaboration



Collaborators

- **Committed residents:** members of board of the association and members responsible for each activity.
- **Residents:** beneficiaries of the activities and in some case also co-producing part of the services but with low commitment.

Trust building

Trust is built essentially because of proximity, because they are residents sharing the same objectives, i.e. have a lively neighbourhood and providing services that solve daily issues and create conviviality. There is a Manifesto with the main principles on which engaged residents agreed and monthly meetings with the board of residents to discuss main issues. A e-form for proposals is always available on the website so that every resident can propose an activity.

Enabling system

Porta Moneta has a series of dedicated space: a common “living room”, a kitchen, a yard and a vegetable garden. There is also a whatsapp community and a series of whatsapp groups related to each specific activity.



The Silvers

Learn from the experience

- 📍 Copenhagen, Denmark
- 🕒 Ongoing

Case introduction

TheSilvers is a startup platform that connects people aged 60+ — whether Danish or international — with individuals across generations through home-hosted meals and shared experiences. Seniors open their homes to offer simple dinners and exchange life stories, while guests of all ages, from those in their twenties to fellow seniors, participate driven by curiosity and a desire to learn from fully lived lives. Beginning with shared dinners, the platform enables access to the wisdom, presence, and experiences of the older generation. TheSilvers' mission is to bring the unique magic of seniors to a wider audience through real-life encounters, intergenerational stories, and products created by seniors and curated with the help of youth.

Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- **Seniors:** people who can become a host to share dinner or other experiences who want to share what they have learned through time.
- **People across all ages and backgrounds:** locals, Danish, internationals, curious visitors, tourists, friends, parents and their kids —anyone who wants to access the knowledge of senior humans

Trust building

This is a form of horizontal accessibility to seniors to share their experience and to all ages people to share time together. Trust comes from the opportunity to read about the experiences that other people have had thanks to the platform.



Enabling system

The initiative is promoted and coordinated by the Silvers startup which also takes care of the functioning of the platform (privacy policy, terms and conditions and other requests) and the promotion of the initiative. They have also a Facebook and Instagram profile.



Café Livskraft

Mutual care for cancer patients

- 📍 Ballerup/Copenhagen, Denmark
- 🕒 Ongoing (weekly meetings)



Case introduction

Few years ago, the library of Ballerup inherited a large 2-level building, very close to the library main building, that has been dedicated to community activities. The activities are coordinated by the library personnel, but several initiatives, similar to Café Livskraft, are coordinated by local associations or groups. Further initiatives are coordinated by the national elderly association. In this building, the library works as an enabling platform for several initiatives, including Café Livskraft. Café Livskraft is a form of horizontal collaboration among existing cancer patients and patients that have recovered from cancer. The system complements traditional healthcare treatments by focusing on everyday life when subject to cancer treatment.

Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- **Volunteers:** cancer patients or people that have recovered from cancer treatment.



Trust building

The meetings are completely informal and trust is build on the personal experience of volunteers. Meetings are open and in groups, but 1 to 1 meetings are also possible.



Enabling system

The library of Ballerup (in the Copenhagen metropolitan area) has a dedicated space, in a former post office, where several activities are happening, under the coordination of the library.



Østergro Tag Farm

Community Supported Agriculture initiative in roof garden

📍 Copenhagen, Denmark

🕒 Ongoing



Case introduction

Østergro is the first roof garden in Denmark, connected with other 600 sqm of farming areas, where citizens can come close to food production. Here, people can follow the cycle of organic vegetables from the ground to the table, through periodic visits, workshops, training, voluntary work and social dinners. Østergro é una Community Supported Agriculture initiative, that feeds 40 local families in the area. Østergro also has a restaurant, Gro Spiseri, and with other gardens in the city (Øens have).

There is place for 25 voluntary every Tuesday, with meeting in the morning and in the afternoon; at the 10 AM and 14 PM there is a distribution of tasks. At 13 there is a common lunch. Further initiatives are promoted, such as a garden bar and a Christmas market.

Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- **Volunteers:** Groups of citizens that periodically meet to increase the green coverage in the area and maintain the green areas.
- **Gro Spiseri, local restaurant:** using fruits and vegetable from the Roof garden and from another city garden.

Enabling system

The roof garden and the Øens Have are the physical meeting places where citizens are periodically meeting. The dinner restaurant is also part of the enabling system, with periodical social dinners.

Trust building

Trust is build among the community, on the basis of mutual peer to peer exchange of knowledge about vegetable gardens.





RENTEN Transition Northwest

Transition community

📍 Copenhagen, Denmark
🕒 Ongoing (weekly meetings)



I Case introduction

RENTEN brings together local actors and volunteers in a community of action that gives ownership of the local transition, using participatory methods to envision the changes needed to reduce traffic in the local area, relocalize food systems and create communities and green spaces.

At present more than 200 neighbours and 17 local partners have participated to the initiative and planted native wild plants in area that have been made free from the previous asphalt or cement coverage, or that are temporarily not used. Volunteers show up regularly to gardening events and local groups are taking ownership of the local transformation



I Form of collaboration

Trust building

This is an form of horizontal collaboration of voluntary building, trust is build through periodical meetings at Democracy Garage. The initiative is promoted and coordinated by a working group within the organization We do Democracy, which also takes care of contacts with local authorities or land owners to negotiate the use of local areas.

Enabling system

Democracy garage works as a collaboration platform, promoting several initiatives to promote democracy and transition.

Collaborators

- Volunteers: Groups of citizens that periodically meet to increase the green coverage in the area and maintain the green areas
- Democracy Garage: a social/cultural centre in the area
- We do Democracy: an association promoting social and cultural initiatives inspired to democracy and democratic transition
- Transition network: a global network of groups working on transition
- Rentemestervej library local library

Collaborative Village Renewal

Participatory Watershed Management and Integrated Rural Development in Ralegan Siddhi

📍 India / Maharashtra, Ahmadnagar District, Parner County (Taluka)

🕒 From 1975–ongoing



I Case introduction

Driven by unprecedented community collaboration led by local leader Annasaheb Hazare, Ralegan Siddhi transformed from a degraded village plagued by poverty and social issues into a self-sufficient model. Confronted with severe water scarcity, agricultural failure, and social problems including rampant alcoholism and large-scale migration prior to 1975, the village adopted participatory watershed management as its core solution. Through voluntary labor, they built water-harvesting structures and planted 3.5 million trees, raising groundwater levels from 20 meters to 6.5 meters. Accompanying social reforms—banning alcohol consumption, abolishing the dowry system, promoting family planning, and eliminating caste discrimination—laid the foundation for an ethical and just social order, achieving sustainable development and community self-reliance.

I Form of collaboration

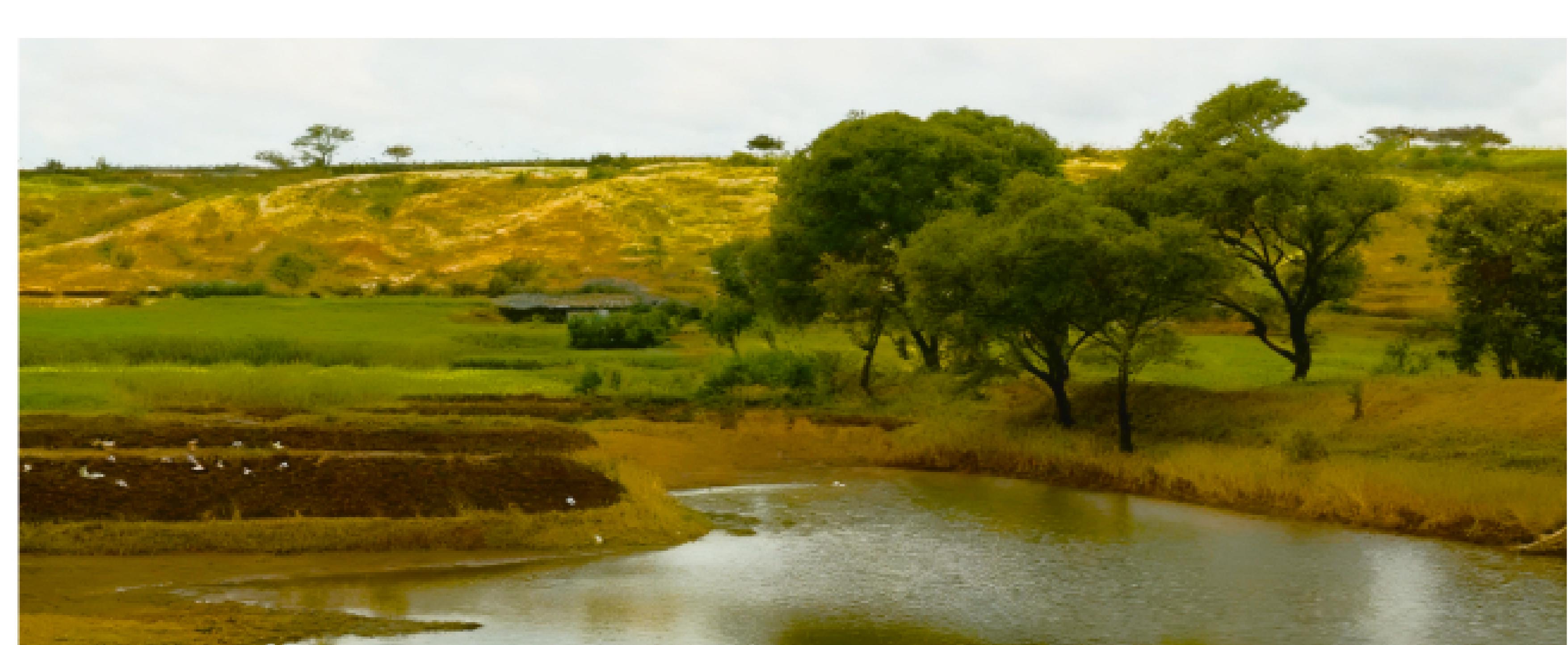


Collaborators

- Mr. Annasaheb Hazare (Anna), a local leader served as a catalyst and a bridge. He was instrumental in mobilizing all sections of society, including women and lower castes, ensuring their involvement in planning and implementation.

Trust building

Trust was built through Anna's selfless leadership and sacrifice. He initiated the village's reconstruction by spending his entire savings on renovating the Sant Yadav Baba temple, living in it as a renunciate, and breaking family ties. This act of altruism and dedication won the villagers' confidence and established his moral authority. Democratic decision-making and the adoption of a voluntary moral code of conduct, enforced with strict discipline, further solidified the collaborative spirit.



Enabling system

The temple served as a common platform (Gram Sabha) where people of all castes and classes could meet, discuss village affairs, and make collective decisions by consensus. Various village organizations like 'Tarun Mandal' (youth organization) and 'Mahila Mandals' (women's groups) facilitated the ongoing collaboration and implementation of initiatives. Water harvesting structures became physical manifestations of their collective effort.

Amul: Empowering Farmers Through Cooperative Collaboration

The Anand Pattern and India's White Revolution

- 📍 India, primarily Gujarat, with its headquarters in Anand
- 🕒 Founded in 1946, currently became the world's largest dairy cooperative.



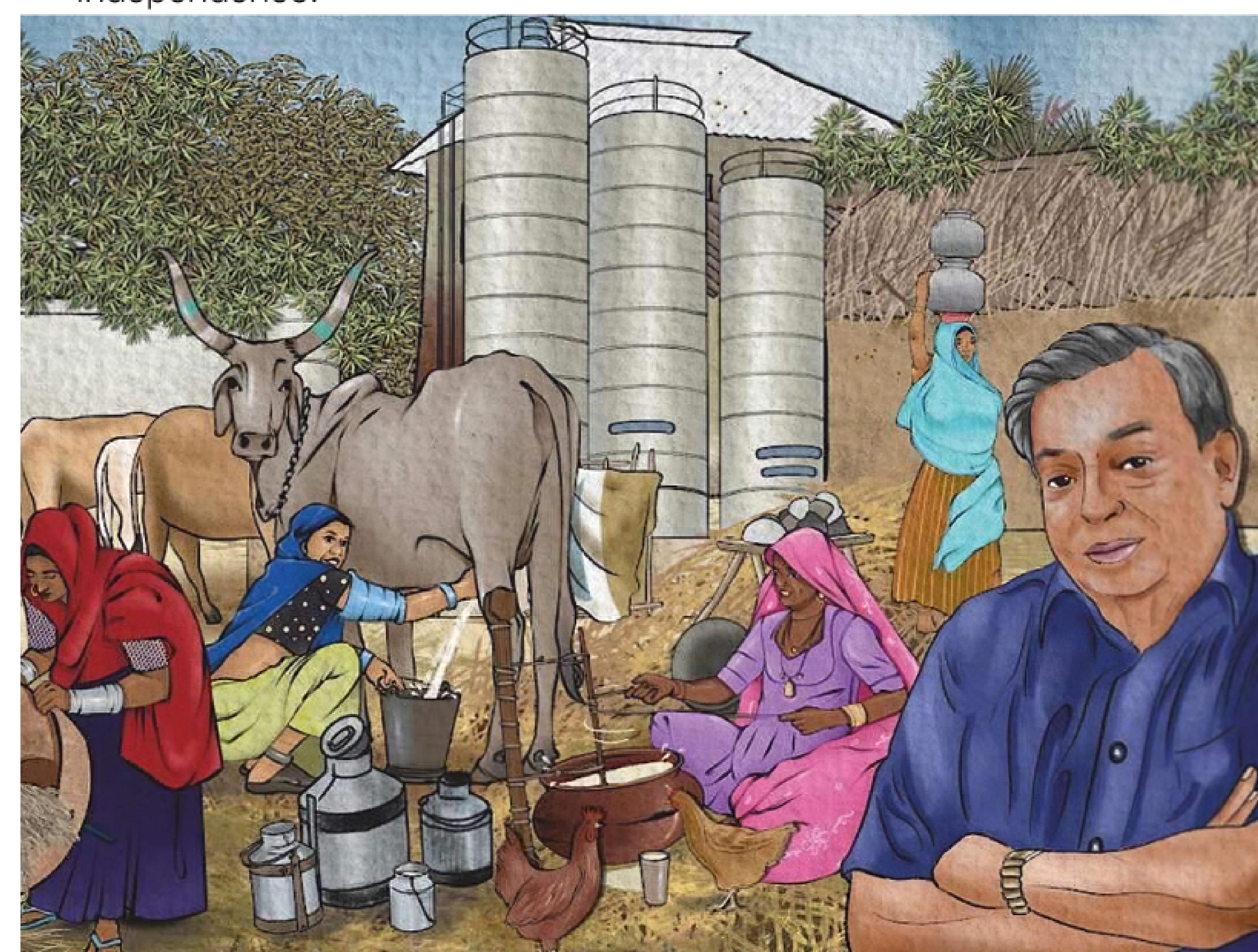
I Case introduction

Amul, an Indian multinational cooperative, unites 3.6 million farmers through a three-tier structure comprising Village Dairy Cooperative Societies, District Unions, and the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation. It combats middlemen exploitation while pursuing fair returns and economic autonomy. The social innovation began with the 1946 Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union, establishing a farmer-owned supply chain. Amul spearheaded India's "White Revolution," making the country the world's largest milk producer, elevating millions economically—especially women—and fostering rural development and social cohesion, demonstrating a sustainable integration of business growth, social justice, and environmental stewardship.

I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- Amul unites 3.6 million farmer-members through a three-tier structure: Village Dairy Cooperative Societies, District Cooperative Unions.
- The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Limited (GCMMF). Motivated by exploitation and unfair pricing from middlemen, farmers, guided by leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Verghese Kurien, sought fair returns and economic independence.



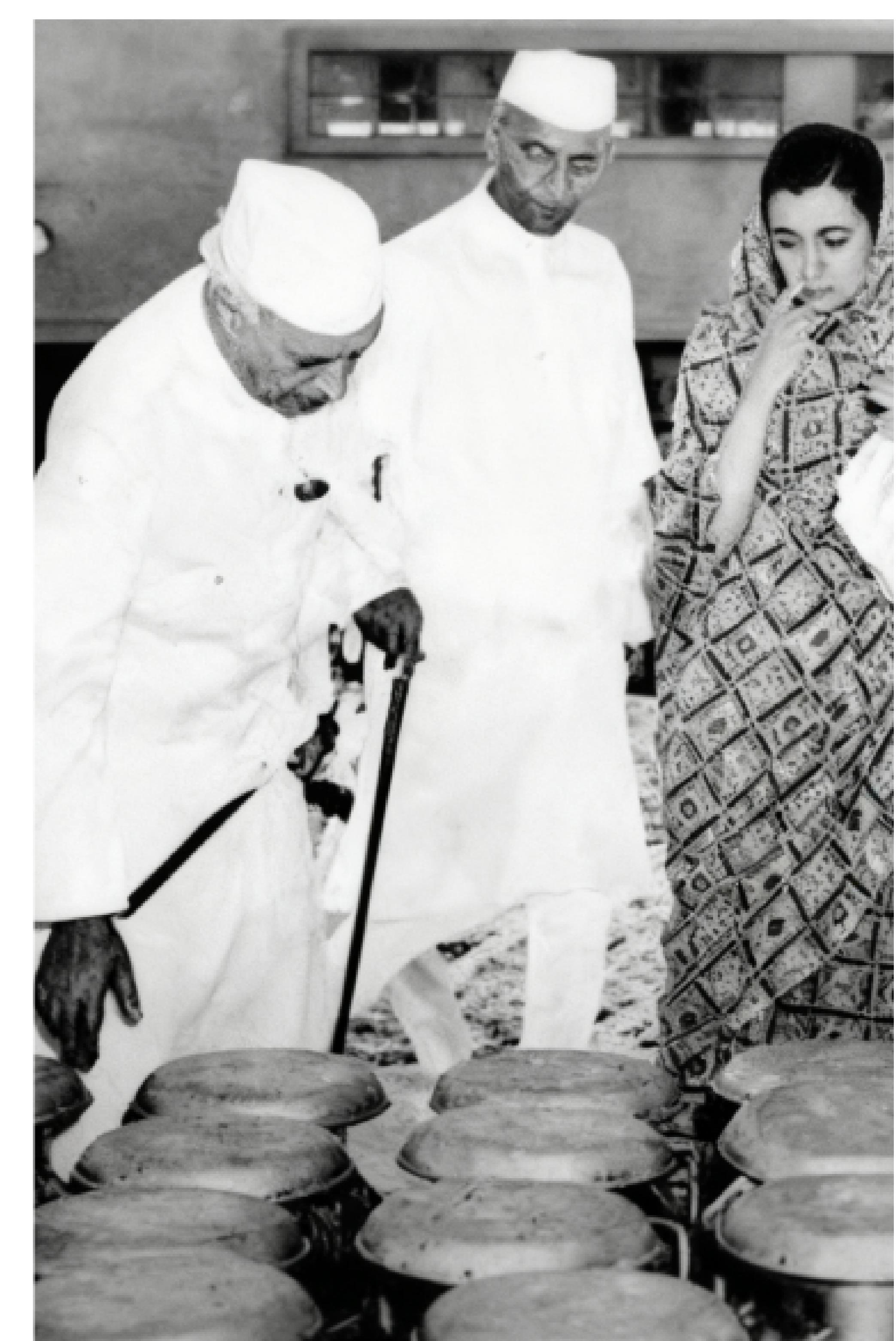
Trust building

Trust is paramount, built via democratic governance where farmers elect board members, ensuring a "One Person, One Vote" principle. Amul returns 85% of earnings to farmers, offers higher procurement rates, and reinvests profits into farmer welfare (veterinary services, cattle feed, AMUL Farmer app).



Enabling system

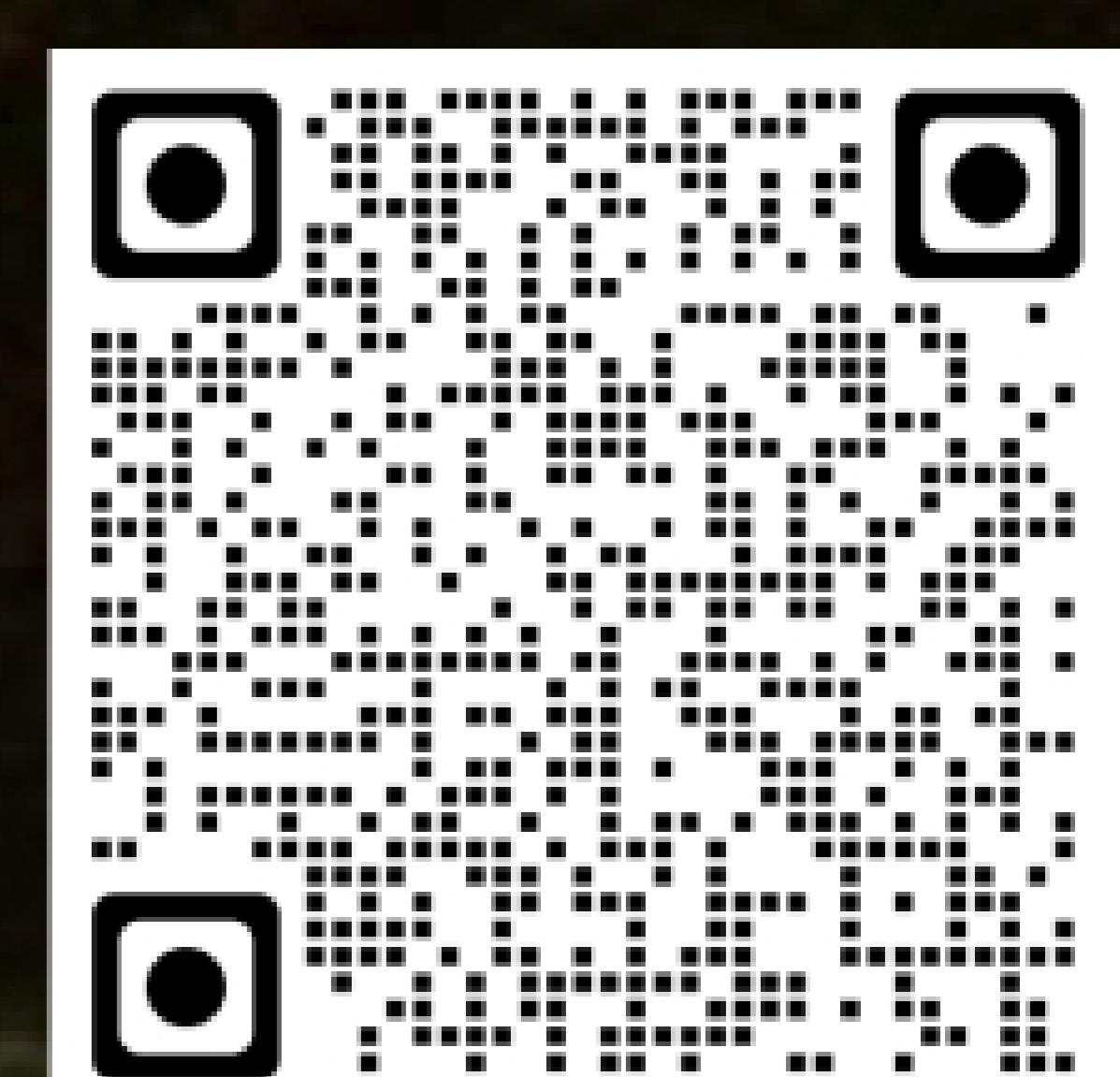
Three-tier structure, efficient supply chain management, buffalo milk spray drying technology, veterinary services, cattle feed services, AMUL Farmer app.



Design-led Collaborative Learning for Rural Self-Reliance

The Jawaja Project: An Experiment in the Rural University

- 📍 Jawaja, Ajmer district, Rajasthan, India
- 🕒 From 1975–ongoing



I Case introduction

The Jawaja Project, launched in 1975 by Professor Ravi Matthai of IIM Ahmedabad, established a "rural university" model integrating economic development with education. Collaborating with the National Institute of Design, Central Leather Research Institute, and Viva Service Centre, with support from the Rajasthan government, UNESCO, and ICSSR, it addressed issues including high dropout rates and irrelevant curricula. By training weavers to produce furnishing fabrics like rugs and leatherworkers to master new tanning techniques for schoolbags and handbags, the project enabled artisans to bypass traditional trade barriers and form self-managed craft associations. Through collective management of finances, purchasing, and marketing, villagers not only generated greater wealth but also ensured fairer distribution, with successful urban exhibitions validating market demand for quality products. Despite persistent funding and resource challenges, this research-based initiative provided India's 250 million impoverished people with a sustainable pathway to self-reliance through skill development and cooperative action.



I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- The collaboration was characterised by a "mutuality of learning" where individuals like Ganesh (a weaver), the designers, and many others were "learners together in a common experience". Designers from NID brought expertise in product development, skill enhancement, and market access, aiming for their skills to be relevant to India's rural poor. Villagers brought existing craft skills and local knowledge.



Trust building

Trust was built through this shared learning and a strategy of "extensibility," where designers taught a few villagers who, in turn, taught others. The designer's role was envisioned to decrease over time as villagers gained the capability to innovate and design their own products.

Enabling system

Infrastructure included training workshops, the introduction of new technologies (e.g., new tanning processes, dyeing), and the establishment of craftsmen associations like the Jirachi Aviva's Association and the Georgia Leather Association, which began to manage their own affairs.

Center of Production and Sharing – Lights of Tomorrow

Agroforest – community garden

📍 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
🕒 2021 – ongoing



I Case introduction

The Lights of Tomorrow project in central Rio de Janeiro has transformed a one-hectare vacant lot from a public lighting company into an ecological green space. By integrating food production with cultural activities, it promotes agroforestry knowledge, natural medicine, and traditional music while fostering co-creation between the community and the land. After two years of development, the site now hosts over 100 plant species and sustains itself without irrigation or fertilizers. Through monthly volunteer days and weekly kindergarten visits, this community-driven initiative has earned regional organic certification, becoming an urban innovation hub that connects ecological agriculture with cultural education.

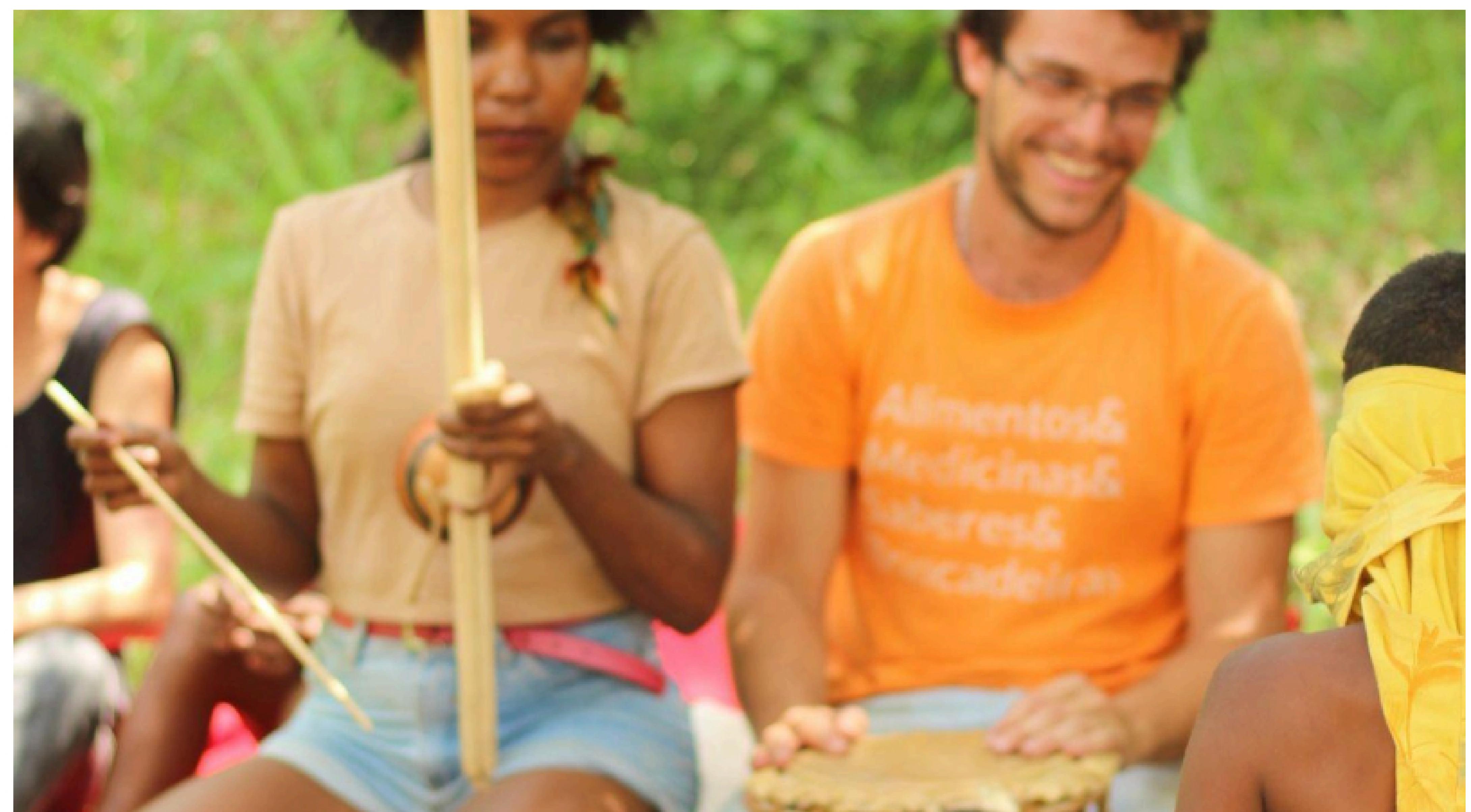
I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

- **Nearby favela residents and projects:** social ONG's that work with kids and residents.
- **Young people with an interest in agroecology:** Collaborate to work on the land and organize events.
- **A kindergarten nearby:** A partnership to weekly receive the kids at the agroforest.

Trust building

It happens organically with participants and it is not systematized. The leader is responsible to talk with the participants and build trust through an interpersonal level, which makes the wish to create a horizontal management harder. But on an “institutional” level, the project related to a network of other agroecology projects and a participatory guarantee system to certify its production as organic.



Enabling system

The land is commissioned through a lending contract with the public lightning company, and the rules include the project can use it to plant food on it and build a small non-permanent warehouse. There is a group on whatsapp with 70+ people, in which the topics regarding the land cultivation and the events are discussed, and an instagram page for publicity.

Susu (Money Go Round)

A Collaborative financial Tradition Evolving Through Digital Innovation

📍 Ghana (West Africa) – Kumasi
🕒 Ongoing



I Case introduction

Susu is a traditional rotating savings and credit association (ROSCA) widely practiced in Ghana. It is a grassroots social innovation based on collaboration, trust, and voluntary participation. For centuries, Susu has enabled individuals, particularly those in underserved and informal communities to pool funds and take turns receiving lump sums. These contributions help members meet personal needs, finance small businesses, handle emergencies, or support family obligations, all without relying on formal banking institutions. What makes Susu powerful is its mutual aid ethos. Instead of contracts or collateral, participation is secured through social trust and collective responsibility. Members decide contribution sizes, rotation schedules, and payout orders together, holding each other accountable. Today, Susu is evolving. With support from groups like the Ghana Co-operative Susu Collectors Association, digital tools such as mobile apps, SMS alerts, and online record-keeping are modernizing the practice. These innovations improve transparency, reduce default risks, and connect participants to formal financial services, all while keeping Susu's core principle of trust intact.

I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

Families, friends, neighbors, market women, traders, artisans, and informal workers.

Trust building

In traditional Susu, trust comes first, before money is exchanged. As the cycle runs smoothly, confidence deepens, allowing groups to take on collective projects such as farming or trade ventures.

Enabling system

In its digital form, accountability is reinforced through real-time tracking, reminders, and the involvement of rural banks or cooperatives as guarantors. Technology acts as a "trust infrastructure," extending Susu beyond the local community.



The Clean Ghana Project – Sanitation as Collective Responsibility

Reviving Communal Values for Environmental Stewardship

📍 Ghana (West Africa)

🕒 From 2017 to Present (Ongoing)



I Case introduction

The Clean Ghana Project is a nationwide environmental sanitation campaign launched to promote cleanliness, waste management, and civic responsibility across Ghana. It draws inspiration from traditional communal systems such as Noboa and Nnoboafos, where members of a community come together to clean shared spaces, markets, and waterways for mutual benefit.

The initiative brings together government agencies, schools, churches, market associations, and civil society groups to create cleaner, healthier urban and rural environments. Activities range from regular community clean-up exercises and waste segregation drives to the installation of waste bins and public education campaigns. Through these efforts, Clean Ghana transforms sanitation from an individual duty into a collective movement grounded in Ghanaian values of unity and mutual care.



I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

Local government assemblies, sanitation workers, school children, traders, faith-based organizations, and residents all participate. Chiefs, opinion leaders, and assembly members act as mobilizers.

They collaborate because of:

- **Shared Identity:** The initiative revives the sense of communal ownership that characterized traditional Ghanaian life.
- **Accessibility:** Everyone can contribute and no expertise or financial resources required.
- **Visible Impact:** Communities see immediate results, motivating sustained participation.
- **Social Recognition:** Participation strengthens civic pride and belonging.

Trust building

Trust is built through transparency and shared responsibility. Traditional and religious leaders endorse the program, while local assemblies ensure that each community sees tangible results, clean streets, improved waste collection, and safer environments. This visibility reinforces public belief in the power of collaboration.

Enabling system

The project leverages existing social structures, including community information centers, local schools, and district assemblies, to coordinate activities. Media campaigns “Keep Ghana Clean” amplify the message and inspire wider participation.



Tree Planting Exercise in Ghana – Noboa

A Collaborative Tradition for Environmental Sustainability

- 📍 Ghana (West Africa) – Kumasi
- 🕒 Ongoing



Case introduction

The Noboa concept is rooted in Ghanaian communal traditions of mutual aid and cooperation and has been revitalized as a framework for environmental sustainability through community-based tree planting initiatives. In Kumasi and other parts of Ghana, Noboa is practiced when community members, civic workers, and students come together to plant and nurture trees as part of local and national greening efforts. Seedlings are often provided by local government agencies, with logistics and tools supplied through collaborative arrangements. These activities typically coincide with national events such as World Environment Day, transforming them into celebrations of civic responsibility and environmental stewardship. This practice fosters environmental awareness and instills values of care, responsibility, and sustainability.

Form of collaboration

Collaborators

Families, friends, neighbors, market women, traders, artisans, students, and local government officials, including assembly members and civic officers, all contribute voluntarily to the tree planting activities.

People collaborate because it reflects a sense of belonging and ownership. The tree-planting exercise is not merely an environmental activity but also a reaffirmation of cultural identity and solidarity. Through Noboa, individuals see themselves as co-stewards of the land, contributing to the common good. The absence of financial reward underscores the intrinsic motivation to care for one another and the environment, reinforcing social cohesion and civic pride.

Trust building

Trust is cultivated through shared community participation and transparent organization. Local government representatives, traditional leaders, and school administrators play key roles in ensuring fairness, accountability, and follow-up, reinforcing the sense of mutual responsibility central to Noboa.



Enabling system

The initiative thrives on existing community structures and local governance systems. Civic organizers, chiefs, teachers, and assembly members facilitate coordination and ensure that resources and support reach participants equitably.



Umuganda – Rwanda's Model of Collective Action for National Development

Coming Together for the Common Good

- 📍 Rwanda (East Africa)
- 🕒 Reintroduced in 1998 – Ongoing



I Case introduction

Umuganda – a Kinyarwanda term meaning “coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome” is a nationwide community work initiative held on the last Saturday of every month. On this day, Rwandans across all districts pause regular activities to participate in collective efforts such as cleaning public spaces, repairing roads, constructing schools and health centers, and addressing local challenges. Reintroduced after the 1994 genocide, Umuganda has become a cornerstone of Rwanda's post-conflict reconstruction and national unity agenda. It represents not just manual labor, but a philosophy of shared responsibility, emphasizing that sustainable development begins with community ownership. Through Umuganda, citizens actively shape their physical and social environments while fostering dialogue, solidarity, and mutual accountability.



I Form of collaboration

Collaborators

All citizens aged 18–65, public officials, local leaders, youth groups, and occasionally the President himself participate in Umuganda. Ministries, NGOs, and district councils often align their programs with Umuganda activities to amplify impact.

- **Collective Progress:** Citizens witness visible improvements in roads, schools, and neighborhoods.
- **Social Cohesion:** Umuganda bridges ethnic, generational, and socio-economic divides.
- **Civic Engagement:** Serves as a platform for government accountability and public consultation.
- **Cultural Continuity:** Revives precolonial traditions of cooperation (ubudehe) and collective self-help.

Trust building

Trust is fostered through visibility and equal participation, where leaders work side-by-side with citizens. These monthly gatherings double as forums for civic education and open dialogue, strengthening transparency between communities and government officials. The collaborative spirit rebuilds confidence in public institutions and promotes peace through shared purpose.

Enabling system

Each community (umudugudu) has an Umuganda Committee responsible for planning, mobilizing, and evaluating activities. Participation is mandatory, and absence without a valid reason may attract a fine, reflecting the cultural and civic importance of communal responsibility in Rwanda.



Hillside Dams Conservancy --Restoring Nature through Community Collaboration

Citizens Transform Urban Green Space

- 📍 Zimbabwe – Bulawayo
- 🕒 Ongoing



Case introduction

The Hillside Dams Conservancy in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, stands as a living example of how community collaboration can protect and restore urban ecosystems. Once threatened by neglect and invasive species, this historic conservancy has been revitalized through collective action led by conservationist Bernadette Mupinda, her team, and dedicated volunteers. Their shared mission: to preserve one of Zimbabwe's most treasured natural heritage sites.

The team's primary challenge is combating the spread of Lantana camara, an invasive shrub that endangers native vegetation and disrupts the park's ecological balance. Through coordinated community efforts, regular uprooting campaigns, and ecological monitoring, the conservancy has achieved a 70% reduction in invasive plants, enabling native species and biodiversity to thrive once again.

Form of collaboration

Collaborators

Local conservationists, student volunteers, civic organizations, and residents work side-by-side in restoration and monitoring efforts.

Enabling system

Smartphone apps to document changes of invasive species and indigenous flora.

Trust building

Transparency and community ownership: Volunteers engage in practical conservation. This participatory approach fosters transparency and community ownership of the conservation process.

Visible impact: The park now sustains over 100 indigenous plant species and 200 bird species, reinforcing its ecological and cultural significance. As student volunteer Zothile Zulu notes, "When people see tangible results, they stay committed."

Civic pride: The Hillside Dams Conservancy has become a model for how citizen-led environmental stewardship can safeguard biodiversity within cities which inspires civic pride and ecological awareness.

