



EARTH FOCUS

Communities | Education | Livelihoods

Annual Report 2023-24





Vision

A Kanha landscape where
people and nature thrive.

Mission

Empowering forest dwelling communities
and restoring nature through contextual
education and sustainable livelihoods.

Why Kanha?

This landscape abounds with possibilities for restoration — of the relationship between forest-dwelling communities and the ecosystem, of nature-based livelihoods, and of the degraded landscape in the buffer zone.



However, Baiga and Gond communities around Kanha National Park have compromised development levels, and often don't receive their legislated rights



Communities are often stuck in poverty traps because of issues that dampen their livelihood options



Tribal children face many barriers in receiving quality education



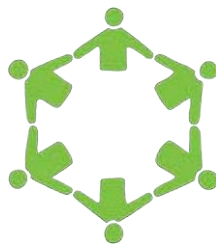
3 Pillars of Work

There is great potential to leverage these communities' symbiotic relationship with nature and place tribal youth and families on fundamentally better life paths. This requires thoughtful, contextual approaches to both education and livelihoods that harness community knowledge and practices.



Livelihoods

Our livelihoods efforts will restore ecosystems and enhance community revenue streams



Communities

We identify community needs and build their agency towards economic and social mobility



Education

We deliver foundational and contextual learning in early education

Introduction

The year 2023-24 marked a significant milestone for Earth Focus Foundation as we advanced our mission to empower the indigenous communities of the Kanha Landscape through contextual education programs and nature-based sustainable livelihood initiatives.

Our **contextual education program** engages children from government primary schools and anganwadi centres, focusing on foundational literacy, numeracy, and biodiversity education. This approach is designed to nurture the next generation of environmental stewards who will protect and sustain their land.

The **sustainable livelihoods program** is dedicated to creating resilient, nature-based income streams while restoring degraded ecosystems within the Kanha Tiger Reserve landscape. By rejuvenating degraded land and cultivating native species, this initiative seeks to build a harmonious relationship between people and nature.

Through community-driven efforts and ecologically sensitive practices, Earth Focus Foundation is shaping a future where both the local population and the natural environment thrive in balance. Below are the key achievements of 2023-2024:

Key Achievements in Education Interventions:

1. Expansion of Villages and Educational Facilities

- **Primary Schools (Anandghar):** Added 15 new Anandghar schools, providing quality primary education in underserved villages.
- **Anganwadi Centres:** Established 17 new centers to support early childhood education and nutrition for children aged 0-6 years.
- **Total Villages Covered:** Expanded operations to 15 villages in the Kanha landscape.



2. Increased Number of Students

- Enrolled 834 new students across Anandghar schools and anganwadi centers.
- **Indigenous Representation:** 88% of students belong to Gond and Baiga communities.

3. Enrolment of Mata-Samiti Members

- Engaged 530 mothers in Mata-Samiti, fostering parental involvement in their children's education.
- **Roles:** Actively involved in school management, decision-making, and community mobilization for education.



4. Capacity Building for Education Teams

- Conducted 30 days training sessions for teachers and facilitators, focusing on:
 - Pedagogical methods tailored for indigenous communities.
 - Biodiversity sensitisation
 - Effective classroom management and lesson planning.
 - Community engagement strategies to promote education.



5. Progress on Biodiversity Curriculum

- Developed and integrated a **biodiversity-focused curriculum** into all Anandghars.
- Topics included:
 - Local flora and fauna of the Kanha region.
 - Importance of conservation and sustainable living practices.
 - Hands-on activities like nature walks and biodiversity mapping.

6. Digital and Financial Literacy Program

- **Students Enrolled:** 56 students participated in digital and financial literacy training to build essential life skills.
- **Team Members Trained:** 21 education team members received training to facilitate the program effectively.
- **Outcome:** 90% of participants can now operate basic digital tools and applications.

Impact

- **Educational Access:** Enhanced access to quality education for 800+ children in remote areas.
- **Community Empowerment:** Increased engagement of 530+ mothers in Mata-Samiti, creating stronger community-school relationships.
- **Skill Development:** Prepared 56 students and 21 team members with digital and financial skills for modern challenges.
- **Conservation Awareness:** Fostered environmental stewardship through the biodiversity curriculum, instilling conservation values in 560+ children.

Future Goals for 2024-25

- Establish 10 more Anandghar schools and anganwadi centers in unreached villages.
- Expand the biodiversity curriculum.
- Launch vocational training programs for older students.
- Strengthen digital infrastructure for education delivery.

Key Achievements in Livelihoods Intervention

1. Expansion of Agroforestry Model (M1 and M2)

- **Acreage:** An additional ~128 acres of barren land were brought under sustainable cultivation.
- **Beneficiaries:**
 - Total beneficiaries: 117
 - Demographics: 45% women, and 100% from indigenous Gond and Baiga communities.
 - Districts covered: 01



2. Protection of Land

- Installed chain link fencing across ~128 acres, safeguarding restored land from grazing and encroachments.

3. Plantation Initiatives

- **Species:** Bamboo, horticultural plants, and native tree saplings.
- **Total Saplings Planted:** Bamboo (n=17390), Horticulture (n=2199) and Native (n=1885)
- **Survival Rate:** 92% maintained through consistent care and monitoring.



4. Watershed Management

- **Farm Pond Deepening:** 2 ponds deepened, improving rain-water retention.
- **Pond Lining Installation:** 2 ponds lined to reduce water seepage and support year-round irrigation.
- **Procurement and installation of irrigation equipment:** Pumps (fuel as well as electricity) along with delivery systems were



5. Irrigation Systems Setup

- Implemented advanced irrigation systems across 22 acres, ensuring optimal water distribution for plantations and crops.

6. Intercropping Practices

- Cultivated local millets, oilseeds, and vegetables through intercropping on 36 acres, enhancing biodiversity and food security.

7. Vermi Composting Beds

- Established 22 vermi composting units, promoting the use of organic fertilizers and reducing dependency on chemical inputs.

8. Maintenance of Plantations

- Adopted sustainable maintenance practices, including:

- Collaring of young plants.
- Mulching to conserve soil moisture.
- Application of natural fertilizers, compost, and pest repellents.

9. Capacity Building

- Conducted 15+ training sessions for the team and 22 households and their members on agroforestry, including:
 - Monitoring and maintenance of plantations.
 - Sustainable farming techniques.
 - Agroforestry benefits.

10. Convergence money and benefits unlocked

A total of INR 7,10,511/- has been unlocked via different government schemes in the year 2023-24

Impact

- **Ecological Restoration:** Restored ~128 acres of barren land, contributing to habitat improvement and biodiversity conservation in the Kanha landscape.
- **Economic Upliftment:** Increased household income for 22 landowners by turning unproductive land into a resourceful agroforest.
- **Community Empowerment:** Enhanced skills and participation of marginalized groups, especially women and youth.

Future Goals for 2024-25

- Expand restoration to an additional 350 acres.
- Strengthen diversified incomes from nature-based solutions.
- Introduce renewable energy solutions for irrigation and processing.
- Scale up community involvement in agroforestry initiatives.

Highlights from Media and Engagements

1. **Village Square:** [*"Kanha Women Make School Fun for Tribal Kids"*](#)
 - A feature on how indigenous women are transforming education for tribal children in Kanha through innovative and engaging methods.
2. **SNHC Journal:** [*"Empowering Indigenous Communities through Nature-Based Solutions in the Kanha Tiger Reserve"*](#)
 - A detailed article showcasing our efforts to integrate sustainable practices and community empowerment around the Kanha landscape.
3. **Nayi Duniya & Travel Links Magazine:**
 - [*Library Inauguration in Village Gudma in Collaboration with IAHV & IIT-UK*](#)
 - Coverage of the collaborative effort to establish a library in Village Gudma, creating a hub for learning and development for the local community.
4. **Forgotten People Documentary:**
 - [*Our documentary film*](#) was screened at the prestigious *Nature in Focus Festival* and shortlisted for the *TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards 2023* under the "Wildlife Documentary Award 2023" category, recognizing our storytelling of indigenous lives and conservation.
5. **Agrobiodiversity Roundtable:**
 - Our team [*presented*](#) impactful work on agrobiodiversity at the *Network for Conserving Central India's Conference* in Mandla, contributing to the ongoing dialogue on conservation and sustainable practices.