



## Fast Facts

**Country:** India

**Duration:** April 2005 to May 2008

**Implementing UN Agencies:** WFP

**Other Implementing Partners:** Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti; Life Academy for Vocational Studies; women's groups; local NGOs

**Budget:** \$1,017,500

**Key Words:** Food security; women; poverty reduction; capacity-building

## BACKGROUND

Despite significant improvements in human development, India was home to 260 million people living under poverty line in 2005. At the time, one of World Food Programme's (WFP) global poverty alleviation initiatives, known as 'Food for Work', utilized large stocks of food grains as an instrument to create employment and improve food security for the poor. In India, the programme provided

employment in rebuilding infrastructure in a target area, and ensured access to subsidised food grains for the workers in return. However, women and other vulnerable groups were often unable to participate in work that demanded heavy manual labour and therefore did not directly benefit from the distribution of food.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project's overall goal was to demonstrate that expanding 'Food for Work' to actively bring in women as workers in community projects would benefit both the women, who would develop their skills and knowledge in exchange for food, and the communities in which they thrived. To this end, the project implemented efforts to (i) empower women to become equal community agents of human development and poverty alleviation; and (ii) create

meaningful employment for women; and (iii) pilot a replicable model for food in return for employment at the community level based on human capacity and ingenuity of the poor. In addition, since villagers expressed discontent over the lack of local ownership over the pre-existing programmes, the project promoted collaboration between service providers, local authorities and the target communities.

### BENEFICIARIES

Overall the project targeted about 10,000 female-led households in 90 villages in the three states of Orissa, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Nearly 560,000 people benefited from created employment in the project villages, of which 86 per cent were women. Local women's groups were contracted to engage

interested women as well as disabled men who were unable to take part in manual labour. The participants benefited from capacity-building training in order to serve as multipurpose health workers, educational peers, grain-bank manager as well as other vocations.