Individual citizens and village level institutions in rural India have the most at stake in the development of their communities. Good Rural Governance programs empower these communities by engaging citizens and members of village level institutions to actively participate in their own development. Sehgal Foundation’s Strengthening Village Level Institutions (SVLI) initiative provides leadership skills, trainings, and interventions to enhance the responsiveness, accountability, and transparency of village councils and committees so they will facilitate the effective delivery of key government programs within their communities.
Promoting Collective Action of Village Level Institutions

SVLI builds the capacities of panchayats (village councils), School Management Committees, and Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees by conducting training sessions, establishing ongoing dialogues by organizing interactive workshops with government officials, facilitating micro planning at the village level, mobilizing communities to participate in gram sabhas (village meetings) and mahila gram sabhas (village women meetings), and forming mahila sangathans (women collectives). Skills are developed as community leaders share knowledge and learn by doing. Collective action inspires confidence, self-worth, and self-reliance. Institutions gain strength by identifying and addressing problems collectively. They use their newfound strength to develop village plans, access funds from the government, and implement the plans in a transparent manner.

Making a Difference

Strengthening Village Level Institutions is active in more than 125 villages in Mewat, Haryana, Alwar, Rajasthan, and Samastipur, Bihar. In addition to organizing gram sabhas, preparing village plans, and leveraging funds from various departments, members have implemented community improvement projects, such as constructing household toilets, building village roads, promoting cleanliness with soak pits and soak wells, solving local problems like electricity and acquiring BPL plots, mobilizing school enrollment, and creating model villages based on community priorities. Newly empowered members inspire other VLI members to carry out their official roles and responsibilities more effectively.

Our Partners Ensure Value

Sehgal Foundation trains grassroots NGO workers and students to develop communities by strengthening their village level institutions in partnership with select NGOs, corporate foundations, and social work departments of universities. Our partners help broaden our reach of good rural governance initiatives.

For further information, please email partnerships@smsfoundation.org
Join the team! www.smsfoundation.org

A WOMAN SARPANCH SPEAKS

“Sarai has seen many changes since I became the sarpanch [village council head] four years back. Earlier there were many problems, such as lack of water, limited electricity, and dirty roads. In January 2013, the panchayat [village council] undertook a micro planning exercise in Sarai with the help of the Sehgal Foundation team. The entire village participated in the making of these micro plans. The panchayat then submitted applications to the district administration and got government funds to construct paved roads, install tube lights in the streets, and put water tanks and individual latrines in homes . . . I used to be a little apprehensive talking to government officials, as I do not know how to read or write. But slowly as I met with them more regularly, my confidence grew. Now I do not send my husband or son to execute my panchayat-related work. I talk to the concerned authorities on my own.”

~Vimla, Sarpanch, Sarai village, Mewat