

## Village committees to maintain water infrastructure

Villagers in Gudachandraji area of Nadoti block were elated as the community took over maintenance of the eleven check dams constructed under the *Jaldhara* (stream of water) project, supported by Coca-Cola Foundation in four villages of Nadoti block in Karauli district, Rajasthan.

Rapidly depleting groundwater levels had been a cause of worry for the entire area as their tube wells were going dry and crop yields decreased. Some crops failed due to lack of proper irrigation.

In 2016 the Sehgal Foundation team identified four panchayats in Nadoti block (Gudachandraji, Pal, Rajahera, and Chirvada) for implementation of the Jaldhara project. Eleven check dams now harvest rainwater runoff from the catchment area and recharge the groundwater table. Other project interventions included solar pumps for irrigation and plantation.



An integral component of the project was building the capacities of eight village development committees constituted to look after the maintenance and upkeep of the completed structures. Village women were part of these committees, as they are key stakeholders in the collection and usage of water.

Villagers contributed in cash and in kind for the check dam construction. Community funds contributed went into a bank account opened for the village development committees for operations and maintenance of the structures.



According to Parth Gohel, "Water management interventions done as part of the project have been possible with community support. We hope the check dams constructed in these villages will harvest every drop of rain and bring prosperity to the villages."

In an event held on December 28, 2017, with members from Sehgal Foundation and Coca-Cola Foundation, the community took complete charge of sustaining the structures. Villagers shared that in addition to the increase in the water table, soil health has already improved after the construction of the check dams.