BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE FRONT-LINE CADRE

INTRO TO THIS PLAYBOOK

DEFINE THE VISION
-12 to -9 months

DESIGN THE PROGRAMME
-9 to -6 months

READY THE RESOURCES
-6 to -3 months

RECRUIT THE RIGHT TEAM

TRAIN & COACH

PLAN CAREER PATH

INCENTIVISE FOR EFFECTIVENESS

CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

SUPPORT THE FRONTLINE CADRE JOURNEY
INTRO TO THIS PLAYBOOK

WHY THIS PLAYBOOK?
India will have half the water it needs by 2030. Hindustan Unilever Foundation’s mission is to save more and use less water with a focus on optimising usage in agriculture.

Learnings from HUF’s successful programmes across can be re-applied by other organisations for a faster scale across India. When working with farmers, one critical success factor is creating a **scaled, capable local front-line cadre within the villages**. This playbook contains best practice learnings from one such programme in East UP – Project SWERA.

WHO IS IT FOR?
This playbook is for implementing NGO partners who need to ready the ground resources for farmer focussed programmes.

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT’S NOT
It contains key principles on how to recruit, develop & retain a capable front-line cadre who can handhold and guide farmers to embed farming practices that successfully increase incomes and reduce water usage.

It is not an all-purpose agricultural guide or a ‘one size fits all’ playbook. While using this, varying contexts must be kept in mind.

HOW TO USE IT?
The playbook has two distinct stages & 7 key steps. There is a main step by step navigation guide and accompanying materials – AVs, documents, manuals.

You should review and adapt or modify as needed, based on local needs & context.

While comprehensive in scope, you may need to create additional resources based on your unique needs.

CONTACT US
We welcome feedback & inputs to improve this playbook at anantika.singh@unilever.com.
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT
1. A clear understanding of the specific context and challenges of each region helps to define a relevant vision & design right outcomes
2. It is important to also define at the outset the key success criteria that will ensure the program can sustain even after the implementation agency has moved on

OBJECTIVE:
To develop an inspiring vision that is understood easily & is motivating for all stakeholders to ensure program success

KEY STEPS:
- Define a clear vision & inspiring purpose
  - Understand local challenges
  - Translate into solution opportunities
  - Find right words & language for communication

- Define short-term & long-term outcomes
  - Translate vision into yearly & stage-wise goals, outcomes and metrics
  - Define simple metrics to measure progress

Link: CRP Profile & 5year plan
Link: CRP Profile & Recommendations
Link: Program SWERA Process Improvements
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT

1. To build a capable village front-line cadre, first, the implementing agency needs to set up a core team, with well-defined roles and accountabilities. They need to plan the programme design aimed at creating expertise, capability & infrastructure at the local level.

2. The implementation team needs to keep in mind that mindsets & behaviours must change so the work can carry on 4-5 yrs out with empowered & capable village teams & farmers.

OBJECTIVE:

To develop a robust program design & put in place the right infrastructure based on a thorough understanding of the context.

KEY STEPS:

Understand the context thoroughly
- Socio-economic-cultural context of the villagers
- Similarities, variances within the district
- Barriers, enablers at each level - village panchayat, government officials
- Historical issues, challenges faced

Select & train the right team
- Understand KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes) needed to succeed based on SWERA
- Assess own team capability based on context and need
- Decide span of control – initial & ongoing
- Put in place the right team of core members & new recruits
- Define clear roles, responsibilities
- Equip team with the right technical capabilities & coach on key soft skills to lead the program

Map the enablers for each stage
- Understand enablers & resources needed for a high-quality program plan based on SWERA
- Assess readiness – identify gaps, opportunities
- Assess & identify immediate & long-term resource needs

Link: The Context

Link: CRP Documents
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT
1. Implementing team members should ideally have a good knowledge of the geography and credibility within the communities. This significantly improves quality of planning, success & speed of outcomes
2. Focussing on soft skills & values is a pre-requisite for success

OBJECTIVE:
To develop or modify resources for each stage of the program based on need assessment

KEY STEPS:
Recruitment and Training
Ready recruitment & training materials to create a capable front-line village cadre.
Review existing materials & modify if needed based on the specific, local context

[Link: Annexures 1A, 1C, 1F, 1G]
[Link: Backend support to CRPs]

Multi-stakeholder out-reach
On board all relevant stakeholders to ensure support & sustainability of the program
Target local community with communication plan to shift mindsets & ensure active support for the front-line cadre
List govt programs that intersect with the programme & put in place communication plan and content for government officials at block and district level
Seek & make partnerships for long-term employment opportunities for front-line cadre

[Link: Working Together]
[Link: Leading without Authority]

Technology & Communications
Create simple, efficient technology & communication tools for the smooth, effective and safe working of the program
Put in place tools for easy connectivity, grievance handling, field safety

Soft Infrastructure
Safety & wellbeing – To ensure safe & confident front-line
Do a process audit – review materials and mechanisms in place
Fill gaps and upgrade as needed
Values & culture - a trustful & empowering culture that encourages experimentation & continuous learning:
Do a culture audit
Make training plan for interventions as needed

[Link: Managing Stress & Building Resilience]
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT
1. A front-line cadre comprising women village experts is at the heart of the program’s success. Women have the motivation to work tirelessly for their villages & sustain the program in the long term.
2. It is important to design the recruitment program keeping in mind that the woman’s family members become supportive & act as enablers.

OBJECTIVE:
To recruit the right front-line cadre, maximise retention, minimise regrettable attrition.

KEY STEPS:
- Build the atmosphere
  - Broadcast the hiring drive in the communities
  - Engage with families – address concerns, answer questions
  - Identify & engage stakeholders

Plan & run the selection process
- Recruitment day - Written exam & Group Discussion
- Personal Interview
- Selection
- Community Immersion

Link: Community Immersion Plan
Community Immersion Report

Link: Questionnaire
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT
1. Training & coaching is not a one-off but a continuous process with learning for both the front-line cadre and supervising team
2. It’s important to induct each & every front-line cadre first-hand to ensure that the foundational knowledge & training is strong

OBJECTIVE:
To equip the front-line cadre with training & resources to achieve defined outcomes

KEY STEPS:
Arrange & communicate logistics for the training program
Plan and share schedule, venue, logistics
Arrange transport & stay for women & family members as needed

Classroom training
Vision, goals, metrics
Technical & technology
Soft skills – e.g. Persistence, patience, courage
Objection handling, building networks, relationships
Reporting, documentation
Safety, well-being protocols
Role of KAK (Krishi Aajeevika Kendra), Demo plots, MKS (Mahila Kisan Sangathan)
Role of government schemes for farmers & how to avail them
Access to training materials

Field training
Technical skills
How to set up demonstration plots
Use of videos to communicate progress and show proof of principle to farmers
Meet & greet with government officials, farmers, important stakeholders

Continuous check in & refreshers
Communicate check in protocols
Online, offline updates
Twice a year – season training (Kharif, Rabi)

Shadowing experts
Assign experts to each front-line cadre
Get started in the field

Link: Annexure 2A

Link: Field Team Training Block Team Training

Link: MKS Concept & Framework Training Module for CRP

Link: Check in & Refreshers
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT
1. Front-line cadre annual earnings range from 50-70k Rs. Their pride and motivation in being able to contribute to the family income grows as they progress. The family members too actively start growing their support
2. Incentives should drive effectiveness over targets. Ideally, front-line cadres should be able to define their own growth journeys

OBJECTIVE:
To ensure the front-line cadre understand their key deliverables & linkage to incentives and are motivated by it.

KEY STEPS:
Educate teams on the incentive structure
KPI linked incentive structure
How to communicate, assess, administer
Learnings on incentives structure – plan vs actual

Ensure motivation of the teams
Daily, monthly check in protocols & tools
Examples of action taken/ course correction made

Links: Incentive Structure
Links: CRP Workload Assessment
WHAT WE’VE LEARNT
1. The front-line cadre have the capability to take on more responsibility and move from being village experts to business entrepreneurs.
2. Behaviour change in farming techniques takes at least 6 seasons. Therefore, it is important to have a long-term perspective on the program and front-line cadre careers.

OBJECTIVE:
To ensure the front-line cadre sees a motivating career path for growth

KEY STEPS:
Map lessons in journey from ‘CRP to entrepreneurship’
Understand career development journey from SWERA
Conduct work-load analysis of front-line cadre
Analyse their capabilities, interests & availability of opportunities

Build capacity
Actively train cadre for taking on more responsibilities
Train for other external, upcoming opportunities

Create and tap networks
To absorb cadre into suitable roles, build pathways:
Promotions within
Government roles
Entrepreneurship

Link: CRP documents
Link: Krishi Ajevika Kendra
We would like to **acknowledge our partners**

For their very **generous and invaluable contribution** of learnings and experiences in developing this Playbook

Our appeal to **all our partners**

To treat this as an evolving document which we can keep improving with your continuous learning and inputs

Please feel free to share these liberally so we can make the Playbook even stronger and scale up faster our ambition to make farming communities in India water resilient