

SETU Abhiyan  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2014-2015

**Vision of SETU Abhiyan:**

The rural and urban regions of the Country are locally governed by fully empowered and enlightened local governments with engaged citizens and communities. And that society moves towards the decentralized governance of natural, cultural and economic resources, as well as primary services, entitlements and access to justice.

**Mission of SETU Abhiyan:**

To strengthen citizen and community's faith, understanding and engagement in local governance; And improve local government bodies' (gram panchayats and municipalities) capacities to govern with transparency, and deliver development services by being inclusive, sustainable, creative and efficient.

**Objectives of SETU Abhiyan**

- To support Communities, citizens and the State in implementing the 73rd and 74th amendment of the Constitution in letter and spirit.
- To facilitate and sensitise local Governments in the villages and small towns to envision, plan, partner, and implement policies, programmes and activities; In a way that addresses the concerns, priorities and dreams of children, youth, women, the poor, livelihood practitioners, the aged, the differently abled, vulnerable sections, as well as their society at large.
- To enable local government bodies and citizens to enhance their access to knowledge systems, information, skills, perspectives, learning opportunities, and other resources by which they can improve their capacities for decentralized governance.
- To encourage and facilitate platforms of action, research and sharing of healthy practices between local governments, citizens, and organizations.

# GOVERNANCE of SETU Abhiyan

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Board members:

1. Mr. Binoy Acharya – President
2. Mr. Dinesh Sanghvi - Member Secretary
3. Ms. Nandini Narula - Treasurer
4. Dr. Kajri Misra - Member
5. Mr. Ajit Chaudhuri - Member
6. Mr. Upendra Upadhyay - Member
7. Ms. Krupa Dholakia - Member

Auditor: Shri PC Doshi Pvt Ltd

Bankers:

HDFC Bank, Bhuj

# SETU Abhiyan - a new journey

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SETU emerged from the chaos and distress of the earthquake - literally three days after January 26, 2001. Playing a bridge role, SETUs facilitated relief and rehabilitation efforts through 33 relief coordination centres set up by Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan<sup>1</sup> covering 468 affected villages.

Over the past 14 years, the 'SETU' concept and its work matured and stabilized as a model, distinct in its approach that defines a turning point in the way developmental transformation can be undertaken in a fast changing development environment. SETUs have attempted to evolve as a human resource support system to the local governments – thus reinforcing citizen's confidence in themselves, in the gram sabhas, and their local governance bodies; and supporting them in identifying their local issues, facilitate knowledge, information, expertise and financial resources by which village communities and Local Governments emerge as informed decision-makers, implementers and governing institutions. Through this facilitative approach, it has sought to build a sense of ownership amongst the communities for any work that they undertake, rather than become dependent on the SETUs, other NGOs or the Government. This way it bridges resources between the community and the external environment be it the Government, donors, NGOs or other professional institutions.

Since 2010, SETUs started working on issues of urban governance initiating at Bhuj and thereafter extending to Rapar Municipality.

In Kutch, today, 8 SETUs (6 in rural and 2 in urban) are fully operational, covering totally 336 revenue villages, 154 Panchayats and two Municipalities.

The concept of the SETU as a facilitating centre has been widely accepted and replicated in other parts of India by Abhiyan with local partners. In Tamil Nadu, post the Tsunami in 2004, the concept of a SETU was introduced in the most affected district of Nagapattinam. These centres became the critical facilitating node between the affected communities and the Government, as well as NGOs. Similarly, 8 SETUs were set up by the Government of Bihar in partnership with ODRC<sup>2</sup> in the Kosi region which was affected by the Kosi flood in 2008. These are called the SETU Kosi Kendras. Thus, in post disaster situations where Abhiyan has contributed to strengthening the

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<sup>1</sup> Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan (Abhiyan) is a district network of 33 development organizations. While all of these organizations have their own area and focus of work, Abhiyan collaborates with its network organizations on issues pertaining to the District

<sup>2</sup> Owner Driven Reconstruction Collaborative (ODRC) is a resource group which enables States to develop mechanisms for mainstreaming the application of Owner Driven approaches in post-disaster situations. ODRC has been constituted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Kutch NavNirmanAbhiyan (KNNA), Hunnarshaala Foundation for Building Technologies and Innovations (HSF), People-in-Centre (PiC), Unnati & Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS).

governance of disasters with State Governments and local civil society, the SETU model has got replicated in other States.

In Mar 2014, SETU Abhiyan became registered as an independent organization. The 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting post registration was held on 29<sup>th</sup> Apr 2014.

This Annual Report 2014 – 2015 covers glimpses of the approaches and achievements of SETU Abhiyan in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of its existence. As a new organization, while ample time was devoted in working out the organizational strategies, defining our work areas, our approaches, our values, focus was also streamlining organizational systems and on trainings and capacity development of our staff according to the analysed need of the staff members.

# Organisational shifts / New concepts in place

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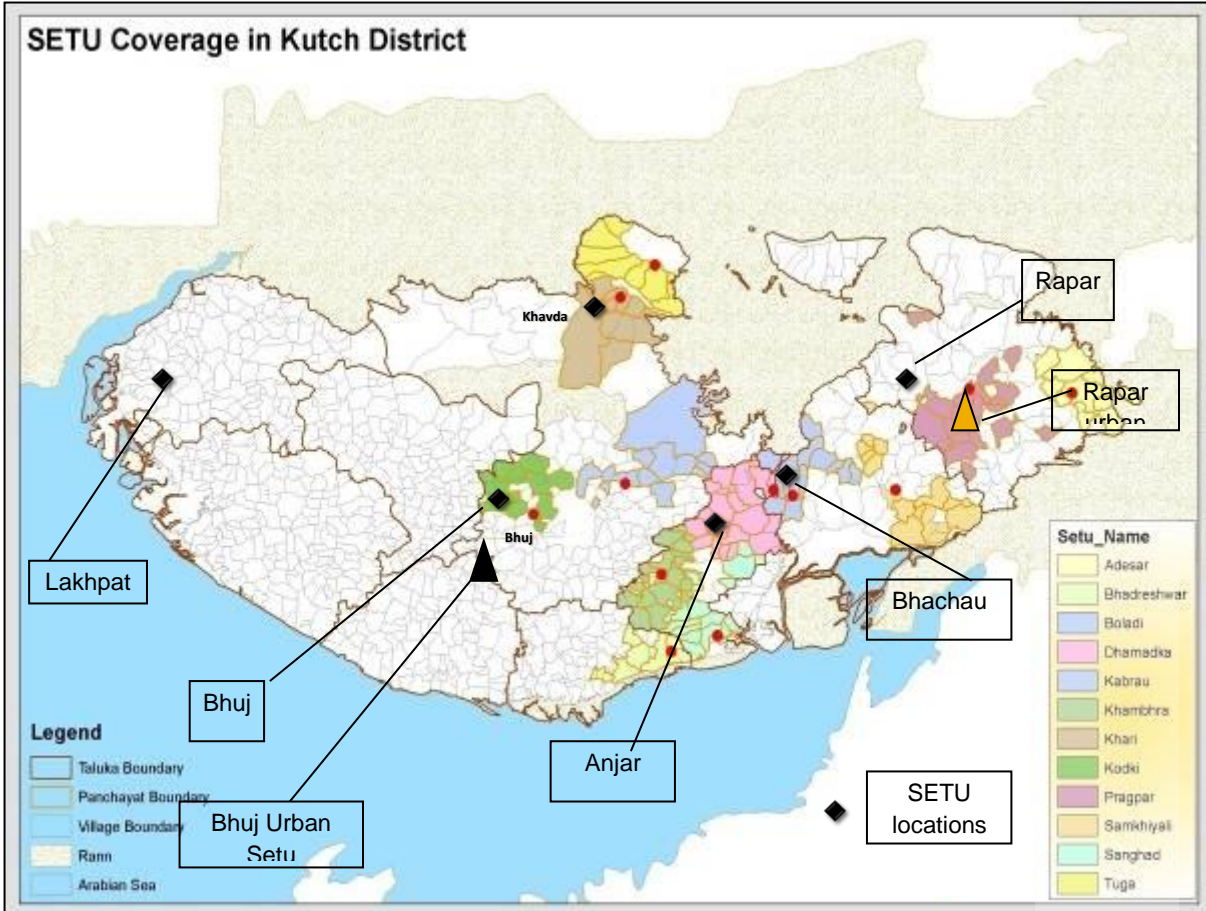
2014 was a year when with the birth of SETU Abhiyan, series of interactions with the overall staffs were organized for revisiting and reflecting on the approaches, focus areas and the achievements in the past years. Not only consolidating what has been achieved, the sequence of exercises with mentors, Board members helped in reconsidering the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats in the present context of SETU Abhiyan's functioning. This led to redefining the vision, mission, and re-strategise the approaches of SETU Abhiyan. With this, the year 2014 marked the following major strategic shifts:

## A. Functioning from cluster level to block level:

After a decade of cluster-wise approach since 2001, SETUs strategically shifted its approach from cluster level to block level. This shift went through a rigorous process of interaction with the primary stakeholders, the block officials, and reassessing the potentials of shifting to the block level. SETUs planned their future interventions based on the scopes at the block level and thus defined common agenda that they need to take up as common agenda in all the blocks and the autonomous agenda specific to each block. The year was also marked with shifting of locations of the SETU offices considering easy accessibility to the villages in the block, and the legality of the SETU premises.

Responding to the need of Lakhpur, the westernmost block of the District, SETU Abhiyan extended its work to this region in 2014.

The human resource structure accordingly was redefined at the block level as One Block coordinator with two cluster coordinators for each block.



## B. Institutionalising the Learning Lab for Local Governance (LLLG)

With the concept of experimenting, documenting and upscaling SETUs' innovations in strengthening local self governance, SETU Abhiyan conceived the idea of institutionalising Learning Lab for Local Governance. The LLLG intends to promote and give space for experimenting, conducting research, training as well as ploughing back research analysis into action with regard to Local Governance.

**This Annual Report 2014-2015 reflects the interventions with regard to the set objectives of SETU Abhiyan.**

**Objective : To support Communities, citizens and the State in implementing the 73rd and 74th amendment of the Constitution in letter and spirit**

**In Urban Areas:**

The SETU concept was extended to the urban area and the first BHUJ SETU was set up in 2010. Over the years, Bhuj SETU was able to establish itself in a facilitation role and also as the key accountable organization for local governance related initiatives. As a pilot approach to facilitate urban local governance in small towns, Bhuj setu facilitated mechanisms enabling the urban local bodies and the citizens to be the key change agents towards improved governance and holistic development of the towns.

In the year 2014, Bhuj SETU facilitated the formation of Ward Committees (WC) in two wards - Ward No. 2 & 3 respectively (known as *Ward Vistar Vikas Samiti*).

To strengthen the ward level institutional mechanism of the ULBs, Ward Offices in Ward No. 2 and Ward No.3 were set up. The ward offices, as per its mandate, started acting as a common ground that connects ward councilors, committee members with the ward citizens to discuss questions pertaining to the ward and also functions as decentralized democratic planning units within the wards. Setus facilitated the Ward committee members for the development of a ward plan for Ward no. 3 and thus ensured coordination with the Municipality for planned interventions.

Interventions influencing urban governance in Rapar block were initiated this year as a response to the demand expressed by the MLA, Rapar. A detailed presentation of SETU's concept and approach was made before Rapar Municipality officials and an agreement signed on mutually decided accomplishments in the next three years. Rapar urban SETU conducted meetings in smaller groups and individual interactions with the 21 councillors, citizens of the 7 wards in Rapar as well as the representatives from local organisations in Rapar. A GIS based software named as Urban Governance Support System (UGSS) has been developed by Klink Foundation and data collection started for the same. The UGSS would enable informed planning while developing the ward plans.

**Objective : To enable local government bodies and citizens to enhance their access to knowledge systems, information, skills, perspectives, learning opportunities, and other resources by which they can improve their capacities for decentralized governance.**

In Bhuj town:

The '*Mahiti Mitra*' ('Information friend') centre was set up within the Bhuj Urban Setu office in 2010 to facilitate people's access to entitlements and enable their participation in governance. It tries to integrate information and communication technology to strengthen the Councillors' access to information, reach citizens and enhance people's participation in governance. In 2014, a Mahiti Mitra has been inaugurated at Ganeshnagar in ward no.13 of Bhuj town.

### ***Bhuj Bole Chhe (Voice of Bhuj)***

With the objective of creating an enabling environment for improved local governance, and facilitating ULB's engagement, towards a better town, a communication platform known as *Bhuj Bole Chhe* ([www.bhujbolechhe.org](http://www.bhujbolechhe.org)) was developed in 2013. More than just a website, *Bhuj Bole Chhe* emerged as a social media platform and a movement to mobilize citizens as well as ULB representatives, their opinions, perspectives, ideas, and actions vis a vis the city's issues and concerns. This has developed as a platform thus bringing ULBs and citizens closer especially the youth who are accessing a range of social media and technology applications, across classes and urban section of the society. *Bhuj Bole Chhe*'s focus has also been to develop linkages with other media, as well as organize concrete events and programs which are rooted in the cultural, political and environmental contexts of the town.

In 2014, *Bhuj Bole Chhe* made efforts in training and motivating the youth of Bhuj who were recognized as the "Ambassadors of Bhuj" who were engaged into promoting good practices within the town.

An informal documentation of the communities in Bhuj was started in 2014 with the objective to have a record of the lifestyles, the practices, the rituals followed by the communities. *Bhuj Bole Chhe* completed the documentation of Kolivas Community, Siddhi, Marvada, Devipujak, Koli and Nagar Communities.

*Bhuj Bole Chhe* launched a slum archiving initiative to document slum communities in Bhuj. In a short period of time, the slums in Bhuj will give away to newly planned and constructed settlements. These slums carry within themselves stories of times and events it has witnessed; stories that need to be preserved and passed on to our future generations. The archiving through *Bhuj Bole Chhe* served as an opportunity for the slums communities to rediscover their identities and present their own identities with dignity. Bhimrao Nagar was the first slum to be documented as a part of this project. A short movie was filmed. The initiative shall cover different slum communities across Bhuj.

## **OBJECTIVE : To encourage and facilitate platforms of action, research and sharing of healthy practices between local governments, citizens, and organizations**

### **Institutionalising the Learning Lab for Local Governance (LLLG):**

Having incubated various innovative strategies with more than 150 gram panchayats and two municipal towns, SETU Abhiyan believes that it needs to disseminate and upscale the learnings from these practices, even as it continues to fulfill the growing demand for capacity building from local governments in and outside Kutch. SETU Abhiyan thus initiated a **Learning Lab for Local Governance (LLLG)** which serves as a platform to teach, learn, share, and develop a repository of knowledge resources for Local Governance. Being the first of its kind, the process of institutionalising the Learning Lab for Local Governance (LLLG) started in Aug 2014 with discussions with the SETU team members and also with various institutes, networks and Government departments. While the core areas for the functioning of LLLG were defined, an advisory committee was set up for mentoring and guiding the LLLG's interventions. A coordinator for LLLG has been engaged in February 2015 for coordinating and leading the LLLG activities.

This year the LLLG hosted a group of staffs from AKRSP (Aga Khan Rural Support Program) who approached SETU for an exposure to understand the SETU concept and the interventions in strengthening local governance in Kutch District.

SETU Abhiyan has been a member of the LOGIN (Local Governance Initiatives and Network), a network of national and international organisations working on decentralisation. As an initiative of the LLLG, SETUs in collaboration with LOGIN defined SETU's learning offers and learning demands for the year 2015 in areas of Decentralisation and local governance.

SETU Abhiyan partnered with the LOGIN network (Local Governance Initiative) to host participants from 6 South Asian countries for a three days travel workshop focusing on collectivization / federating local governments and thus included a visit to the Local Government Associations in Kutch district. The total number of participants was 21. The workshop focused on the sharing of the knowledge and experiences on the formation of Local Government Associations, their achievements and challenges. As a participant from Kutch, the president of Anjar-Gandhidham Panchayat Association interacted with the Local Governments of Kerala and Mumbai.

LLLG in coordination with LOGIN facilitated a visit made by Ms. Tashi Pem from Helvetas, Bhutan to understand SETUs work on strengthening local governance. During this visit, she also shared the structure and status of local governance in Bhutan and the functioning of the Local Governments in Bhutan.

In November 2014, SETUs hosted a team of representatives from civil society organisations from Bhutan who came to understand the experiences and synergies of a network, the evolution of programs and to understand the local governance including the elected women representatives in Kutch. The networking gave a scope to share SETU's experiences as well as also learn the status of local governance in Bhutan and the organisational initiatives in the country.

So as to offer on site learning opportunities for students, while also commissioning studies, surveys, and research, LLLG collaborated with institutes like XIMB (Xavier's Institute of Management – Bhubaneshwar), DAIICT (Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology- Gandhinagar) and with Kurve Wustrow, Germany for sending volunteers this year to SETU Abhiyan.

### **A Course on Decentralization for Social Facilitators:**

The LLLG successfully entered into partnership with AKRSP and DSC for facilitating a team of 30 grass root professionals for undertaking 3 – 4 months' structured training on 'Decentralization'. The course was segmented into three modules named as *Prajatantra* (Democracy), *Ajoyan* (Planning) and *Bhavishya* (Future).

Trainings / Exposures organized for SETU staffs are mentioned below:

Sr. No.	Topic	No. of persons attended	Resource person/ Institutions
1.	ToT	2	Jagori, New Delhi
2.	Budget Analysis	1	Patheya,Ahmedabad
3.	Urban governance	25	Avantha Foundation

# SETU RESOURCE SUPPORT CENTRE

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With SETU Abhiyan getting registered as an independent organization, the board set up a Management Committee for the management of the day to day affairs within SETU Abhiyan to take decisions with regard to administration and financial aspects. The committee is formed of 4 members including the Joint Director of SETU Abhiyan.

In the Governing Board meeting dated 14th Mar 2015, a finance committee has been set up to monitor and overlook the finances of the organisation. The finance committee is represented by the Board members and the internal auditor of the organisation.

SETU Abhiyan finalised its HR policy and got it approved by the Board in 2014.

SETU Abhiyan got into a partnership with Avantha Foundation in 2014.

A partnership with AJWS was discussed in 2014 for initiatives towards enabling community institutions prepare holistic planning and development thus addressing gender and social justice, conservation of natural resources and responding to vulnerabilities of traditional livelihood dependent communities. This partnership was formalized and application submitted for seeking prior permission from MoHA completed.

In partnership Khamir, Setu completed a survey of the traditional potters in Kutch district to demarcate the clay sources. This was done to create a base for advocacy on conserving the clay sources as these sites are now under threat.

## Our partners in 2014-15:

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- Government
- Organisations
  - Avantha Foundation
- Individuals