



# Ideate 2024

*from ideas to action*

by

**Bansidhar & Ila Panda Foundation**

in partnership with

**Dasra**

An annual thought leadership advocacy platform  
on

**Utkal Udyam**

**Community Centric Development for Fostering Climate Resilience**

Bansidhar & Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF), in partnership with Dasra, successfully concluded the 13th edition of its annual flagship conference, IDEATE 2024. This year's theme, "Utkal Udyam: Community-Centric Development for Climate Resilience," convened policymakers and industry leaders across various segments to address the pressing challenges of climate change and explore transformative strategies that empower grassroots communities for climate adaptation.

As India faces the escalating impacts of climate change—including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and shifting monsoon patterns—the conference served as a critical platform to deliberate on sustainable solutions. Rural and coastal communities, women, and youth are among the most vulnerable groups affected by these changes. IDEATE 2024 aimed to anticipate and avert these impacts by emphasizing the importance of systems, agents, and institutions in building resilience.

The event, held on 5th September 2024 at the Mayfair Convention in Bhubaneswar, Through collaborative discussions and knowledge sharing, the conference sought to catalyze actions that can drive meaningful change at the grassroots level.

The conference featured a series of impactful sessions, beginning with inspiring addresses and culminating in thought-provoking discussions. The collective insights underscored the vital role of community engagement in combating climate change.





## INAUGURAL SESSION

Ms. Shaifalika Panda, Trustee and Founder CEO of BIPF, set the tone with an impassioned opening address, emphasising the importance of inclusive on-ground collaboration in building climate-resilient communities. By doing so, she argued, strategies become more effective and inclusive, truly reflecting the realities on the ground. Ms. Panda also highlighted Odisha's potential to lead in environmental solutions, advocating for a blend of grassroots efforts and strategic philanthropy. She emphasized that empowering women could dramatically increase climate resilience and reduce disaster mortality rates. "Together, we have the power to make a meaningful impact," she asserted, calling for unified action.



Delivering his address virtually, Dr. Benjamin K. Sovacool, Director of the Boston University Institute for Global Sustainability, shed light on the global underinvestment in climate resilience and adaptation solutions. He pointed out the alarming increase in emissions and the dire consequences for biodiversity, including the potential loss of 99% of the world's coral reefs. Dr. Sovacool championed community efforts and bottom-up approaches, advocating for innovative, nature-based solutions piloted by communities in Asia. "Climate resilience is of paramount importance," he stressed, urging for immediate and collective action.





## PANEL DISCUSSION

### Harnessing Grassroots Knowledge for Climate Resilience



*Moderated by Ms. Parnasha Banerjee, Director of ClimateRISE at Dasra, the panel brought together experts who shared diverse perspectives on leveraging grassroots knowledge:*



**Mr. Devjit Mitra, Programmes Director at Socratus Foundation**, presented his strategy for climate action centered on integrating local narratives with broader ecological and economic goals. He emphasized a collaborative, place-based approach that unites diverse actors to address local and global challenges effectively.

By merging traditional knowledge with scientific research and advocating for community-driven solutions, he spoke about empowering local "climate champions". His philosophy of "brokering knowledge" covered actionable insights at all levels and highlighted the replicability of successful local strategies, aiming to inspire similar initiatives worldwide.



**Padma Shri Sabarmatee, Co-Founder of SAMBHAV**, shared how she integrates local knowledge with scientific methods to effectively address environmental changes. She shared examples focused on organic farming and community-driven conservation practices as key strategies for economic sustainability and climate

resilience at the on-ground community level. She also drew attention to ways of empowering local communities, particularly women, through capacity-building programs that enable them to adapt to and mitigate climate impacts. She strongly called for maintaining local conservation efforts, such as preserving indigenous seed varieties within communities, to ensure holistic well-being and resilience.



**Ms. Tanaya Patnaik, Director at Sambad Group (Eastern Media Ltd.)**, addressed the traditional limitations of media coverage on climate change, which focused primarily on disaster management without a broader perspective. Recognizing this knowledge deficit, she spearheaded the "Earth Again" initiative to demystify

climate terminology and bring the issue closer to the public. She highlighted the need for specialized training for journalists to effectively communicate the local impacts of climate change. She also spoke about shifting the media spotlight from celebrities to local climate heroes, enhancing community engagement, and emphasizing the media's role as a pivotal link between climate issues and solutions.



**Mr. Sameer Shisodia, CEO of Rainmatter Foundation**, advocated for a place-based approach to climate action at the community level, recognizing the necessity of a multidimensional perspective. He pointed out the loss of local knowledge systems due to the dominance of centralized, top-down approaches,

advocating for a return to customer-centric solutions that prioritise local ecosystems and community needs. Additionally, he urged for the development of self-sustaining collaboration models that empower individuals and communities to tailor their approaches to climate action, emphasizing the role of philanthropy in fostering environments that enhance local infrastructure, capabilities, and agency.



**Mr. Jarnail Singh, Deputy Director (India) at MacArthur Foundation**, focused on the critical role of philanthropy in facilitating collaboration by providing the necessary resources and fostering trust among stakeholders. He discussed the evolution of philanthropic strategies from emission-centric, top-down

approaches to recognizing and supporting state-based, hyper-local strategies, particularly influenced by the disparities revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, he acknowledged the unique challenges faced by different regions, advocating for tailored strategies that reflect local needs and conditions spearheaded at the state level, enabling grassroots communities to adapt to the changing climate.

## FIRESIDE CHAT

### Empowering Community as Climate Champions



The afternoon session featured a dynamic fireside chat with:

- **Dr. Abha Mishra, Head of Office-Odisha at UNDP India**
- **Ms. Bijal Brahmabhatt, Director of Mahila Housing Trust**
- **Ms. Madhusmita Parida, Climate Champion**

They explored the synergy between bottom-up and top-down approaches, discussing how collaborative ecosystems can scale successful local models across Odisha and the nation. Central to their dialogue was the pivotal role of women, youth, and indigenous groups in climate action and the necessity of building supportive structures that place them at the forefront.



## Strategic Funders' Roundtable



A closed-door session, the **Strategic Funders' Roundtable**, brought together key philanthropists and funders including **Ms. Jyoti Singhania** from JK Cement, **Mr. Jarnail Singh** from MacArthur Foundation, **Mr. Sameer Shisodia** from Rainmatter Foundation, **Ms. Tanaya Pattnaik** from Sambad, **Mr. Jyotirmay** from Dasra, and **Mr. Dharmesh Gohel** and **Ms. Shaifalika Panda** from BIPF. The roundtable served as a platform for these leaders to learn, share, and explore synergies in supporting the vision of a climate-resilient and flourishing Odisha through a community-centric lens. Each funder, with their unique interests and focus on social impact in Odisha, discussed how their diverse strengths and expertise could complement each other's efforts.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### From "Utkal Udyam: Community-Centric Development for Fostering Climate Resilience"

The conference concluded with several critical insights that emerged from the discussions:

#### 1. Embrace Traditional Knowledge

- **Value Indigenous Wisdom:** Essential for sustainable practices and disaster resilience.
- **Integrate with Modern Strategies:** Combine traditional and technological approaches.

#### 2. Engage and Empower Communities

- **Ownership Leads to Success:** Involve locals for culturally relevant actions.
- **Sustainable Outcomes:** Community engagement ensures lasting impact.

#### 3. Leverage Media and Communication

- **Shape Public Perception:** Media can mainstream climate issues.
- **Inspire Action:** Effective storytelling motivates widespread participation.

#### 4. Prioritize Policy and Governance

- **Climate-Centric Policies:** Embed environmental considerations in governance.
- **Comprehensive Planning:** Governments must integrate climate action in all decisions.

#### 5. Address Challenges Innovatively

- **Scale and Integration:** Overcome hurdles by adapting to diverse needs.
- **Multi-Sectoral Approaches:** Collaborate across sectors for effective solutions.

## About Bansidhar and Ila Panda Foundation



Bansidhar and Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF) was established in 2011 to implement sustainable and scalable interventions in the areas of health, education, livelihood, and water and sanitation, building on decades of community development initiatives by the Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys Ltd. (IMFA). Today, BIPF is a premier on-ground implementation partner structured to collaborate with the Central and State governments as well as local and international organisations to implement programs and drive results for the marginalised and underserved communities of Odisha.

## About our event partner Dasra



Dasra is a strategic philanthropy organization focused on transforming India's social sector. Through research, capacity building, and fostering collaborations, Dasra bridges the gap between donors and high-impact social organizations, driving systemic change for sustainable development. Over the last 25 years, Dasra has channelized more than \$400 million to social causes, touching the lives of over 200 million Indians across the country.

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