

A large, thick yellow arrow pointing from left to right, with several smaller yellow arrows pointing in the same direction along its path.

CELEBRATING THE NEW NATION BUILDERS

16 outstanding grassroots women change agents identified as
Finalists of the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Program, 2017

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ABOUT CII FOUNDATION'S WOMAN EXEMPLAR PROGRAM

The CII Foundation's Woman Exemplar Program recognizes exemplary women who are transforming grassroots India. Since its inception in 2005, the program has discovered, recognized and supported women from excluded communities who have, against all odds, excelled and contributed to the development process in India. The women who are selected for this initiative are called EXEMPLAR because they demonstrate vision, resilience and role model leadership.



Women Exemplars recognized till 2016 with the Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, and other dignitaries.

ABOUT THE 2017 WOMAN EXEMPLAR PROGRAM

This year, the Woman Exemplar Program, 2017, received 178 nominations from across 25 states – the highest ever. After a rigorous four-step selection process, 16 finalists were shortlisted, each of whom have emerged ground-up, from the most marginalized communities of India. They have overcome deep social and economic exclusion to transform their own lives and their communities.

Working across ten states with different communities and sectors, what is common to these finalists is their vision of an inclusive India, where full citizenship is secured for all. In every way, these grassroots women change makers are 'nation-builders', driving progress and change in the fields of education, health and micro-enterprise.

In addition to the Award given to the three Winners – 'Exemplars' (one each from the categories of Education, Health and Micro-Enterprise), all winners and finalists will be part of a leadership training and mentoring program.



CATEGORY: EDUCATION

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: EDUCATION

A portrait of Bharathi Srinivasan, a woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a yellow patterned top and a black lanyard with 'AMBA' and 'FABRY 2023' text. The background is a colorful wall with red hearts and letters. A large yellow triangle is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Bharathi Srinivasan

Organization: **AMBA for Life**
Location: **Bengaluru, Karnataka**

Living with an intellectual disability, Bharathi is the Managing Trustee of AMBA, a pioneering organization that provides vocational education and employment to persons with low IQ. Under Bharathi's leadership, AMBA has directly impacted 750 individuals and trained 199 skill trainers across 23 states to accelerate vocational education for persons living with severe to moderate intellectual disabilities.



Dalimba Sabar

Organization: Gram Vikas

Location: Koinpur, Odisha



One of six girls to be born into a poor tribal farmer's family, Dalimba Sabar is the first woman Sarpanch of Koinpur, a remote village of Odisha. This school drop-out is changing the local mindset and building the infrastructure to make quality education accessible for children from the Lanjia Saora tribe. By ensuring road connectivity across 12 villages, ramping up the Public Distribution System and revitalizing the Integrated Child Development Scheme, Dalimba has enrolled more than 300 students in schools and trained her community to become champions of education.

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: EDUCATION

A portrait of Jayamma Bandari, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a pink and grey saree and a gold necklace. She is looking slightly to the left with a gentle expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Jayamma Bandari

Organization: Chaithanya Mahila Mandali

Location: Hyderabad, Telangana

Jayamma quit sex work to start Chaithanya Mahila Mandali (CMM), with seven women who shared similar journeys. CMM provides education, lifeskills and child protection to children of women in sex work and those who are at risk of being trafficked. It has directly impacted 4428 women, of which 1000 are now engaged in alternative livelihoods. In areas where a large majority of women in sex work live, CMM reaches out to 3332 government school students to prevent them from harm. Jayamma also runs a home for 43 children of sex workers.



**Uma
Singh**

Organization: Nabadisha/ Thoughtshop Foundation

Location: Kolkata, West Bengal

Growing up in an impoverished slum, Uma has overcome unemployment, poverty and gender discrimination to launch Nabadisha, an education and lifeskills organization that is run by community youth leaders. It offers creative and safe spaces for adolescents from excluded communities to find their voice, become leaders and run community action programs on gender, sexuality, rights and citizenship. Nabadisha has directly impacted 112 adolescents and 200 youth in three municipalities of Kolkata.

CATEGORY: HEALTH

SOPPRTING PARTER





C. Lalthanzami

Organization: Grassroots Development Network (GDN)

Location: Aizawl, Mizoram



Lalthanzami overcame spousal torture and forced heroin addiction, to launch the Grassroots Development Network (GDN) – a one-stop support centre for women survivors of violence. GDN's shelter home has housed 87 women and their children and provided emotional, legal and economic counselling to 113 individuals and families. She is also training local communities to rehabilitate families of minority tribes and undocumented migrants. Lalthanzami is also the founding member of the National Burma Democratic Party, which is part of Aung San Suu Ki's coalition of democratic parties.

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: HEALTH



Jasodabhen Bhil

Organization: Society for Women's Action and Initiatives (SWATI)

Location: Radhanpur and Varahi, Gujarat



Daughter of a labourer from the Bhil tribe, and a survivor of child marriage, Jasodabhen is making rural health systems responsive to violence against women. A social activist, counsellor and legal mediator, she has trained the staff of three government hospitals, 786 ASHA workers and 60 paralegal workers to detect and report domestic violence as the cause of health complaints reported by women. She leads 6 Mahila Nyay Panchayats or village platforms for justice for women across 30 villages. Her efforts have transformed the lives of 395 women.



**Jhulan
Mondal**

Organization: Kolkata Sanved
Location: Kolkata, West Bengal



Growing up in a shelter home and forcibly separated from her mother and grandmother who lived in a red-light area of Kolkata, Jhulan went on to be the co- founder of Kolkata Sanved (KS). KS is India's first organization that uses Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) to transform survivors of sexual abuse, violence and trafficking into change agents. Jhulan's work has impacted 10,000 girls and women. She also conducts diploma certificate trainings at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences on DMT.

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: HEALTH



Manisha Ghule

Organization: Janvikas Samajik Sanstha (JSS)

Location: Kaej District, Maharashtra



Daughter of a sugar cane cutter and survivor of violence, Manisha leads the all women federation, Mahila Vikas Manch, in the backward district of Beed. Under her leadership, Beed has become one of the first districts of Maharashtra to ensure joint property ownership for more than 20,000 women. Mahila Vikas Manch has also addressed 2000 domestic violence cases in Kaej District.



Manika Majumdar

Organization: Anjali

Location: Rajarhat-Gopalpur Municipality, West Bengal

Despite poverty, family violence and discontinued education, Manika went on to become West Bengal's first trained community mental health counsellor. In partnership with local urban bodies, she and her team run a community mental health kiosk and outreach programs that provide de-stigmatized, accessible and affordable mental health care to marginalized individuals and families. More than 800 individuals living with acute psychosis have been directly impacted by Manika and her team. They have also created awareness and local mental health champions from among 3000 persons across 35 municipal wards.

CATEGORY: MICRO-ENTERPRISE

SOPPRTING PARTER





Kamal Kumbhar

Organization: Kamal Poultry and Ekta Sakhi
Producer Company/Swayam Shikshan Prayog
Location: Hinglajwadi, Osmanabad, Maharashtra



Daughter of a daily-wage labourer, Kamal walked out of poverty and a failed marriage to set up Kamal Poultry and Ekta Sakhi Producer Company. Her ventures have enabled 3000 women to run successful poultry farms, doubling their households' incomes. Additionally, she has mentored more than 5000 women in the drought – prone region of Osmanabad to set up their micro-businesses. A serial entrepreneur, Kamal today owns six different businesses and is a role model business leader.

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: MICRO-ENTERPRISE



Kana Mondal

Organization: Hasta Udyog

Location: North 24 Parganas, West Bengal



Kana Mondal dropped out of school at the age of 15 to shoulder the responsibilities of nine sisters after the death of her father. She challenged the stereotypes faced by women from minority communities, to set up Hasta Udyog, a handicrafts venture that exports hand-stitched and diversified jute products. With an annual turnover of Rs 37 Lakhs, the venture has opened up livelihoods for more than 2500 women from her area. Empanelled as a training organization with the government's skill development initiatives, Kana has enabled 3000 women and girls to set up their own handicrafts micro-businesses.



Krishna Sahu

Organization: BAIF Development Research Foundation
Location: Betul, Madhya Pradesh



Krishna Sahu, daughter of a fruit seller and one of a family of ten, has lit up India's heartland by introducing 17,029 rural families to solar lamps. By extending solar energy into agriculture, she has also enabled 2861 farmers to practice multi-cropping, including gum and lac cultivation. By demonstrating increased yield through solar power, she has enabled tribal farmers to overcome debt, bonded labour and access town markets.

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: MICRO-ENTERPRISE



Krishnaben Yadav

Organization: Mahila Housing Trust
Location: Ahmedabad, Gujarat



Brought up in extreme poverty and educated till the 10th grade, Krishnaben and her 200 'Vikaasinis' (clean energy change agents) have introduced energy audits in the slums of Ahmedabad. She enlists slum dwellers to register as legal electricity consumers, conducts energy audits on their electricity meters and facilitates families to shift to the use of energy-saving appliances. This 'light-waali ben' has performed 15,000 energy audits, made energy-efficient appliances accessible through linkages with micro-finance loans and encouraged behaviour change among 1 lakh slum dwellers.



Nilu Paul

Organization: Seven Sisters Development Assistance

Location: Chirang, Assam



A feisty 60-year old from Kashikotra village with a single machine tailoring shop, Nilu emerged from an impoverished childhood and severe personal hardships to become an influential community leader and role model for women. She has mobilized 450 women into 37 Self Help groups and two village organizations facilitating members to avail loan amounts totalling to 15 lakhs from formal banks.

FINALISTS

CATEGORY: MICRO-ENTERPRISE



Sunita Kamble

Organization: Mann Deshi Foundation
Location: Mhasvad, Maharashtra



Sunita is the first grassroots woman goat doctor in the severely drought-affected Mhasvad region of Maharashtra, where cattle-rearing is a key source of livelihoods. Having performed artificial insemination on 2267 goats, Sunita and her team of seven barefoot veterinarians have trained 375 women in the technique, thereby pioneering an alternative and profitable livelihood option for women-headed households of the area.



Zahida Amin

Organization: Nayi Kiran

Location: Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir



Living in the heart of the Kashmir conflict, Zahida Amin uses entrepreneurship for peace-building. Guided by her strong design acumen and drive to change the Kashmiri handicrafts market, Zahida blends Kashmiri embroidery with styles drawn from other states to create unique pieces. She employs 40 women in her venture, Nayi Kiran, who work in unforgiving geopolitical conditions, ensuring a steady income of Rs.5000 per month for each employee, more than double the typical earnings in the Valley for a salaried job.

STEERING COMMITTEE : CII FOUNDATION'S WOMEN EXEMPLAR PROGRAM 2017

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ABOUT CII FOUNDATION



The CII Foundation was set up by CII to provide a meaningful bridge between marginalised communities and donors, especially corporates, and to develop and manage high-impact programmes through strategic guidance on CSR. Over the last few years, CII Foundation has undertaken various projects with corporate sector support in the areas of skill development, child development and maternal health, water conservation, disaster relief and rehabilitation etc.

THANK YOU PARTNERS

Supporting Partner: Micro - Enterprise Category



Supporting Partner: Health Category



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