



Webinar: Community Listening-W4P Approach for Accelerating Entrepreneurship

W4P co-organised an interactive webinar on "Community Listening: A W4P Approach for Accelerating Entrepreneurship and Economic Development" on 1 October 2020. The objective of the webinar was to share perspectives on the need for deep listening to communities and stakeholders and its potential in informing the co-creation of relevant solutions for job creation and entrepreneurship.

The Work 4 Progress (W4P) programme of Development Alternatives and "la Caixa" Foundation accelerates the creation of meaningful and dignified employment through platforms for innovation, action and continuous learning. It adopts a social innovation methodology through which it listens to the community through dialogue, finds answers through co-creation, and then prototypes solutions and shares learning to eventually create impact at scale.

The participants included members from the W4P India and global network - "la Caixa" Foundation, Action Aid, Transforming Rural India Foundation, Vikas Anvesh Foundation, Institute of Rural Management Anand, Manviya Drishtikon Sewa Samiti, Swami Vivekanand Sewa Samiti, Janastu, and Medha Learning Foundation and Development Alternatives (W4P India lead partner).

The webinar was focused on the following major topics:

Why Listening is important and its relevance in the field of entrepreneurship and livelihood creation' (Perspectives by Gorka Espiau, Director, "Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies"; and Kanika Verma, Programme Director, DA) - The speakers started the session by sharing perspectives on ways in which deep listening gives insights for social innovation. They shared how it enhances the quality of data collected from research and also builds trust with communities to make collective interpretations, which goes on to inform the design of relevant solutions for job creation.

This was followed by a few examples of ways in which deep listening has informed the programme design of W4P India and its solutions for entrepreneurship were then discussed. For example: During the Kaun Banega Business Leader competition, when asked who entrepreneurs think is a business leader, a striking majority of 91% voiced their admiration for a local successful entrepreneur of their village. As a response in the next phase of the competition success stories of our entrepreneurs were used as examples and received over 1600 applications from 20 villages of Bundelkhand.

Inquiry and adaptive management (Perspectives by Vrinda Chopra Lead, Learning and Knowledge, W4P India) - The session included perspective sharing on the significance of listening in Inquiry and adaptive management. The speaker elaborated on the need to understand the different actors, flows and processes of the local ecosystem in order to create a culture of entrepreneurship and several tools including Theory of Change Workshops, Learning System, Reflection Workshops, and Regional Entrepreneurship Coalitions were shared as example of enablers for adaptive management.

Experience sharing of international programmes (Perspectives by Itziar Moreno, Programme Lead, “Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies”) - The speaker shared cross country examples of different community and digital tools being used in employment generation programmes of Southern Thailand, Balistan and Malaysia to provide a deeper understanding of how listening is being incorporated in development programs at the international level with diverse communities.

First look of W4P India’s ‘Community Listening’ toolkit (By Ankita Pant and Upma Singh, DA) - Sharing the first look of the Community Listening Toolkit, the W4P India team talked about its relevance and implementation in diverse situations especially during disruptions like COVID19. The toolkit is the first of the *Finding WHY* Toolkit series being developed under the programme to assist development practitioners in listening to communities, prototyping solutions and taking collective action.

The closing remarks were delivered by Prema Gera (External Adviser, W4P India) and Joshua Fisher (PhD Scholar, Columbia University) wherein they reiterated the importance of considering listening as an immersive experience exercise to understand our communities.

The interactive discussion during the webinar not only gave the participants and speakers insights on the potential of deep listening in developing relevant solutions but also ways in which it enhances the agency of individual entrepreneurs and improves relationships between actors in the ecosystem.