



Strengthening Partnerships for Desert Ecosystems

Shrashtant Patara, Sr. Vice President, Development Alternatives Group participated as a panellist in the “Maru Manthan: Partnerships for Our Deserts” webinar in an event co-organised by Urmul Trust and Desert Resource Center (DRC) on 13 and 14 February 2021. The forum aimed to celebrate desert land, life and its anomalies, with a key focus on developing and strengthening partnerships and interventions in desert ecosystems. Both Urmul Trust and DRC are the implementing agencies for the Urmul Natural Dye Cluster of IMEDF under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) initiative of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India for cluster development.

Other speakers included Anubhuti Patra, In Country Representative, Malala Fund; Sumita Ghosh, Board Member, Urmul Trust and Founder Director, Rangсутra Crafts, India; Partab Shivani, Chief Executive Officer, Thar Education Alliance, Pakistan; Manoj Mishra, Executive Director, Sahjeevan; Raman Ahuja, Independent Resource Person, Value Chains and was moderated by Prerna Agarwal, Chief Executive Officer, Urmul Desert Crafts.

While sharing his views, Shrashtant Patara highlighted the importance of collaboration and multi-stakeholder dialogue for creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. One such successful example of a joint initiative is how the strong relationship shared between Development Alternatives Group, Urmul

Trust, and DRC led to the incubation of a natural dye cluster in Bajju, Rajasthan. Adding to this, he emphasised on the need to shift from vertical partnership building to more horizontal partnerships to ensure involvement of multi-stakeholder perspectives, especially community's participation and decision making while co-developing livelihood solutions. He also announced that IMEDF is extending its partnership with DRC by incubating a lemon grass cluster in Manipur

The two day event, which included the panel sessions, craft exhibits and inauguration of a camel milk center, paid tribute to the rhythm of life in the deserts and among desert dwellers. It showcased the resilience, jubilations and innovations amidst living in a harsh environment with its challenges and scarcities

IMEDF is a special purpose vehicle of the Development Alternatives Group that accelerates the development of micro-enterprises at scale. It is also the nodal agency of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India for the development of clusters under SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries).