



*Bahraich coalition*

## Entrepreneurship Coalition in Uttar Pradesh

**D**istrict-level Entrepreneurship Coalitions were conducted in the Bahraich and Lakhimpur districts of Uttar Pradesh to accelerate entrepreneurship development in the region. The meeting was organised by Transform Rural India Foundation (TRIF), the core partner of the Work4Progress (W4P) India programme. Under the third phase of the W4P programme, Bahraich, Lakhimpur Kheri, and Basti, Uttar Pradesh have been added as new geographies. The coalition in Basti was organised in June, 2022, while it was conducted for the first time in Bahraich and Lakhimpur Kheri in July, 2022. The two coalitions were attended by 60+ individuals in total. In Bahraich, the coalition meeting was attended by 10 entrepreneurs and representatives from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, National Rural Livelihood Mission, Rural Self Employment Training Institutes, Lead Bank, Horticulture Department, Agriculture Department, Aga Khan Foundation, Ernst and Young, and Tata Communications Limited. In Lakhimpur Kheri coalition meeting, 12 entrepreneurs and representatives from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme, National Rural Livelihood Mission, and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act participated.

Both the meetings started with a round of introduction of all the participants, followed by setting the context for the district-level coalition by TRIF members. As the coalition meetings were conducted for the first time in these two districts, the objective and role of the coalition platforms were discussed in detail. The objective of the coalition was to avail information about available schemes from different government departments in the perspective of Bahraich, and Lakhimpur Kheri, especially the Mihinpurva and Nighasan blocks, so that siloed efforts of each stakeholder can be transformed into collective actions. This was followed by the introduction of Development Alternatives (DA) by Omkar Gupta, DA, highlighting the thematic areas of intervention, along with a brief about the W4P programme and its methodology. Both the coalitions were interactive, wherein entrepreneurs raised queries regarding the difficulties of starting and expanding a business, for which the coalition members provided information about the solutions in form of better market and technology linkages. The coalition members also agreed that a platform for collaboration was necessary and such meetings can be conducted once every month to build initial momentum around entrepreneurship.

The focus of the discussions was on entrepreneurship-related schemes such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, One District One Product, Mukhyamantri Yuva Swavalamban Yojana, etc., which are run by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. As agriculture is prominent in both geographies, stakeholders emphasised value addition in agricultural products.

Furthermore, they also highlighted the importance of bulk production to reap the benefits of economies of scale. Some innovative non-farm enterprise models such as integrated fishery and poultry and e-rickshaws were also discussed, which have high potential in the districts. Towards the end of the coalition, the entrepreneurs showcased their products including bangles, bamboo jewellery, and paintings made out of the wheat stem.

As a way forward, DA and TRIF teams will set specific targets for enterprise development in the region and work towards formalising the coalition in the two districts along with establishing a core team for future coalitions.