

MINI TOOLKIT ON COLLABORATION FOR ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

ABOUT WORK 4 PROGRESS (W4P), INDIA

The Work 4 Progress (W4P) program of “la Caixa” Foundation aims to accelerate the creation of meaningful and dignified employment through the creation of platforms for innovation, action and continuous learning. In India, W4P provides enterprise development opportunities for youth and women in two regions - Bundelkhand and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. W4P uses social innovation methods that encourage dialogue-based participation by the community to co-create model solutions and share learning with others to generate impact at scale.



DIALOGUE

Listen to Multi-Stakeholder Perspectives



CO-CREATE

Develop Relevant Solutions Collaboratively



PROTOTYPE

Demonstrate Sustainability of Solutions



ACCELERATE

Mainstream Learning for Impact at Scale

W4P OBJECTIVES

W4P innovates and demonstrates systemic solutions to create a culture of entrepreneurship through the following interconnected objectives:

- **Nurture constructive communities** through community led influence platforms, safe spaces for women, social enterprises, and awareness building through local self-governments and change leaders
- **Unleash entrepreneurial energies** through finance, technology and marketing solutions for entrepreneurs, network of information centres, and peer-to-peer influence
- **Build robust ecosystems** for enterprise development by creating regional and national platforms for convergent action
- **Mainstream enabling mechanisms** by sharing lessons and evidence on job creation through regional and global platforms

W4P aims to enable decent work opportunities for a million people over the next ten years.

SYSTEMS CHANGE FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To achieve the 2030 Agenda for transforming our world towards sustainable development, a departure from traditional project-based efforts to practical solutions is required for addressing growing and complex needs. There have been recent developments in adopting a systems change approach for complex development problems like unemployment and job creation. Evidence from these developments shows that stakeholders in the development process have been provided with the tools and frameworks to navigate complexity and strengthen their capacity for initiating transformative change.

“The systems-thinking lens allows us to reclaim our intuition about whole systems and hone our abilities to understand parts, see interconnections, ask ‘what-if’ questions about possible future behaviours, and be creative and courageous about system redesign.”¹

A systems approach need, therefore, defies using pre-defined solutions. It is the core of social innovation methodologies which in implementation work to influence linkages and interconnections of the system to reach their intended communities.² It does this through activation of networks, collaboration, human centred design, embedding learning, and shared narratives. It taps into leverage points in the system, and creates viable and sustainable alternatives to established mindsets and paradigms, providing an inclusive and open approach for sustainable development.

¹ Donella Meadows (2008) Thinking in Systems: A Primer

² Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The approach thus has the potential for achieving development solutions with greater efficiency and scale, than traditional approaches. Evidence from successful initiatives shows that there can be new ways of organizing and operating to achieve our development goals. These new ways of operating, based on deep understanding, reflection, co-creation and collaboration, build constructive communities geared towards transformative change.³

Work 4 Progress (W4P) aims to practice innovation that is social in purpose, systemic in nature and inclusive by design.

Development Alternatives (DA), through Phase 1 of the W4P program of the “la Caixa” Banking Foundation, working on innovating resources, processes and models, has had early success in the space of micro-entrepreneurship to provide meaningful and decent work for all. Stories are emerging of women transcending gender barriers to drive progress literally through e-rickshaws, the youth taking advantage of technological and market dynamism through information kiosks, and communities in general transitioning from being recipients of change to co-creators of change. Building on current evidence base and initial successes, W4P continues to strengthen its systemic approach to further develop interconnected solutions with diverse actors to drive transformational change at not only the micro, but also the meso and macro levels.

³ Corka Espiau (2017) Social Innovation Platforms for International Development

COLLABORATIONS FOR CO-CREATING RELEVANT SOLUTIONS

In recent times, the lack of job creation and unemployment has been on a rise. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector is increasingly seen as the engine for growth and employment. MSMEs in India employ nearly **40%** of the workforce. Within the sector, **micro enterprises comprise 99.4% of the total enterprises**, and employ nearly **23 million people**. In essence, support for micro enterprises can lead to significant gains in socio-economic development. The government, NGOs and, increasingly, the private sector are thus beginning to accelerate their support to micro enterprise development and towards creating a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Development Alternatives, in partnership with “la Caixa” Banking Foundation, has launched a social innovation program, Work 4 Progress (W4P), that envisions creation of meaningful jobs for women and youth through micro enterprise development. The program is being implemented in the districts of Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Jhansi and Niwari in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

The micro enterprises in the program geographies, as is true for most of India, face numerous barriers with respect to information, technology, market, finance and capacities. The W4P program is addressing these challenges by applying social innovation and systemic approaches and tools such as dialogue, co-creation and prototyping. In dialogue with key stakeholders and micro entrepreneurs, the program recognized different needs in an entrepreneurial ecosystem and come together on a platform in support for entrepreneurs.



The collaboration platforms have been co-created with stakeholders at the local and district level ecosystem, building a meso level network of stakeholders. These include entrepreneurs, government agencies, civil society organizations (working in the sector of livelihoods), financial institutions (banks, non-banking financial companies etc.), training institutes, academia, trader associations, etc. These platforms aim to unleash collaborative energies towards entrepreneurship, by bringing together stakeholders otherwise working in silos. The platform would, thus, serve to find mutually beneficial ways for entrepreneurs to support each other towards greater prosperity and productive employment. Micro entrepreneurs are active agents at these platforms, as equal partners in collaborative efforts among stakeholders. In essence, the platforms bring together the entrepreneurs and the stakeholders to build and nurture a contextualized, responsive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the program geographies.

At the national level, W4P is working towards co-creating a collaboration platform involving key actors from the government, donors, private sector, foundations and civil society organizations. At the global level, W4P exchanges knowledge through various platforms such as UNDP good practices, World Bank's Impact Portfolio, and Systems Play (<https://systemsplay.com/about/>) – an initiative connecting change makers in the global South.

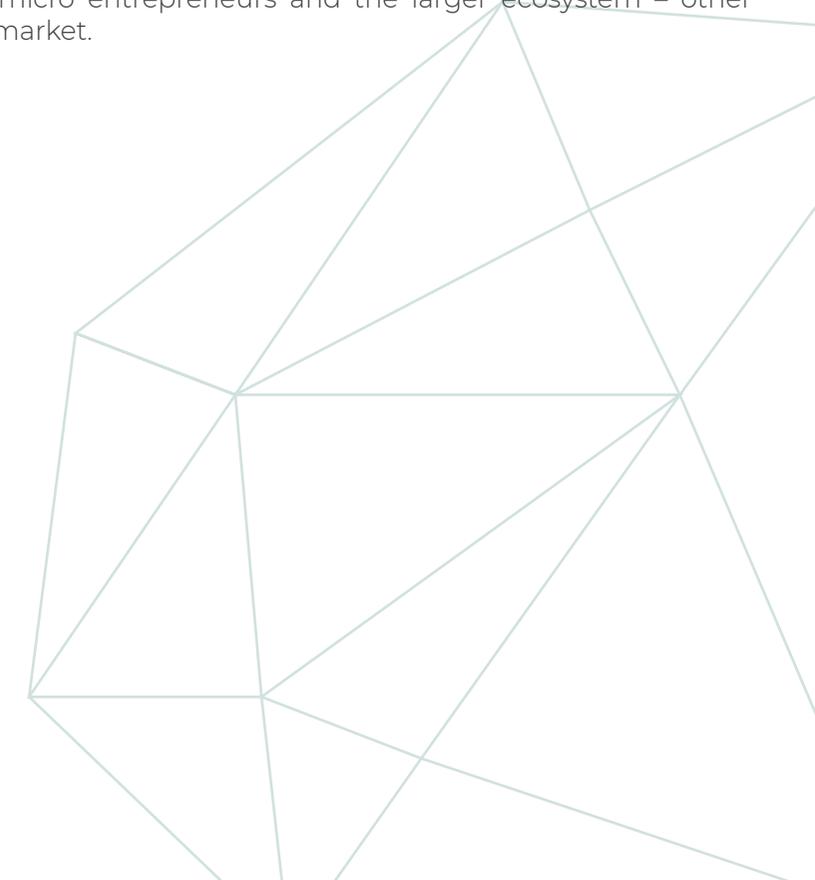
WHO CAN JOIN THE COALITIONS?

If you are passionate about local economic development and job creation, or are an expert in the domain, we will be eager for you to join us. We invite representation from entrepreneurs and a wide range of stakeholders from public, private and civil society, such as ground-level practitioners, academia, bankers, subject matter experts, NGOs and government representatives.

The coalitions and members in the program geographies are working on understanding the potential of community-led networks and delivering support to micro entrepreneurs. The coalitions are also platforms for collaboration on the ground. For example, two collaborative efforts have emerged in the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. These networks involve peer-to-peer influence among entrepreneurs visiting and supporting each other in their businesses. A woman entrepreneur, Asha Devi, who set up her first business of vermicompost production in her village, has now evolved to become a local aggregator. The members of the Mirzapur district coalition have also identified the need to set up a local incubation centre that can provide services to entrepreneurs in the area.

The coalition is a prototype in the W4P program, which was initially being driven by Development Alternatives. This platform supported local entrepreneurs and linked them with different stakeholders addressing their needs. Thus, ensuring the continuity of this platform beyond the W4P program was crucial, for which the need to build ownership among the stakeholders was identified.

Such collaborative action at the meso level can subsequently trigger shifts at both macro and micro levels to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Collective action by stakeholders with the common goal of enterprise development and livelihood creation can bridge the gap between micro entrepreneurs and the larger ecosystem – other communities and the external market.



COLLABORATION EXAMPLES OUTSIDE W4P FOR ENHANCING LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES

SELF HELP GROUP (SHG) FEDERATIONS⁴

WHY DO WE COLLABORATE?

- **Empowerment of stakeholders:** A collaborative approach allows stakeholders to present their perspective to others.
- **Building new strategies:** The partnership approach provides a break from traditional strategies that were not effective, thus giving rise to different approaches.
- **Direct stake or responsibility in management of resources:** Individuals have financial, legal or strong personal stakes in a way the resources are managed.
- **Coordination:** To avoid duplicate work, accomplish more, and gain pooled knowledge, individuals chose collaboration.
- **Community building:** To improve relations, diffuse tensions, and get to know the other members of community.

⁴Operation Manual, Gram Panchayat Level Federation, Odisha Livelihoods Federation, Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Odisha

Federations consist of women SHGs joined together based on mutuality and affinity from the poorer sections of the society. These are a network of SHGs of a particular Gram Panchayat, providing a common platform for the SHG members to share their experiences and voice their problems. The federations can help in pooling talent and resources from the Gram Panchayat/block/district, thereby accelerating the impact of an individual SHG. The federations focus on financial intermediation, formation and development of SHGs. These can act as service providers to individual SHGs and cluster level forums on demand.

PLATFORM FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP (PIE) BY VRUTTI⁵

PIE is a producer-centric digital platform, a transformative systemic solution being built on the Societal Platform approach, to improve the incomes (3-10 times) and resilience of small producers, helping them to access all key services in their livelihood journey.

CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN INDUSTRIES (CII)⁶

Starting with engineering industries, the CII has become a torch bearer of inter-sectoral integration of industries coming together for common interest. With their collaborative actions, they have been able to steer governmental policies and decision-making. Collaborative action through a process of diversification and expansion, and working towards common goals, has made CII a sustainable organization empowering its members and giving them a platform to influence policies.

⁵<https://vrutti.org/platform-for-inclusive-entrepreneurship-pie/>
⁶<https://www.cii.in/>

DO IT YOURSELF – REGIONAL COALITION

ACTIVITY	Regional Coalition for Enterprise Development
OBJECTIVE	To enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem by co-creating a collaboration platform for all stakeholders in the enterprise development and livelihood sector at block/ district level
DURATION OF ACTIVITY	2 hours
FREQUENCY	Once in 2 months in 1 district/ block
LOCATION	Big room – centrally located, possibly belonging to the facility of local stakeholders
KEY RESOURCES USED TO CARRY OUT ACTIVITY	Personnel: 2 personnel Tools: Flipchart, poster, sticky notes, moderation sheets (of various colors), pens, sketch pens, notepad Audience size: 15- 20 local stakeholders

KEY PARTICIPANTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- **Entrepreneurs:** local entrepreneurs
- **Local government agencies:** DIC, NABARD, NRLM, Horticulture, Agriculture, Veterinary Department
- **Financial institutions:** banks, MFIs, lending agencies
- **Technology supplier:** vendors of machinery (optional)
- **Market aggregator:** trade association members, FPOs and other aggregators
- **Skill development agencies and academics:** RSETIs, ITI schools
- **CSO agencies:** NGOs
- **Media:** journalists, print media

ARRANGEMENTS THAT NEED TO BE MADE AT THE LOCATION

- 1 poster put up at the location
- 40-50 flyers of various government schemes, and collaterals belonging to partnering organizations
- Projector and sound system
- Chart papers pasted on the walls, and moderation sheets
- Proper drinking water and seating arrangement
- Seating arrangement should preferably be circular, so that everyone can see each other

I. PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	PREPARATION	REMARKS
STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main criteria of stakeholder identification is to select institutions/ individuals working in livelihood sector and enterprise development Initial one-to-one dialogue with institutions should be carried out, and one representative should be identified who will act as point of contact Protocols of institutions for participating in external meetings should be identified, and invitations should be made accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While selecting institutions, it is important to see their field activities Also, the stakeholders should be from varied sectors like marketing, academics, training, government, CSOs etc. While selecting representatives, care is to be taken about the nature of their work; it is always suggested to select mid management employees who are working on ground or are related directly to operations; although head of institutions can also be invited for chairing the meetings and to expedite decision making

PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After identification of participants, they should be sent formal mails copied to their respective seniors Agenda should be provided with the invitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the first few coalition meetings, role setting should be completed so that each participant is aware of their role in the coalition
COLLATERALS ARRANGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderators should be finalized for each meeting, and format of the meeting should be decided Members should be encouraged to use visualization tools or writing exercises 	
DATA COLLECTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed minutes to be captured and shared with the members 	

II. FLOW OF EVENTS:

NO.	AGENDA	TIME	TOOL
1	Welcome Address followed by quick round of introduction	10 mins	Use of suitable tools for communication / presentation / discussion
2	Success stories sharing	10 mins	
3	Report on action points of previous meetings and agenda setting for the current meeting	10 mins	
4	Discussion on the agenda points	60 mins	
5	Actions points setting and date finalization of the next meeting	5 mins	
6	Thanks	5 mins	

III. NOTE:

- a. Responsibility of leading the meetings should be rotated among the members
- b. Venue can be selected in rotation according to the lead organizer
- c. Action points should be focused on for improving collaborative action
- d. Formal official mails to be sent out to members minimum 5 days prior to the meeting
- e. The date and time for each coalition meeting should be finalized in the previous meeting

III. FOLLOW UP:

- a. Minutes of each meeting to be shared
- b. Success stories should be captured

STRENGTHENING VINDHYACHAL'S ENTREPRENEURS

Crossing the southern part of Shivpur village, you can hear the carefully timed soft clicking of Taramani's container-making machine. Going in his machine room, you will find Taramani operating the machine like he was born to do this.

In 2003, eight years after working on his father's farm, Taramani decided to look for a job in the neighbouring temple belt of Vindhyachal. This belt is full of many colourful, narrow lanes leading to various temples, with shops selling offerings made to the gods and goddesses. Containers filled with vermillion are an important part of these offerings, which are bought in large quantities by devotees and priests every day. This is where Taramani saw a thriving market, and started manufacturing small boxes for selling vermillion from a small room in his house. Over a decade, he expanded his customer base and began to sell an average of 7,200 containers every month, which gave him a monthly revenue of INR 50,000.

In 2018, Taramani started participating in regional stakeholder coalition meetings with other entrepreneurs and enterprise service providers such as market aggregators, government programs and financial institutions. At one of the meetings, he shared his vision for expanding his enterprise, and connected with the manager of a reputed financial institution where he applied for a loan of INR 35,000. Taramani invested the loan in purchasing machinery for enhancing his production capacity and diversifying his product portfolio. He also employed two other people, Dinesh and Kamesh, from his village, for managing the workload. Taramani proudly claims that his profits have increased by 60% in the last six months.

Taramani continues to be an active member of the stakeholder coalition meetings for enterprise development in his district. He shares, "I started attending the coalition meetings in July, and have been attending all meetings since then. I find the interactions very useful, and everyone always leaves the room with new ideas." Taramani plays an instrumental role in bringing the voices of his community to the forefront and getting information for growing enterprises. By doing this, Taramani has linked market aggregators and government programs from the coalition with aspiring entrepreneurs from his community.

One of them is a homemaker, who wanted to bring good quality groceries to the doorstep of other homemakers, and has thus set up a general store in Shivpur village. The other is Kamesh, who works with Taramani and plans to start his own enterprise soon. Taramani plans on expanding the reach of his enterprise to temples within a radius of 200 kilometers, and continues to be an agent of change in his community.

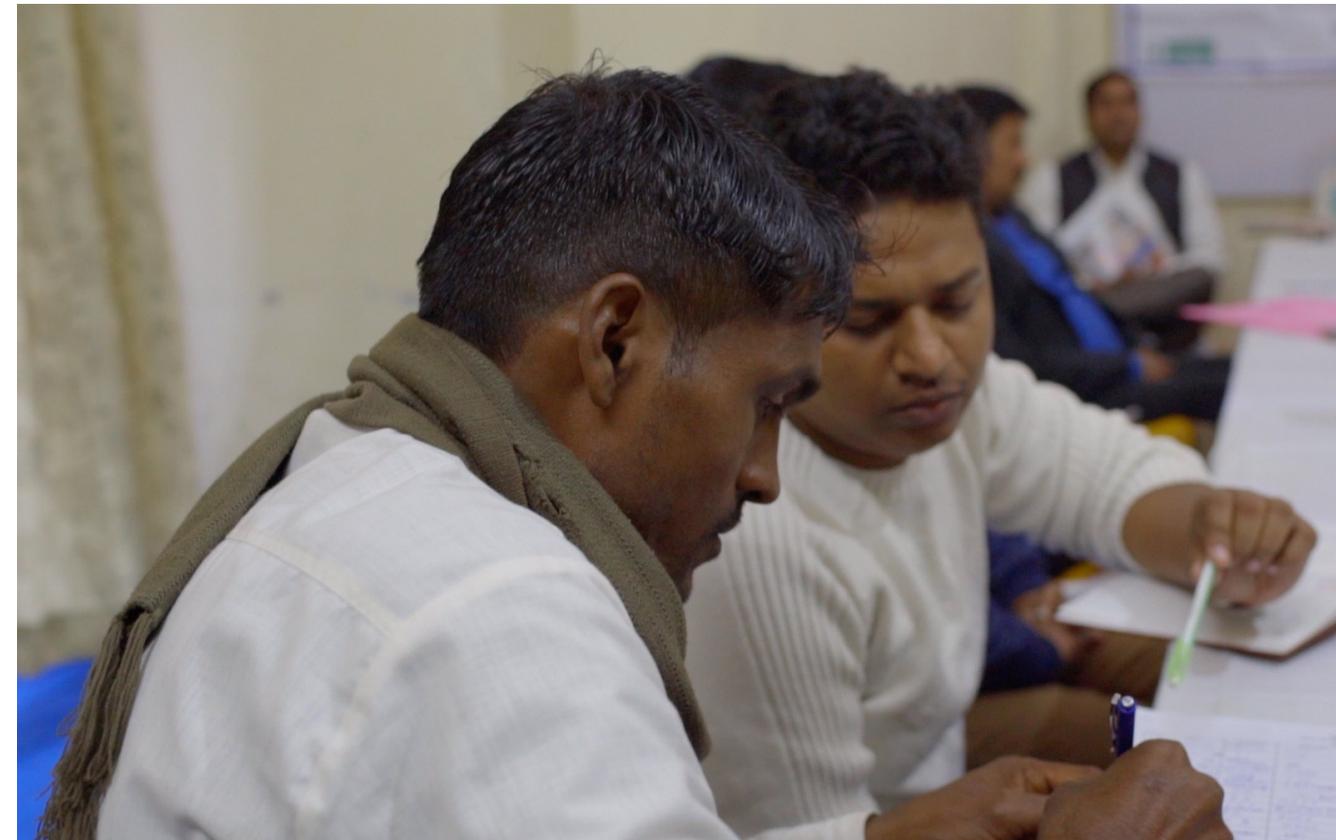
WHAT MAKES TARAMANI AN ENTREPRENEUR?

He is confident and resourceful

TARAMANI AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE:

Facilitates the creation of multiple jobs in his village by connecting his community with the regional stakeholder coalition for enterprise development

The regional stakeholder coalition for enterprise development is the first of its kind in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The coalition is not only connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with support service providers, but is also connecting support service providers with each other. Over the past year, the coalition has enabled setting up of enterprises across four districts in India. Members of the coalition are growing every month, and so are partnerships and action for creating decent jobs.



W4P TOOLS AND INITIATIVES FOR FACILITATING COLLABORATIONS



ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT COALITION

Coalitions are regional platforms consisting of a diverse (and balanced) group of stakeholders who meet periodically to discuss individual and collective interests, and ideate solutions for micro enterprise development through convergent action.

Ultimately, the coalition aims at building a robust business ecosystem for micro enterprise development in regions of their operation.



INFORMATION KIOSK

Information kiosks offer internet and computer services through which communities can avail government schemes, apply for insurance etc.

These kiosks also act as local points of contact and information dissemination on employment and self-employment options.

ENTERPRISE FAIR

Enterprise fairs are market places that have the potential to build networks between entrepreneurs and enterprise service providers. Such fairs also extend W4P reach by creating a momentum in the community towards pursuing entrepreneurship.



LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT (GRAM PANCHAYAT) LEADERSHIP MODULE

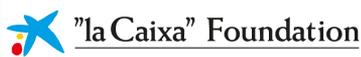
W4P is developing a capacity building module with the Gram Panchayats for sensitising them towards adopting self-employment opportunities, especially for vulnerable communities.

The module aims to mainstream entrepreneurship through the local development agenda.





Development Alternatives (DA) is a social enterprise with global presence in the fields of green economic development, social empowerment and environmental management. It is credited with numerous innovations in clean technology and delivery systems that help create sustainable livelihoods in the developing world. DA focuses on empowering communities through strengthening people's institutions and facilitating their access to basic needs; enabling economic opportunities through skill development for green jobs and enterprise creation; and promoting low carbon pathways for development through natural resource management models and clean technology solutions.



The "la Caixa" Foundation from Spain, the third largest foundation in the world, promotes diverse social, economic, cultural and ecological initiatives to foster sustainable development across the world. "la Caixa" has worked for more than 110 years in contributing to the advancement of society and the progress of individuals, with a special emphasis on those who need it most. Its main strategic objective is to provide opportunities and fight inequalities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through programs that contribute to the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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