

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session of the “Jobs We Want” event introduced the Work 4 Progress program as a multi stakeholder platform which promotes innovations to accelerate job creation. The audience was welcomed by **Mr. George Varughese**, President – Development Alternatives who expressed his gratitude to all participants for attending the event. Introducing the Work 4 Progress program briefly, Mr. Varughese emphasized the role of innovations and partnerships to jointly address the cause of joblessness and local economic growth in the country.



Ms. Marta Solsona, “la Caixa” Banking Foundation shared a video describing the genesis and evolution of the “la Caixa” Banking Foundation since 1904. Since its inception, the Foundation has worked on promoting culture, improving health and education, and enabling social and economic development for the disadvantaged communities in Spain and across the world by addressing the needs of the times - to build a better future. Post the video, Ms. Solsona shared a presentation describing the work of “la Caixa” Foundation in the areas of social progress, science and research, as well as culture and knowledge - for the progress of

people and a better society for everyone. In its international program, the Foundation is committed to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through its four lines of action – global health (fight against malaria and pneumonia), education, emergencies and humanitarian action, and job creation for vulnerable women and young people.

Introducing the Work 4 Progress program as an innovator for job creation, Ms. Solsona emphasized that the Foundation aims to support a network of organizations that work in the same area of job creation through co-creation led systemic change. This network would then create platforms of innovation and socio-economic change. W4P adopts a new methodology – which listens to communities to identify challenges and opportunities, co-creating initiatives to address these demands and implementing prototypes to test their feasibility. Based on evaluations and evidence generated, initiatives that demonstrate potential for maximum impact would then be accelerated. The ultimate goal is to promote capacities for innovations and develop collaborations for job creation for sustainability and impact. Describing the work history of the Foundation in India since 2001 and relationship with Development Alternatives, Ms. Solsona welcomed a series of private and public sector organizations to come together in promoting innovations to create jobs for youth and women in areas around Jhansi and Varanasi with the W4P platform.

Mr. Shrashtant Patara shared that W4P in India is focused on promoting job creation through the development of micro enterprises. Highlighting the need for developing a growth story that is inclusive and takes many more people forward with it, Mr. Patara shared the processes and findings for of a deep listening on entrepreneurship and related decisions with youth, women, and entrepreneurs in project areas near Varanasi and Bundelkhand. Based on some of the findings, he shared the example of how new co-creation initiatives using local media to drive entrepreneurship are being undertaken with the communities. He shared stories of three entrepreneurs who played roles of change makers to drive transformation in their communities. Emphasizing the approach of DA Group in promoting sustainability, Mr. Patara underscored the point of increasing resource constraints that make it imperative to build greener, resource efficient, and environmentally benign enterprise solutions. His presentation shared the way forward for the W4P program that aims to create communities of change and developing micro movements of people and partners working together to pool in innovative solutions for promoting entrepreneurship and jobs. Talking about W4P platform, Mr. Patara emphasized that this learning and innovation space aims to bring people together to experiment and implement to learn what can trigger micro entrepreneurship at scale. He ended his presentation by sharing the vision that by 2027, DA Group aims to support a million micro enterprises in India.

The inaugural address at the Jobs We Want event was delivered by **Dr. Arun Kumar Panda**, Secretary, MSME. The address focused on the entrepreneurship development scenario in India and was centered around three main elements:

- Enabling Environment**
 Talking about the diversity and culture of entrepreneurship in the country, he highlighted that businesses, small or large, have faced several challenges in the new era of globalization and recent fiscal reforms such as GST, but have also been exposed to new opportunities. He emphasized the need for formalization of small and micro businesses so as to enable them to access improved business services and be included in formal and large value chains.
- Schemes**
 Dr Panda explained how MSME Samadhaan is one such innovation which allows businesses to share their grievances regarding public procurement order completions from various Ministries. He moved on to talk about other initiatives such as MUDRA, PMEGP, SFURTI, ASPIRE among others that are focused on building these businesses. He stressed upon the issue of lack of information regarding services, schemes, and business-related information as the major hurdle for micro entrepreneurs across rural and remote areas of the country. He proposed the possibility of star entrepreneurs as brand ambassadors to resolve problems of micro businesses around the country. He further highlighted the Government e-Market place (GEM) platform which aims to help rural entrepreneurs across the country to access improved marketing services. He added that incubation platforms to scale up businesses ideas are being promoted through various initiatives of the Ministry.
- Call To Action**
 Dr. Panda also proposed the idea of creating state level MSME platforms to network and share ideas with various actors starting at the block level. Sharing the view that deep listening is crucial, he welcomed suggestions from DA and other participants on potential solutions to service the needs of aspiring and existing micro entrepreneurs across the country. He ended his session on the need to service the information asymmetry and welcomed participants to come together to have a dialogue, co-create, and learn from one another keeping the needs of the people at the centre.

