

District Entrepreneurship Coalition Meeting, Niwari

A District Entrepreneurship Coalition (DEC) meeting was held on 18th May at the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) Office in Niwari, Madhya Pradesh, as part of the Work4Progress (W4P) India programme of Development Alternatives (DA), supported by the "la Caixa" Foundation and State Bank of India Foundation. The meeting was held in person and attended by 44 individuals, including entrepreneurs and representatives from organizations such as State Bank of India, UCO Bank, Department of Horticulture, Srijan, Deepak Foundation, and Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) such as Fusion. The meeting agenda aimed to establish a coordination forum with all relevant stakeholders to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem.



REC in action at Niwari

W4P India has been actively co-creating several social innovation tools and platforms with communities to foster a nurturing ecosystem for enterprise development in the target geographies. One such initiative is the District Entrepreneurship Coalition (DEC), which serves as a multi-stakeholder learning and action platform that co-creates solutions and facilitates convergent action for entrepreneurship-led job creation. The meeting successfully initiated a dialogue among the region's various stakeholders and local entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs present were engaged in papad making, tailoring, grocery store, and computer training. The session was moderated by Rajeev Kumar, Development Alternatives.

The various stakeholders discussed the possibilities and strategies for enterprise development and growth in the Niwari area. S.P. Samadhiya, Lead District Manager from State Bank of India, also shared insights on increasing employment opportunities for youth in Niwari through diverse enterprise development initiatives. He emphasised the importance of establishing market linkages. Participants shared their expansion plans and sought assistance to proceed. Local entrepreneurs engaged in papad making and tailoring expressed their interest in expanding their business, which

required financial assistance. Representatives from Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) also shared information about their work and reassured the attendees of their willingness to support aspiring entrepreneurs needing loans.

The team was responsible for sharing a list of individuals requiring assistance with the MFIs. They also highlighted beneficial schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Industry Upgradation Scheme and Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprise (PMFME) for individuals seeking loans or looking to venture into food processing. Rajeev Kumar from DA gave an example of its partner organisation, Rang De, which has already assisted 1000 entrepreneurs with loans. He emphasised the potential impact that can be achieved if more organisations join forces, as it would assist thousands of entrepreneurs. Some agri-based entrepreneurs also inquired about the registration process to start agricultural enterprises. The representatives provided detailed guidance to the entrepreneurs on accessing different schemes, their eligibility, and their operations.

The coalition had a successful and productive meeting, further highlighting the importance of having a platform where stakeholders can meet and have a space for dialogue. This is imperative to foster an ecosystem that seeks to break working in silos as collaborative action is crucial for systemic shifts to occur, and the meeting moved the needle in the right direction.