

## District Entrepreneurship Coalition in Lakhimpur, Uttar Pradesh

**D**evelopment Alternatives (DA), in partnership with Transform Rural India (TRI), organised a District Entrepreneurship Coalition (DEC) meeting in Lakhimpur, Uttar Pradesh, under the State Bank of India Foundation funded project, “Accelerating Entrepreneurship through Social Innovation approach (AESI)”. The event was attended by 60 participants including entrepreneurs, representatives from government departments such as the District Deputy Commissioner, District Mission Manager, Lead District Manager (LDM), and District Development Manager (DDM-NABARD) along with stakeholders such as National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Pratham, and Horticulture Department. The meeting’s agenda was to discuss entrepreneurship opportunities and address challenges in Lakhimpur.

The coalition highlighted the difficulties and barriers faced by entrepreneurs while setting up enterprises. The participants brainstormed ways to secure financial support and mentor aspiring entrepreneurs. They also discussed how to enhance the income of entrepreneurs and Self-Help Group (SHG) members, uplifting their livelihoods and empowering them as agents of change in their communities.

A key discussion revolved around supporting women from different departments, emphasising the need to ensure their active participation in government programs and initiatives. In line with their commitment to youth development, the coalition explored implementing skill training programs through the Yuva Hub platform; A government scheme to provide training and skill development to youth in UP. Such initiatives could open doors for sustainable livelihoods, economic independence, and enhanced employability through entrepreneurship. Remarkably, Pratham, an NGO



DEC in action in Lakhimpur

recognised for its exceptional work in education and skill development, committed to the coalition, will be involved in empowering the district's youth and women as catalysts for transformative change.

The participants also explored effective ways to mobilise the community through the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme. They focused on food processing, particularly for products like peanuts and pulses, to create economic opportunities at the grassroots level. To amplify the impact of collaborative efforts, they discussed scaling up similar coalition meetings at the district level. By expanding the outreach and inclusivity of such gatherings, stakeholders aimed to engage more communities and individuals in the development process.

Overall, the meeting served as a platform for discussing various business opportunities and challenges in setting up and expanding enterprises in Lakhimpur. The diverse viewpoints and levels of experience among participants fostered a more open-minded approach to transforming enterprise opportunities in the region.

As a way forward, Development Alternatives and Transform Rural India teams will work with stakeholders to map the rural entrepreneurship landscape and strengthen the delivery of enterprise support services at the district level through the District Entrepreneurship Coalition.