

Field visit for Equality4Progress project



Community meeting with CLF members

In a collaborative effort between Development Alternatives (DA) and the Bank of America, the "Equality4Progress" project sets forth an ambitious vision to demonstrate women's empowerment through social innovation, systemic change, and collaboration. This project is committed to uplifting women in rural India who grapple with socio-economic disempowerment and limited access to essential resources and livelihood opportunities. The core objective is to establish 10 'emPowered platforms,' paving the way for the creation of 2,000 women-run enterprises and generating 5,000 job opportunities in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, specifically in the districts of Niwari and Jhansi.

The "Equality4Progress" project adopts a multi-pronged approach, aiming to co-create and implement "emPowerment Solutions." These solutions encompass both enterprise prototypes, showcasing the potential of diverse women-led enterprises, and systemic prototypes designed to dismantle gender and societal barriers to entrepreneurship while enhancing the collectives of women.

During our recent field visit to Bundelkhand, the Development Alternatives (DA) team achieved several crucial objectives through interactions with diverse stakeholders. They initiated a dialogue with Col. Shantanu, who not only endorsed the project but also facilitated introductions to key stakeholders, laying a strong foundation for project implementation. Subsequent meetings with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and the District Mission Manager (DMM) helped clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations, fostering a collaborative environment and addressing critical. Valuable insights and potential project extensions, such as the establishment of a Custom Hiring Centre and initiatives like Thai Guava cultivation, Groundnut processing unit, Pashu Aahar and A2 milk units, were uncovered during discussions with Dr. S.K. Mugdal, the District Programme Manager (DPM), enriching the project's scope and opening doors for innovative approaches.

Moreover, interactions with grassroots organisation like Anubhav Sansthan and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) such as RAM RAJA and Laksh Prerna Laghu Udhog provided the DA team with a deep understanding of existing networks, entrepreneurial ideas, and community-based initiatives. These encounters highlighted the potential for the project's success through partnerships with grassroots organisations and collectives. A meeting with the Centre for Advanced Research and Development (CARD) shed light on the ongoing work in the livelihood sector and its linkages with collective enterprises, emphasising the need to align project requirements with potential collaborators in the region.

In summary, these interactions have paved the way for comprehensive project planning, further discussions, and potential collaborations, setting the stage for the successful implementation of the project in Jhansi.