

## Livelihoods India Summit 2023



Panel discussion in progress

**D**evelopment Alternatives (DA) participated in the Livelihoods India Summit 2023, which was held in New Delhi from 17th-18th January 2024. The summit provided a platform for sharing experiences, case studies, and addressing issues and challenges within the country where over 60 thought leaders, policymakers, and practitioners engaged in the two-day deliberations.

Organised annually by ACCESS, the Livelihoods India Summit attracts around 500 delegates from the livelihoods sector, including practitioners, policymakers, private sector representatives, non-governmental organisations, donors, multilateral/bilateral organisations, academicians, researchers, and other support organisations. The event offered a unique experience with diverse themes discussed over the two days.

Kanika Verma, Associate Vice-President, and Lead - Green and Inclusive Entrepreneurship, DA, was part of the closing plenary session titled, "Unlocking Entrepreneurship, Creating Jobs at Scale – A Collaborative Platform Approach," which brought together experts in the field of entrepreneurship. She presented the platform approach employed by Work4Progress, highlighting a shift from a project-based methodology to a collaborative platform driven by collective action. Emphasising the departure from traditional siloed projects, she elucidated the platform's role in promoting open innovation.

The other panelists contributed to the discussion where Dipali Sharma, Organisational Effectiveness and Partnerships (Action Aid India), shared insights into removing systemic barriers for marginalised communities, particularly women and the instrumental role of social mobilisation through community-based groups. Anjani Kumar Singh, Senior Programme Director (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), talked about the challenge of job creation despite the country's growing economy and advocated for improved access to finance, suggesting that expanding loan limits would empower individuals with innovative ideas to contribute to job creation. Dr. C Shambu Prasad, Professor (IRMA),

emphasised the need for inclusivity in the start-up ecosystem. He highlighted the importance of supporting small and nano entrepreneurs, particularly at the grassroots level and proposed new metrics for evaluating grassroots entrepreneurship.

The panel discussion was co-organised by Development Alternatives, Access Development Services, and Action Aid Association, and moderated by Ranu Bhogal, External Coordinator, India Platform, "la Caixa" Foundation, and provided a thought-provoking discussion and insights into redefining entrepreneurial strategies through a collaborative and inclusive approach.

Additionally, Kanika and Shabnam Durani, Lead - Knowledge, Learning and Communications, DA, were part of a closed-door round table on "Exploring the Establishment of a Network for Advancing Women Entrepreneurship in India" on Day 2 of the summit. With several efforts made to advance women's entrepreneurship in recent years, the round table discussion dwelled upon exploring the possibility of setting up a national network to communicate, collaborate and commit to furthering the efforts to create a conducive and responsive ecosystem for women's entrepreneurship. The discussion proposed a multi-stakeholder network to address challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in areas such as access to finance, markets, and capacity building.



Kanika Verma presenting the W4P platform approach



DA booth at the Summit

DA also showcased its work through a booth featuring knowledge materials and products from Nautical Artefacts cluster, Roorkee under IMEDF (Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation).

In conclusion, the Livelihoods India Summit facilitated impactful dialogues on improving the livelihoods of the poor. Diverse stakeholders engaged in discussions, sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and building consensus on strategies to strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable outcomes.