

## Listening Session with Cluster Level Federations (CLFs)



Snippets from the sessions

**'H**um Jawab denge jis din hum manzeel tak pahunch jayenge' is a sentiment shared by a woman during one of our listening sessions with the Cluster Level Federation (CLF) in Sonebhadra, Uttar Pradesh.

In our effort to deeply understand the aspirations, challenges, and barriers to entrepreneurship, we have held 43 listening sessions with over 1,300 community members in UP. These sessions, spread across four districts – Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Jhansi, and Sonebhadra – have allowed us to immerse ourselves in the everyday lives of the community, gaining a nuanced understanding of the local narratives and culture. Various tools such as Comic Workshops and Community Canvas were used to facilitate deep listening with the communities.

Through this process, we have unearthed invaluable insights. Gendered roles perpetuate an unfair burden of unpaid domestic labour, leading to a 'double shift' for women in tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and water-fetching. One of the needs that emerged is the urgent requirement for financial and digital literacy for rural women, especially in using online payment platforms like PhonePe. Women entrepreneurs also face additional obstacles, such as difficulty accessing capital, often due to biased preferences from investors and financial institutions favouring male counterparts. Furthermore, mobility issues persist for many rural women.

With the insights we have gained, we are committed to enabling women to co-create solutions and place ownership of social innovation tools in their hands and their institutions, such as Cluster Level Federations (CLFs).

The listening sessions were conducted as part of the Promotion of Women-led Enterprises project, which is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This initiative aims to enable an intergenerational change in the lives of 244,000 women by leveraging women-led solidarity platforms, particularly Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), and nurturing entrepreneurship through a 'social innovation' approach by placing these tools in the hands of women and their institutions.