Micromovements of Change

District Entrepreneurship Coalition (DEC)

At the district level, multiple organisations are working towards the common goal of supporting micro-enterprises. However, due to the traditional top-down linear approach, lack of comprehensive policies and implementation plans, the efforts of these organisations are often isolated and siloed. It inhibits existing and aspiring entrepreneurs from effectively accessing required resources and support, thus affecting their profits and job creation potential.

To address these systemic challenges, Work4Progress India (W4P), through dialogue with the ecosystem, came up with the idea of a District Entrepreneurship Coalition or DEC with the following objectives:

- **Leverage relational aspects** for cooperation between multiple organisations thereby, building solidarity and trust
- **Prototype solutions collaboratively** to ensure the sustainability of intervention thereby, utilisation of resources efficiently
- Create an **enabling ecosystem** that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of entrepreneurs who are thereby, supportive of innovations

Impact and Potential

Back in 2017, stakeholders in Mirzapur made isolated attempts to support enterprise development. What started as informal meetings to facilitate pathways of cooperation grew into a formal platform as a District Entrepreneurship Coalition. By unlocking synergies between stakeholders, coalitions have created responsive entrepreneurship ecosystems. This has resulted in:

- **1000+ micro-enterprises** emerging from direct convergence between stakeholders and entrepreneurs, each creating 3 jobs on average, against the national average of 1.5, and with 98% of enterprises continuing to thrive and make profits
- **Interconnectedness between different actors of an entrepreneurial ecosystem**, leading to a reduction in the **average time to set up an enterprise from 3 months to just 3 weeks**
  - A network of more than **450+ stakeholders** directly connected to local entrepreneurs in **12 districts** across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Haryana
  - **5-fold increase** in access to credit support in the last 3 years, with credit worth INR 8.2 million leveraged by **500+ entrepreneurs**, and **8000+ entrepreneurs availing sector-specific training**
  - **Solidarity** among local stakeholders, influencing change in the bylaws of micro-finance institutions and mainstream banks
  - **Laid the foundation for the emergence of new entrepreneurial initiatives** in areas of health and agriculture

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1. Why do Indian Startups fail 2022? Everything you need to know for a successful startup, IBM Institute for Business Value
2. Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Jhaneri, Basti, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Niwar, Barwani, Bhagwanpur, Ramgarh, Palwal, and Jhaljaer
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Networking to scale growth...

With over 15 years of work experience in the garment manufacturing sector across Delhi and Chandigarh, Jauhar Ansari, 32, decided to return to his village in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh in 2016. Within a year, he established his garment manufacturing business and today, his unit has 24 full-time employees from nearby communities. During the pandemic, Jauhar ensured that none of his workers were laid off. He not only took precautionary measures at the workplace but also started employing local youth seasonally. Jauhar became the voice for creating market breakthroughs with his continuous efforts to unlock market opportunities through the coalitions. Through his enterprise, Jauhar is defying the common narrative that only large corporations can be job creators.

Connecting opportunities with entrepreneurial energies...

While Jauhar is facilitating entrepreneurship for youth, Uma advocates collective enterprise. Uma Baranwal, 45, has always been driven to uplift women. She began her journey by helping local Self-Help Groups (SHG) with marketing and outreach to cities through her oration skills she became a good marketer, especially for goods produced by SHGs. Since she collaborated with Coalition in 2020, she has become the face of the community. From occasionally marketing SHG products, she planned to start her own enterprise during the lockdown. Through engagement and exposure unfolded by the coalition, she is enabling and training women to market their own products. Uma, today has inculcated a culture of assessing the market and finding USP for their products. She has and is inspiring women to voice, act and mark their space.

Breaking down silos, building up synergies

On the principle that systemic change is not achieved through a linear approach, Devendra Dubey, 38, a senior RSETI trainer of Bhadohi District has been working closely with Coalition since 2019. He has led convergence between multiple stakeholders to support entrepreneurs in Bhadohi. Through his dedicated efforts, he has trained over 500+ W4P entrepreneurs while also onboarding key government stakeholders in the district. With the belief that micro-entrepreneurship can and will bring radical change in the local economy, Devendra remained motivated toward his mission throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Having a brilliant grip on market opportunities, he channelised market support to women entrepreneurs under Self Help Groups to not only sustain their businesses but also grow them during the lockdown.

“Growing transparency within the ecosystem is motivating better flow of resources between the district level administration and the village level entrepreneurs”
-Sunil Jain, Ex-AGM, NABARD and Core Coalition Member, Mirzapur

The District Entrepreneurship Coalition in regions like Mirzapur is now redefining how people access entrepreneurship opportunities, as stakeholders have begun to realise that a transition is needed from traditional top-down approaches to collaborations for building robust entrepreneurship ecosystems. Taking the coalition to every village in India has the potential to be a catalyst for the creation of millions of future-ready enterprises.

Learn more about the #JobsWeMake movement on www.jobswemake.org
Contact us at work4progress@devalt.org

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