Bridging the Digital Divide through Technology Innovations

Development Alternatives (DA) conducted a Policy workshop to identify and seed digital technologies with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and facilitate linking to digital space and technology infrastructure. CBOs address the local concerns and issues of the last mile communities but face a dearth of technological solutions. They have been using traditional communication methods to reach out to their beneficiary communities for fostering development processes. However, they face a dearth of low-cost and appropriate technology options that affect their efficiency of operations and outreach.

DA has been supporting innovative technologies to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and outreach of CBOs. The initiative 'Bridging the Digital Divide – Technology Innovations for Community Based Organisations' with support from the Ford Foundation facilitated incubation of seven technologies addressing various needs of the CBOs. The objective of this initiative was to identify and seed these technologies with the existing CBOs and facilitate linking to digital space and technology infrastructure. This technology incubation helped meet the various needs, demands and challenges of the CBOs.

The policy workshop intended to share the learning from these technology incubations and discussed possible pathways for engendering technology innovation, incubation and implementation in the present policy frame. The workshop brought together policy makers, government officials, civil society organisations to highlight the importance of technology in communication for development and to work towards informing policy. The CSOs which have developed innovative digital technologies and participated in this workshop were - CG Net Swara and Red Dot Foundation (Mumbai), Bodhi Impact Interventions (Gurgaon), Ideosync Media Combine (Faridabad)YRG Care Foundation Voluntary Health Service Campus (Chennai), Servelots Infotech Pvt. Ltd. and Janastu (Karnataka).