Work4Progress

Social Innovation led Dignified Livelihoods

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

CONTENTS

Development Alternatives   actionaid ActionAid Association (India)   Alianza por la Solidaridad Member of actionaid   "la Caixa" Foundation
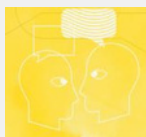
THE W4P PLATFORM IN INDIA

The Work 4 Progress (W4P) program was launched in India by the la Caixa Foundation towards the end of 2016 and subsequently in Peru and Mozambique. The program seeks to create new employment opportunities for young people and women through open platforms or networks for social innovation formed by civil society organizations, universities and public stakeholder institutions. Currently it is operational in 120 villages across the two program geographies of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand and is working with socially and economically disadvantaged communities and individual women and young adults.

Social innovation is at the core of W4P approach and brings with it advanced social innovation tools and methodologies for the key processes of listening, cocreating, prototyping and accelerating. The starting point and an on-going principle is deep listening which lays a solid foundation for community centeredness, innovation and social change. A strong emphasis on developmental evaluation, learning and knowledge building helps to gather insights, refine program strategies and processes and pave the way for acceleration.

In India, the W4P program has two networks anchored respectively by Development Alternatives that joined the W4P platform in November 2016 and by Action Aid and its partner in Spain, Alianza por la Solidaridad that joined in March 2020. The social innovation processes are at any advanced stage for the network led by Development Alternatives along with implementing partners Manviya Dristikon Sewa Sansthan and Swami Vivekanand Shiksha Samiti. Towards the end of 2018, la Caixa launched the Technology Challenge Fund with the objective of providing technology to rural communities. Medha Learning Foundation and Janatsu came on board to work with Development Alternatives towards creating virtual co-working spaces for young women in rural areas, pioneering digitisation of peer-learning to unearth the aspirations of this otherwise marginalised group.

> **W4P India Program led by Development Alternatives network recognised as UN Sustainable Development Goals Good Practice. Read more about the initiative <u>here</u>.**

	Development Alternatives	**Action Aid Association**
DIALOGUE	**20,000+** youth and women **390+** stakeholders	**6344** households **55** stakeholders
CO-CREATE	**4,650+** participants including **2500+** women	**688+** participants including **436** women and **11** transgender people
PROTOTYPE	**67** enterprise prototypes **12** systemic prototypes	**7** models
ACCELERATE	**60+** active partners **SAM-UDYAM** national platform	

EDITORIAL

The first newsletter of the W4P India platform comes at a time when the country and its people are in the midst of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The platform partners and local communities in the program geographies of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand are working in tandem towards better preparedness and immediate response, along with provincial governments and stakeholders.

The local communities that are part of the W4P program belong to socially disadvantaged regions and groups. Lack of meaningful employment and regular income force people, especially the youth, to migrate and become part of the informal workforce away from home or turn to options available closer to home - mainly subsistence agriculture on small landholdings and seasonal wage earning. Setting up of businesses is either looked at with disdain or constrained by financial, technology or market factors.

Across the program geographies of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand, Development Alternatives and Action Aid are nurturing and working with constructive communities to understand and tap into their inherent potential and capacity to create sustainable livelihoods and jobs. Listening tools and sense-making activities are assisting communities to identify and find ways to address social, intergenerational and gender barriers, to co-create innovative solutions as well as to engage actively with the ecosystem players. There are shifts taking place in individual and collective mindsets; in the discourse within households and among stakeholders; in the terms of engagement where the voice and action of disadvantaged communities and individuals is more visible and; in the way interventions on the ground are being conceptualised and facilitated by program teams and stakeholders.

Behind the 1000+ enterprises In the program geography of Development Alternatives are feisty women and dynamic young adults who actively participate in the program that offers them an open platform to come together, ideate, innovate and build and expand their businesses.

ActionAid and Alianza por la Solidaridad joined the platform in 2020 around the time the pandemic induced lockdowns were being announced in the country. As things opened up in the second half of the year, their program team moved swiftly into the field and engaged with the most marginalized in the community. Before they could move to the next stage of co-creating prototypes with the communities, the current wave of the pandemic began leading to lockdowns and restrictions in the rural areas.

In this newsletter, we share with you the social innovation processes as they unfold in the field. The stories reveal how communities and stakeholders are coming together to find solutions to their livelihood challenges, emerging as influencers and energizing the ecosystem, including in the times of the pandemic induced crisis.

LISTEN

Engaging with multi-stakeholder perspectives

Listening is a key process of the Work 4 Progress program. Although it is the first process of the program's social innovation approach, it continues to remain a critical part of co-creation, prototyping and acceleration. Listening helps to unearth individual and collective needs, aspirations, structural barriers, community-based knowledge systems and opportunities for change. It is followed by collective sense making through dialogue which helps to build individual and collective agency and paves the way for social innovation in the community.

Active listening: A key element to build trust among the most vulnerable

ACTION AID ASSOCIATION

Listening to communities is key for developing any project. But this is especially important when we work with the most vulnerable people. In the village of Silgan, Block-Jakhora Lalitpur, widows and single women have very little options for livelihood. During our discussions and series of meetings with these women, they told us that they are unable to take-up economic options such as opening vending shops or migrating to a nearby city for jobs in shops or factories. However, despite all the barriers they face - most of them are illiterate and unable to go out because their children are too young to live on their own- they believe in their capacities. Thinking together about possible livelihood options for these women in their own village, the goatery and backyard poultry emerged as models to which these women can easily adapt.

Tools: Baseline survey and participatory rural appraisal exercise

- Baseline survey covered 6344 people from economically and socially vulnerable groups in the 40 program villages and 40% were women
- Ecosystem mapping and discussion with stakeholders
- During more intensive discussions and with better understanding of assets and resources, 688 program participants identified who will be involved in the cocreation of prototypes along with stakeholders

Active listening in the process increased their trust in the program and motivated them to take this opportunity. Agriculture allied activities, such as goat rearing, agriculture, vegetable cultivation etc., are one of the very important and proven ways to enhance the financial independence for the poor and landless families. After the process of listening, these women are motivated and hope to start these livelihood which are sustainable in the context of the village and very feasible for them. It's also an opportunity to earn their livelihood and support their families, so hands on it!

ASPi: Hyperlocal Networking and the Rise of Gigpreneurs in Mirzapur

Under the Technology Challenge Fund, launched by la Caixa Foundation in 2019, Development Alternatives, alongside Janastu and Medha Learning Foundation co-created and piloted the prototype of an electronic, digitally-driven device. The device aptly named ASPi (abbreviated from 'Aamne Samne Pi' - Face to face- in Hindi) allows young women to co-learn and share ideas by providing a space to freely record audio-visual messages and transmit them over a wider network. The technology allowed Medha and Janastu to 'listen' to the young girls as they went about their day without disrupting daily routines, generating rich data on local discourse while encouraging dialogue and reflection.

I could explore my creative aspirations and become the photographer I once only dreamed to be

– Pooja (in the left picture), a 20 years old freelance photographer sharing her experience of using ASPi

As ASPi was introduced, the sheer curiosity to learn and use the technology triggered a change in behaviour of the young women. They mobilised on their own, deciding on a place and time to meet up in small groups to record and discuss their stories. They then shared their stories with their family and community members. Through ASPi, they began to explore the internet and social media platforms connecting their aspirations with opportunities in the gig-economy.
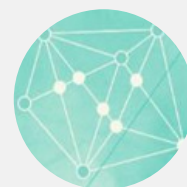
In the Phaphamua village in Mirzapur, for instance, Pooja Kushwaha, after attending a co-creation session, got interested in doing something creative. Through ASPi technology she could explore areas of interest by accessing internships as a content creator in writing, editing and photography. She further accessed online 'gigs' connecting with e-commerce websites like Amazon and Flipkart to catalog products. She also found a mentor, Mr. Piyush Mukesh Singh, to help her hone her skills as a photographer. In January 2020, Pooja's photos were published in the book titled "Pool of Emotions".

ASPi being community-owned, is therefore a reflection of the aspirations and dreams of young women in underserved communities, as well as of their collective intelligence and will. During the pandemic, young women part of the pilot have expressed the desire to take on health services such as in telemedicine to become important conduits of verified information and medical advice within their communities. In the future, the technology will be scaled to other locations and connected with other prototypes to deepen the value of 'listening' within the communities of action, generating much needed conversations and connecting local realities with global discourse on employment and entrepreneurship.

CO-CREATE

Developing Relevant Solutions Collaboratively

Building resilience during times of uncertainities

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

> *I want to start my Typewriting Service Centre that will provide professional typing services to people and also train young girls and women to learn computer typing*
>
> *- Renuka Devi participant of a comic workshop session in Nandurbar district of Maharashtra*

Renuka's business idea of a typewriting service centre, emerged during comic workshops the DA-network conducts within new communities of action. Based on the principles of collaboration, community ownership and equal participation, these easy-to-make comics, developed on an A4 size paper, generate a lively discussion within a group and are effective in unearthing latent aspirations. Renuka's idea, for instance, stems from her prior experience of working as a typewriter with a private company.

40+ comic workshops were conducted in 14 districts of rural India to unleash entrepreneurial energies of aspiring women entrepreneurs under an acceleration partnership with PRADAN for the UN-WOMEN funded SCE Project

Tools for Co-Creation

Identify support mechanisms in communities
- Design Workshops with Women and Youth

Co-develop business ideas and plans with entrepreneurs
- Start Your Business Training of ILO
- Peer to Peer learning
- Digital Self Learning App

Collaborative initiatives with local market players
- Regional Coalitions
- Enterprise Fairs

When her idea came forth during these workshops, it triggered the processes of co-creation, by unlocking aspirations and facilitating linkages with existing support mechanisms (such as credit, training) that could enable Renuka's ideas to come to life. Renuka's unit will be the first woman-owned and managed Typewriting Services enterprise of her village. The comic workshop tool, first used in 2018 in Bundelkhand with a group of women, is now being replicated in different geographies of rural India. For instance in rural Odisha with aspiring women entrepreneurs, the tool led to co-creation of 20+ business ideas including bakery unit, mushroom farming, retail and production of soy milk products and e-rickshaw.

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PROTOTYPING
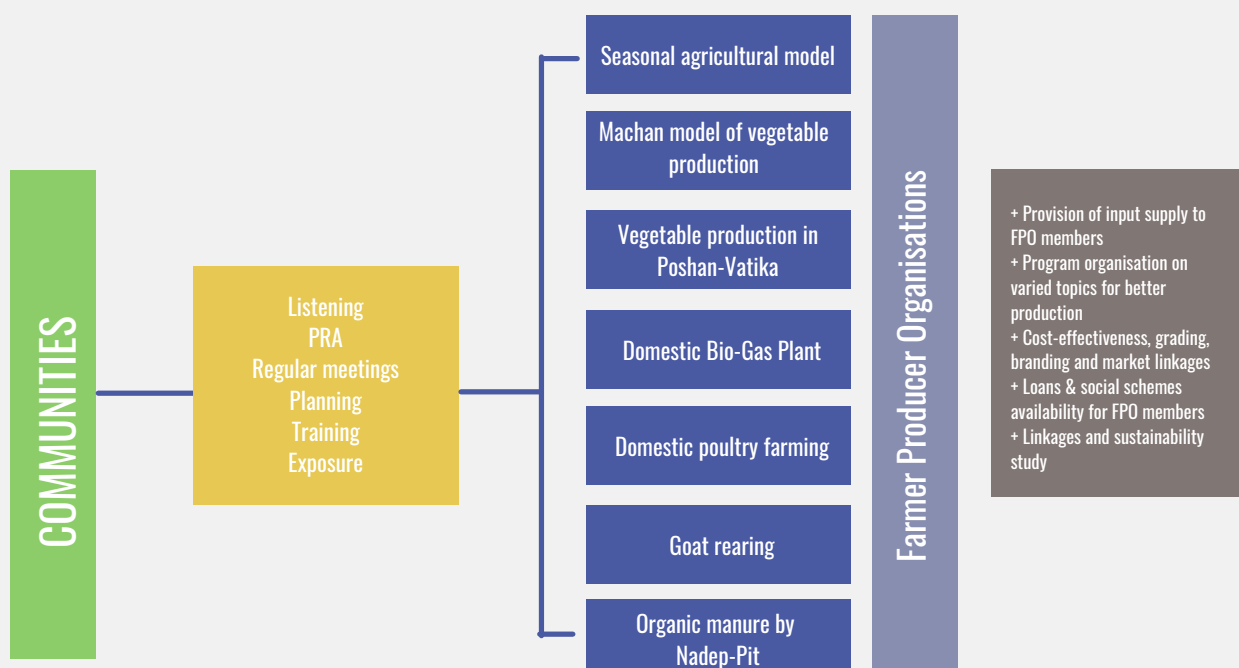*Demonstrating Sustainability of Solutions*

Prototypes developed under the W4P Program in the program geography of Development Alternatives in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand represent enterprise solutions that have been tested successfully and can be replicated by others and have the agility to adapt to changes in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. There are two kinds of prototypes - enterprise and systemic. Enterprise prototypes are opportunity-driven and cull out the entrepreneurial energies in communities to set up businesses that cater to existing, emerging, and potential needs and demands of the rural economies. Systemic prototypes influence the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and bring about shifts that are systemic in nature. They have been co-designed with communities for creating shifts in the local systems by stirring innovation, breaking down the silos, and forging connections with stakeholders. Action Aid has identified seven livelihood models based on agriculture and allied activities for vulnerable communities in its program geography in Bundelkhand that are linked to their socio-economic status, assets, needs and preferences.

Co-creation of prototypes

ACTION AID

During the diagnosis process, seven prototypes were initially identified as pertinent and relevant for vulnerable communities in the program geography. The deep listening processes helped to refine the information on their needs, vulnerabilities, capacities and opportunities, to assign a suitable prototype and; to re-define and co-create the final prototypes so that they are most adapted to target population's circumstances. The co-creation process is being complemented by other activities aiming at providing participants with specific knowledge and inspiration from others, and linking them with other existing schemes that will contribute to the sustainability of their livelihoods. Furthermore, all prototype-holders will be associated with Pehchan, a Farmer Producers Organisation (FPO) in the region, for continued support and linkages.

COMMUNITIES

Listening
PRA
Regular meetings
Planning
Training
Exposure

- Seasonal agricultural model
- Machan model of vegetable production
- Vegetable production in Poshan-Vatika
- Domestic Bio-Gas Plant
- Domestic poultry farming
- Goat rearing
- Organic manure by Nadep-Pit

Farmer Producer Organisations

+ Provision of input supply to FPO members
+ Program organisation on varied topics for better production
+ Cost-effectiveness, grading, branding and market linkages
+ Loans & social schemes availability for FPO members
+ Linkages and sustainability study

Demonstrating Sustainability of Solutions

At the start of the W4P Program in the program geography of Development Alternatives in Bundelkhand and Eastern Uttar Pradesh, there were an average of six micro enterprises in a village and this has more than doubled by the end of 2020. By March 2021, the contribution of systemic prototypes to enterprises and job creation stood nearly at 28 percent.

The prototypes co-created in the program provide strength and service to the local micro entrepreneurship ecosystem. During the pandemic, the interconnections between the prototypes became evident in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through prototypes such as the regional entrepreneurship coalition, Micro-Credit Facility and information kiosks, multiple stakeholders are providing timely access to enterprise support services to W4P entrepreneurs. Few new prototypes such as sports retail, integrated fishery and poultry and multilayered farming have developed and are being validated.

- Information kiosks are providing **safer alternatives to access financial services** within their villages. They are also helping locals to register for the **COVID-19 vaccines,** and connecting **farmers to e-market** facilities.
- Women-led e-rickshaw enterprises are **enabling access to food by providing their services to vegetable vendors** for procurement and transport of vegetables and fruits from market hubs. They also plan to start providing **mobility services for health workers** and medical officials.

Enterprise and systemic prototypes in responding to the crisis are encouraging local resilience, by ensuring peer support for operations, spreading awareness and improving preparedness for any public health emergencies.

67 enterprise prototypes available across retail, manufacturing and services sectors. 12 systemic prototypes

ACCELERATE

Mainstream Learning for Impact at Scale

Platforms for accelerating and promoting Inclusive Entrepreneurship

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

Regional Enterprise Coalitions are multi-stakeholder platforms at district or block level with the participation and voice of entrepreneurs at the centre. These platforms serve as sites for open dialogue, collaborative action, convergence of resources and acceleration. There are nine regional enterprise coalitions which includes four in the W4P program geography and one in the program geography of W4P partner, Transforming Rural India Foundation.

SAM-UDYAM, a national level collaborative-cum-laboratory was unveiled by Development Alternatives along with its partners including Action Aid, on 30th January 2021 at the ACCESS Livelihoods India Summit. The initiative envisages that together partner organisations can build a new kind of shared "institutional infrastructure" to draw together and make sense of isolated and dispersed efforts in support of grassroots entrepreneurship, in order to amplify local impact and influence future policy architecture.

SAM-UDYAM attempts to bring together diverse perspectives and voices to the collaboratory so that we can together design sustainable solutions for entrepreneurs to have easy access to capital, technology and markets. The collaboratory needs to be a digi- based 21st century entity to solve emerging issues of the entrepreneurship ecosystem'.

Mr. Vijay Mahajan, Founder, BASIX Social Enterprise Group

Virtual Platform for supporting Agriculture led livelihoods

ACTION AID

Agri Centre, an online digital platform, has been developed by Action Aid in close collaboration with district agriculture centres run by the state government and program participants. The online platform will provide marginal farmers in the W4P Program direct access to district agriculture centres and on-site support that can range from technical advice related to preparing the land, seeds, raising of crop/vegetable/horticulture trees, harvesting and any other challenge they face. Agri Centre will also provide support to all members of the farmer producers organisation in the program with respect to marketing and pricing related information. The information and inputs will be in the local language, Hindi, and with the option of uploading voice messages for those who cannot read and write. The farmers can also upload photographs to share the challenges they are facing with experts.

HIGHLIGHTS

Action Aid and Development Alternatives participate in W4P Annual Conference 2021

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

+ Unveiled SAM-UDYAM: an *Inclusive Entrepreneurship Collaboratory* with over 15 partners from civil society organisations, academic institutions, financial institutions and multilateral agencies

+ Contributed a chapter on Inclusive Entrepreneurship in the State of India's Livelihoods Report 2020, read here

+ Participated in an interactive webinar series co-organised by World Bank and S4YE to share learnings on Youth-led initiatives for creating green jobs

+ Celebrated International Women's Day with over 150 women and young girls to promote entrepreneurship as a means to dignified livelihoods

+ Conducted virtual listening sessions with over 170+ entrepreneurs to map needs, challenges and co-create new leverage points to support them in the second wave of the global pandemic

ACTION AID

+ Organised exposure visits for 98 farmers, including 45 women farmers, that involved interaction with scientists and officials on new models of improved agriculture practices and technologies that have been successfully tested in the Bundelkhand region

+ Facilitated visit of 27 farmers including 8 women farmers to the Kisan Mela/Farmers' Fair organized at the Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. This included a technical and machinery demonstration for the visiting farmers

+ Concluded participatory rural appraisal (PRA) in program villages that helped to look deeply into potential livelihood prototype options for vulnerable communities and in the selection of prototype takers, most suitable prototype matching and the initial phases of co-creation process

WORK 4 PROGRESS
GLOBAL

INDIA

In India, W4P enables enterprise development opportunities for youth and women in two regions – Bundelkhand and Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Prototypes Tested: 86

PERU

In Peru, W4P co-develops initiatives that create quality jobs for youth and women in indigenous communities of Quispicanchi and Condorcanqui.
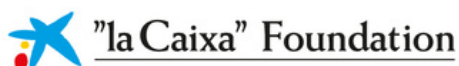
Prototypes Tested: 31

MOZAMBIQUE

In Mozambique, W4P enables decent employment opportunities for vulnerable groups of youth and women in Cabo Delgado, Maputo and Matutine provinces.
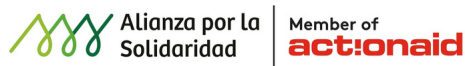
Prototypes Tested: 18

Join the W4P Global Platform at: www. work4progress.org

The "la Caixa" Foundation of Spain, the third largest foundation in the world, promotes diverse social, economic, cultural and ecological initiatives to foster sustainable development across the world. "la Caixa" has worked for more than 110 years in contributing to the advancement of society and the progress of individuals, with a special emphasis on those who need it most. Its main strategic objective is to provide opportunities and fight inequalities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through programs that contribute to the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Follow its social media platforms on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Development Alternatives (DA) is a social enterprise with global presence in the fields of green economic development, social empowerment and environmental management. It Is credited with numerous innovations in clean technology and delivery systems that help create sustainable livelihoods in the developing world. DA focuses on empowering communities through strengthening people's institutions and facilitating their access to basic needs; enabling economic opportunities through skill development for green jobs and enterprise creation; and promoting low carbon pathways for development through natural resource management models and clean technology solutions. Follow its latest social media campaign #JobsWeMake on: Twitter, Instagram and Medium.

Alianza por la Solidaridad is a nongovernmental Spanish organization that currently channels the effort and support of more than 50,000 people, amongst them members, volunteers, supporters and workers in order to fight against inequalities and contribute to protecting Human Rights in more than 19 countries in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. We are members of ActionAid Federation.

ActionAid Association is an organisation working for social and ecological justice. ActionAid has been engaged with the most marginalised communities in India since 1972. In 2006, ActionAid Association was registered as an Indian organisation, governed by an independent General Assembly and a Governing Board. Together with supporters, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all. ActionAid Association works in 24 states and two union territories, with several partners and allied organisations. ActionAid Association is part of a global federation and a full affiliate of ActionAid International, that has presence in over 40 countries worldwide. Follow them on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram.

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