



INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC of the United Nations

Unleashing entrepreneurship to end poverty in the Least Developed Countries

Based on grass-root level experience through our on-going projects, we believe that a model with the following features can encourage sustainable entrepreneurship and end poverty in Least Developed Countries:

- 1) The development of Self-Help groups as micro-enterprises especially among the population in the rural areas which form a major part of the population of LDCs.
- 2) The formulation and functioning of these micro-enterprises need to be done keeping the MDGs as their guiding light. However, initially a global consensus needs to be developed to formulate 'Terms of Reference' for the support of Micro-enterprises, Micro-credit and value-based functional literacy. It is also essential to ensure that the local culture and flora and fauna-based products and services should be made to preserve the local ethnic culture and crafts and add diversity to the global community.
- 3) The Self-Help groups should receive local, national and global patronization by way of financial support through micro-credit and market acceptance of their product/services at all levels. These micro-enterprises should be formed on the screen of the Global Compact to maintain the transparency of operations, work culture and labor rights and quality of products and services.
- 4) It is essential to conduct basic value-based functional literacy programs for adults and children in accordance to the ethnic culture of the people of the region, so that the beneficiaries are able to communicate in writing, manage their finances and make their development more sustainable through the practice of ethics. This education would also enable them to utilize technology and information systems to their benefit and make them competitive even globally. Ethics would make their personal and entrepreneurial endeavors corruption-free and thus more successful and sustainable.
- 5) The LDCs also need to formulate National Progress Reports on the screen of the MDGs. They should also have their National Plan and Budget framed according to the MDGs.
- 6) For a yearly evaluation of the Progress of Nations towards all-round development we would suggest a self-appraisal by the Nations on a 10-point scale of their achievement of the MDGs on a well-prepared format by the UN and a process of evaluation by UN MDG observers for an overall assessment on the Progress of the Nations.
- 7) The UN needs to setup an Evaluating Committee on MDGs and also declare a special recognition of the best performing Nation in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. A separate presentation session may be organized by this Committee where Nations could exchange their Best Practices.

We believe that these endeavors can help prosperity grow from the ground up in the LDCs as well as in all Developing Nations.

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Our Model:

To describe the model that we have successfully implemented in our projects in India, I would speak about our on-going project in the tribal areas of India. We have been working with the Santhaal tribes of Bengal near the Town of Bolpur for past few years. The Government of India has given us 20 villages to develop and help the around 500 impoverished handicraft artisans living there. We started with a baseline survey of the entire area with the assistance of the local community leaders and families. This helped us understand the situation of the people living there, their problems, their culture, their skills, capacities and shortcomings. We helped them with the support from resource persons from the Institute and other sources, and volunteers. Our functional literacy program enabled the families including women and children to become literate, manage their finances, take care of their health, and the environment. Our objective was skill upgradation with the desired design-input for local, national and global markets. So, the Institute formed the artisans into Self Help groups and helped make arrangements with the local bank for disbursing Micro-credit to the Self Help groups. The leaders of the groups and the Master Craft-Persons who are the nodal people in this project are frequently updated on SHG management. We helped them draw up their business models and presented them to the village banks for loans. The money they receive is to be used to produce their handicrafts and we are, till date, helping them market the products to the local, regional, national and even international markets. Through direct access to the markets, they would be able to receive a lot more returns for their products and that will result in raising their per capita income and the quality of life.

In another case we monitored a Kolkata-based (*Kolkata is the capital of the state of West Bengal*) SHG comprising of peasant family members and linked them both with the bank and market after their inception in April, 2005. The turnover by the end of the financial year became more than Rs.35 lacs with a 10 percent profit to be shared by the young members. They are suppliers of self-grown organic green vegetables to hotels.

It can therefore be concluded that if facilitators stress on local skills and resources for services and products by such Micro-Enterprises self-reliance would be quicker with the facilitators also ensuring right interventions and market.

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