



INCUBATION AND ACCELERATION SUPPORT FOR WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES IN INDIA

PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

CONTEXT AND INITIATIVE

The Indian start-up scene is on the rise. Across the metropolitan cities incubators and accelerators are set up to provide support for aspiring entrepreneurs. Yet, of an estimated 60 million micro, small and medium enterprises in India, barely 14% are run by women. If women were to participate equally in the economy, this could increase India's GDP by 27%. The project 'Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Start-ups by Women (Her&Now)' aims to empower women economically by creating a level playing field for women-led enterprises and supporting the Indian Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to design and implement gender-sensitive government support schemes. The project, which is implemented on behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), pilots incubation and acceleration programmes for women entrepreneurs in three regions of India and draws on these experiences for its policy advice.



turn their idea into a formal business through trainings, support by mentors, access to markets and funding opportunities. Women with existing enterprises are supported to scale their business through a six-month acceleration programme. The first cohort participating in the incubation and acceleration programme consists of 147 women. A film and media campaign by the name 'Her&Now' facilitates a public debate about the positive societal and economic contribution of women-led businesses. Pan-India screenings of short films on women entrepreneurship are accompanied by moderated discussions to address and overcome patriarchal gender roles and norms and steer a transformative mindset change.

GENDER - A QUALITY FEATURE OF OUR WORK

Together with local incubators, the project co-designed a curriculum, which is tailored to the gender-specific needs of women entrepreneurs and is currently piloting these women-centric entrepreneurship support programmes in smaller cities where such programmes do not exist yet. Women with a business idea are supported to

IMPACT

315 idea-stage and 130 growth-stage women entrepreneurs will be supported in their entrepreneurial journey in three regions of India. The first cohort currently participating in the incubation and acceleration programme consists of 147 women. Through peer network building activities, the project is expected to support approximately 4,000 women entrepreneurs. The women entrepreneurship ecosystem has

been strengthened through various outreach events attended by 3,000 (aspiring) entrepreneurs and ecosystem players. A model for women-centric entrepreneurship support programmes is being developed, which can be replicated across India. The film and media campaign has already reached more than 30,000 users online. A success factor is the active involvement of men in the debate about gender equality and women's participation in the economy.



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