



*Startups don't just belong to Silicon Valley — they begin in village
alleys too- A Special Story*

Two-Day Workshop on

*“Exploring Synergies of Business in Selected Value Chains among
LCs/CLFs/GCs & Social Enterprises”*

Organized by: IRMA ISEED Foundation

Dates: 10th & 11th June 2025

Venue: City Star Hotel, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

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National Workshop Fosters Collaboration for Rural Enterprise Development

The IRMA ISEED Foundation, in partnership with the UGVs-REAP project, hosted a two-day national workshop to facilitate meaningful collaboration between community institutions and emerging social enterprises across India. The event aimed to strengthen business synergies within agriculture and allied value chains by connecting 15 innovative social enterprises with Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), Livelihood Centres (LCs), and Growth Centres (GCs) established by UGVs in Uttarakhand.

The workshop's primary goal was to create a professional platform for District Program Managers (DPMs), Assistant Managers (AMs), and Boards of Directors (BoDs) of these community institutions to engage with social enterprises operating in relevant value chains. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, the initiative sought to identify opportunities for co-developing sustainable rural enterprises, driving income generation, improving livelihoods, and promoting inclusive rural development.

Day 1: Inauguration and Team-Building

The workshop commenced with a formal inaugural session, bringing together participants from UGVs-REAP and social enterprises. The event began with the traditional lighting of the lamp, followed by a welcome address from Prof. Rakesh Arrawatia, MD & CEO of IRMA ISEED Foundation, who outlined the event's vision and objectives.

Esteemed guests included:

- Sh. Raj Shekher Joshi, Vice Chairman, Setu Ayog
- Ms. Meera Mishra, Country Coordinator, IFAD
- Ms. Jharna Kamthan, Project Director, UGVs-REAP
- Mr. Naresh Kumar, Additional Commissioner, UGVs-REAP
- M.S. Yadav, Human Resources, UGVs-REAP
- Mr. Sambit Tripathy (Retd. IRS), CMD, Livelihood Alternatives
- Prof. Rakesh Arrawatia, MD & CEO, IRMA ISEED Foundation



Their keynote addresses underscored the transformative potential of integrating government-supported institutions with innovative business models to drive inclusive rural growth.

Following the inauguration, participants, including DPMs, BoDs, and social enterprises, introduced themselves, setting the stage for collaboration. The day concluded with an interactive team-building session led by Prof. Satyendra Pandey from IRMA School, TSU. This experiential session focused on fostering collaborative thinking, building trust, and

aligning the diverse stakeholders' mindsets to lay a strong foundation for the workshop's objectives.



Day 1: Afternoon Sessions on Rural Livelihoods and Collaboration

The second half of the day featured focused sessions delving into key aspects of rural enterprise development. Participants explored the challenges and opportunities in implementing effective rural livelihood models, discussing strategies to overcome barriers and leverage local resources for sustainable growth. A dedicated session addressed the expectations of District Program Managers (DPMs) from Growth Centres, highlighting their

role in scaling community-driven enterprises. Additionally, discussions on the scoping and feasibility of interventions by social enterprises provided insights into practical approaches for integrating innovative solutions into existing value chains. These sessions fostered a collaborative environment, encouraging participants to share expertise and identify actionable pathways for partnership.



Featured Social Enterprises

The workshop showcased 15 innovative social enterprises, each contributing unique solutions to strengthen rural value chains. Below is an overview of these startups:

1. **Kumaon Khand** (Almora, Uttarakhand)

Founded by Pavitra Joshi, Kumaon Khand is a social enterprise building a sustainable hemp ecosystem in the Indian Himalayas. By cultivating, processing, and manufacturing hemp-based products, it empowers local communities and fosters entrepreneurship through value addition to Himalayan hemp resources.



2. **Buzzworthy Pvt. Ltd (Humble Bee)** (Bangalore, Karnataka)

Led by Varun Kashyap, Humble Bee co-creates a scientific beekeeping model with rural enterprises in Uttarakhand's districts, promoting sustainable livelihoods and enhancing local honey production.

3. **F2DF** (Rohtak, Haryana)

Founded by Neeraj Sirmar, F2DF is an e-commerce platform serving the agriculture and allied services sector. Catering to both B2B and B2C segments via web and mobile apps, it provides integrated solutions to address pain points in the agriculture ecosystem and organizes Kishan Melas to connect stakeholders.

4. **ADK Makers** (Haryana)

Rahul Dhingra's ADK Makers (Aadhunik, Dhanwaan aur Kushal) Pvt. Ltd. is a SaaS-based platform that supports farmers, laborers, and small businesses by helping them launch and manage brands or co-brand for profitability.

5. **Aural Essence** (Bangalore, Karnataka)

Omkar Rajesh leads Aural Essence, which processes floral waste into high-quality essential oils and hydrosols using their innovative Hyper Steam Explosion & Extraction (HSEE) technology, offering cost-effective and energy-efficient solutions for export-quality products.

Gramse Agritech Pvt. Ltd (Delhi, India)

Founded by Dhruv Joshi, Gramse Agritech builds women-centric, decentralized, and sustainable value chains for fruit preserves in remote Himalayan regions, ensuring transparency and traceability for producers and consumers.



6. **Creamy Millet** (Hyderabad, India)

Naresh Reddy's Creamy Millet is India's favorite millet ice cream brand, innovating unique flavors through extensive research and standardization, aiming for global competitiveness.

7. **Agrawal Digi Commerce (Tummy and Mummy)** (Gurugram, Haryana)

Led by Kushal Agrawal, Tummy and Mummy curates authentic regional snacks from across India, celebrating the country's culinary heritage. The platform connects food lovers with high-quality, culturally rich munchies while supporting local makers.

8. **Konkuwan Herbs** (Puri, Odisha)

Rajeshwar's Konkuwan Herbs creates value chains for indigenous medicinal plants, connecting over 2,000 farmers in Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal to industry buyers, promoting sustainable livelihoods.

9. **Tribe Grown** (Amravati, Maharashtra)

Founded by Bhavesh Wankhade, Tribe Grown works with tribal communities to produce organic, ethically sourced products, promoting fair trade and sustainable livelihoods.



10. **VN Organics** (Madhya Pradesh)

Nisha Niranjana's VN Organics promotes sustainable mushroom farming, offering fresh, organic mushrooms and educating farmers and consumers on their health and environmental benefits.

11. **DESCATUK** (Dehradun, Uttarakhand)

Led by K D Sharma, DESCATUK is a B2B social impact enterprise specializing in luxury sustainable fashion and textiles. Their flagship product, "HimGra," is a natural fiber developed from perennial grass in partnership with Birla Cellulose.



12. **Xen Farms** (Maharashtra)

Diptesh Mukharjee's Xen Farms offers a mobile app-based natural farming ecosystem, providing sustainable inputs and practices that reduce costs by 10% and increase yields up to 100% while enhancing soil fertility.

13. **Nature Organics** (Pauri, Uttarakhand)

Founded by Shivam Dhoundiyal, Naturorganics is an agro-forestry based Proprietor enterprise which is dedicated to fostering sustainable integrated development in the Hilly region. The overarching goal is to develop a business model aligned with the climate, indigenous people's attitudes, and sustainability principles. Multi-dimensional approach involving horticulture, farm, and local spice/herb/crop processing to create a comprehensive and sustainable framework. Currently we have 2 Kiwi Orchards with 8000 marigold plantation, 2 polyhouses, 1 micro-food processing unit & 1 walnut orchard. Current production – Herbal Infusions - Mixed herbal , Nettle, Lemongrass-Burans and Hawan Samagri.

14. **Kumaon Herbal** (Kotabagh, Uttarakhand)

Navin Joshi's Kumaon Herbal produces pure, natural juices and herbal products sourced from the Kumaon valleys, promoting wellness and sustainability through high-quality, Himalayan-inspired remedies.



15. **Shubhaga Himalayan Resources** (Srinagar, Uttarakhand)

Founded by Dr. Preeti in 2021, Shubhaga Himalayan Resources exports and supplies Himalayan herbs, flowers, oil seeds, and millets in raw, powder, and tea-cut forms, operating from Uttarakhand's Himalayan region.

These social enterprises, with their diverse and innovative approaches, are poised to collaborate with UGVS-REAP's community institutions to drive sustainable rural development and economic empowerment.



Day 2: Roundtable Discussions and Collaborative Planning

The second day of the workshop kicked off with detailed presentations from the 15 social enterprises, where they elaborated on their business models and impact strategies. These presentations set the stage for roundtable discussions, where each enterprise was paired with representatives from specific CLFs, LCs, and GCs. These focused conversations led to the co-creation of preliminary value chain intervention plans tailored to the local needs of the community institutions and the operational strengths of the enterprises. The plans explored innovative ideas such as aggregation models, processing units, marketing linkages, and digital enablement to enhance rural enterprise sustainability.

A consolidated session followed, where each enterprise-CLF group presented their proposed plans, receiving constructive feedback and refining their strategies. The day concluded with discussions on potential Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between select startups and Growth Centres, laying the groundwork for formal partnerships to implement the proposed collaborations.

Key Outcomes

- **Strengthened Network:** The workshop connected 15 social enterprises with over 20 community-led institutions across Uttarakhand, fostering a robust network for collaboration.
- **Draft Intervention Plans:** Customized value chain interventions were drafted, focusing on horticulture, non-timber forest products (NTFP), mushrooms, hemp, and other agricultural products.
- **Actionable Commitments:** Participants agreed on follow-up planning, field visits, and joint development of business plans to ensure practical implementation.
- **Partnership Pathways:** The initiation of potential MoUs signaled a commitment to formalizing partnerships for sustainable rural development.







The workshop served as a dynamic platform for bridging institutional rural development efforts with entrepreneurial ecosystems. By fostering partnerships and co-creating actionable plans, it reinforced the IRMA ISEED Foundation's commitment to driving sustainable and inclusive growth through innovative, business-led rural development models. The enthusiasm and insights generated during the event promise significant on-ground impact and deeper collaboration in the future.