

The Kudumbashree Story



Implementation

The MEC Projects have been planned with the following activities.

Preparatory Phase

Exploratory visit of Kudumbashree NRO to the partner States

Kudumbashree NRO team visits the partner-States to understand the overall context, conditions, communities, customs, institutions, and culture.

The NRO team works with the SRLM of the partner-State to develop appropriate strategies for implementation of the project.

Exposure visits of partner State teams to Kerala

A team from the partner State visits Kerala and understand the way the MEC system works. They see some of the best practices models that have come up in the State.

The visit offers an opportunity to take critical look at the MEC system of the State. This assumes special significance as

The Kerala model itself is evolving; a complete proof of concept is yet to emerge

Therefore, it is not a replication of the MEC system of Kerala that the NRO intends to try out in partner-States, but a new model contextualised to the specific conditions of the State, and evolving taking in the lessons from Kerala while attempting to avoid the pitfalls.

KS-NRO team and the SRLM team together decide on the districts for pilot implementation of MEC project.

Initial orientation to staff in pilot districts

A workshop is conducted for the SRLM staff in the pilot districts responsible for the implementation of different NRLM components. The workshop is meant to provide the staff orientation on the project, its objectives, method, and deliverables. It is important that the district level NRLM staff gain adequate understanding of the project.

Mentor MEC immersion and selection

Immersion is meant to provide mentor MECs an understanding of the new place and to familiarise with the geographic, social, economic, and political contexts.

Immersion helps mentors in understanding the local communities and building rapport with the people. As language is a constraint in most of the cases, immersion also helps the MECs in reaching an essential comfort level in communicating with the people. At the end of immersion, a joint team of NRO and SRLM selects the mentors for the project in the pilot districts.

Selection and Capacity Building of MECs

Identification and selection of MECs

KS-NRO and SRLM jointly select potential MECs from among a group identified through the CBO structure. The selection is done through a two-day workshop of identified candidate. After selection, they undergo a grading test to select the candidates for training as master / CREAM MECs. The selected MECs are given an induction assignment.

General orientation training

General orientation training (GoT) is what provides the incumbents exposure to the MEC project, its method, and roles and responsibilities of MECs.

Training in Entrepreneurship Development (TED/EDP)

TED introduces business management concepts of entrepreneurship to MECs. The component has an elaborate module on basic arithmetic operations that lay the foundation for further training. TED also has modules on motivation and communication skills.

Course in Rural Enterprise Administration and Management (CREAM)

CREAM training is only for master MECs / CREAM MECs. It is a rigorous course meant to equip 30-35 MECs as master MECs and trainers for more MECs.

CREAM has its content arranged in six modules.

Overview and business finance

Sales and marketing

Operations management

Financial management

Strategy

Teaching TEAM

The last module is for preparing master MECs to train more MECs; the training programme used for such training is TEAM.

Following CREAM training, a pilot benchmarking is carried out where each MEC collects data on three micro enterprises.

An exposure visit to Kerala is part of CREAM package. The visit is interspersed between the fifth and sixth modules and includes visits to understand the CBO structure, micro enterprises, and MEC system of Kerala.

It is TREE society that administers the CREAM training.

Training in Enterprise Administration and Management (TEAM)

TEAM is a compressed form of CREAM meant to teach essential business concepts to MECs. CREAM MECs handle the sessions in TEAM with the support of mentor MECs.

BLOSSOM

Blossom is a team building activity that is conducted just before the sixth module of CREAM. It focuses on developing team spirit among MECs for future activities. It also ensures the absence of any hierarchy among CREAM and TEAM MECs as the difference in training is only meant to enable the former to engage in training of more MECs. Blossom also works as a platform for orientation of benchmarking to MECs other than CREAM MECs. The process of MEC group formation and initiation of the process for business plan preparation also happens during Blossom.

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