



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY
OF KERALA (INDIA)

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Local Economic Development Society (LEDS) is an incubation agency that works for the social and economic development of small producers in India (small farmers and micro entrepreneurs). LEDS provides management and marketing support to livelihood initiatives of small producers; and assists them in establishing enterprises and collectives of excellence.

SUPPORTING INITIATIVES OF SMALL FARMERS AND MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS

India's economy has experienced tremendous growth in urban industries such as services and information technology. However, more than 300 million Indians continue to live in poverty and of these, 75 percent live in rural areas. More than two-thirds of the population are small producers that depend on agriculture—mostly at a small-scale or subsistence level—for their livelihoods. Stable, regular incomes elude a majority of these small producers. Small and marginal farms have increasingly become an unviable proposition and it has been widely recognised that till farming as a whole is made viable at this scale, it would not be possible to reduce poverty and distress.

Similarly, it is estimated that 50-60% of microenterprises established as livelihood interventions in India do not reach breakeven levels, and tend to become defunct after a few years of operation. Even a majority of the ones that survive do not generate adequate profits, and therefore do not make meaningful contribution to very purpose for which they were established. This scenario poses a challenge to the logic of using microenterprises as tool for poverty alleviation.

LEDS was established to incubate initiatives of small farmers and micro-entrepreneurs such that they become viable and sustainable. LEDS attempts to do this by creating small producer collectives and assisting them with capacity building, securing better economies of scale, facilitating forward and backward linkages, and employing market based strategies.



LEDS GOALS

Strengthen value chains: We work closely with small producers to enable them to grow high-value products, engage with various stakeholders and sell in profitable markets.

Foster entrepreneurship in poor communities: We provide business training and skills development support to women and men who want to create thriving, sustainable enterprises.

Support sustainable local economic development: Our market-led approach increases incomes for small producers, while also catalysing economic and social development for the whole community.

Promote gender-inclusive communities: We integrate a gender lens throughout our programs and provide tailored support for women to expand their opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.



LEDS STRATEGIES

LEDS provides end to end solutions to small producers as below:

- Enable small producer collectives to operate efficiently by assisting them to execute specialised functions (such as procurement and marketing).
- Build sustainable forward and backward linkages for collectives in the areas of procurement, production, technology, branding, and marketing.
- Establish appropriate organisational structure for the collectives based on co-operative principles
- Institute best-in-class systems, processes and capability in the collectives.
- Provide capability building and skill development in multiple functions.
- Employ market based strategies and make available professional management services.



ILLUSTRATION AT THE KIP EXPO PAVILION

- Food products (Cashews, Coffee, Spices and Coconut Oil) from Elements- Fair Trade Alliance Kerala, a collective of 4500 organic farmers from North Kerala
- Ethnic food products from women micro-entrepreneurs of 'Kudumbashree'- a 4 million strong women empowerment organization
- Handloom products from weavers cooperatives



TO KNOW MORE

www.ledsonnet.com

CONTACT



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