

## Society for Development Alternatives (DA)

### 1. **Year of Establishment:** 1982

### 2. **Mission Statement:**

To design, deliver, and promote scalable solutions that enable better lives and resilient economies for everyone, especially the vulnerable communities, women, farmers, and young people in India.

### 3. **Key Achievements:**

Development Alternatives (DA), the world's first social enterprise dedicated to sustainable development, is a research and action organisation striving to deliver socially equitable, environmentally sound and economically scalable development outcomes. Our green technology innovations for habitat, water, energy and waste management, which deliver basic needs and generate sustainable livelihoods, have reduced poverty and rejuvenated natural ecosystems in the most backward regions of India. So far, through our work across various geographies, we have touched 20 million lives by enabling the formation of 5700 self-help groups and 13,450 community-based organisations through its Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) network of 665 civil society partner organisations. The number of persons we have reached out to with practical solutions, information, education and creation of awareness is well over 6 million. Development Alternatives has spearheaded nearly 48,000 environment conservation initiatives through a network of 1.25 million school children and their communities. For natural resource management, it has built more than 294 check dams resulting in the regeneration of over 10,000 hectares of land, benefiting about a quarter million people. Through our highly innovative learning programme, TARA Akshar, Development Alternatives has taught nearly 250,000 women to read, write and do simple arithmetic.

### 4. **Challenges Faced:**

The DA Group addresses global challenges of deep-seated poverty and environmental degradation through the design and dissemination of conceptual, methodological, and technological solutions based on interactions between natural, social, and human-institutional systems. It applies these at the local level, through multi-stakeholder partnerships in a business-oriented approach, builds capacities at local, sub-national and national levels to create enabling conditions for the replication and sustainability of these solutions and advocates for the mainstreaming of eco-solutions in policy and market regimes at national and global levels.

Our thrust areas of focus are:

- Low carbon and inclusive circular economy solutions for shelter, infrastructure, water management, sanitation, waste management and energy services.
- Climate resilience through land water management and agro-ecological solutions for small and medium farmers
- Enterprise development and support services and systems for entrepreneurship in rural, small town and peri-urban regions targeting youth and community collectives
- Packaging and market validation of eco-technology solutions for local enterprise-based delivery of basic needs goods and services
- Green skill development in water, waste, and construction management sectors.
- Capacity building of local and sub-national stakeholders for the deployment of viable techno-eco-social solutions. The DA Group's technologies, management systems, institutional structures, and business models are designed for wide reach through highly scalable dissemination approaches. Technology and service development and demonstration in partnership with local community groups, small entrepreneurs and farmer collectives enables us to test and contextualize solutions on ground, generate lessons for sustainability and replication, and build evidence of triple bottom-line impact. Tools, methods, quality standards and training systems are developed to enable transference of know-how and mainstreaming of institutional, technology and business solutions.

## **5. Strategies for Success:**

The DA Group believes that strategic partnerships and alliances are a key to scaling out the innovative models for sustainable development. The Group works across a diverse partner network that include:

Community partnerships - with civil society organisations to share knowledge to scale up improved practices and build collective negotiation and bargaining capacities.

Business networks - of industry associations, technology promoters, machine manufacturers, dealers and distributors to build strong commercial links in order to expand the portfolio of livelihood packages, foster rapid growth, leverage financial

resources and brand value, assume leadership in effective technology transfer and explore new and large opportunities with public and private markets in less developed regions.

Policy alliances - to inform and influence governments on several issues of environment and development at the local, national and global levels through strategic engagement and networking with research and advocacy groups and institutions working towards the same cause.

Academic associations – with universities and research group’s technology development, validation of social and economic theories of change and developing tools and methods for assessments and analysis of development interventions.

## **6. Lessons Learned:**

We have learned the below mentioned lessons:

- Practices necessary to create policy level changes.
- Community need to be empowered to make changes.
- Women play critical role in the economy hence educating a women is important.
- For Systemic change to succeed one need a long term association with community

## **7. Impact Assessment:**

In the last four decades, the DA Group has completed over 1500 projects and assignments for strengthening the sustainable development agenda, and climate change initiatives at national, regional and global levels. Our work in the past has attempted to identify “Green and Sustainable Economies” from an Indian and South Asian perspectives. Our work has resulted in building capacities of a large number of civil society organizations, corporate houses and public agencies.

We at the DA Group measure the impact of our work through both the qualitative and quantitate manner. We get the impact numbers from project completion report. Our work also impacted the people and geographies from subjective aspect. We capture data through scientific data collection methods. For primary date we chiefly follow the following methods:

- Interviews
- Observations
- Surveys and Questionnaires and for secondary data we follow authentic publications and reports from government and other renowned organisations.

## **8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:**

The Development Alternatives Group has identified a I4 Impact approach that guides the strategic functions the group has defined for itself. These are: Innovate – Incubate – Implement – Influence for Impact.

Innovation is a change that creates a new dimension of performance in products, techniques, finance, service delivery and business models.

Incubation for the market is the process of demonstrating the viability of the delivery model for basic needs products and services.

Implementation involves working with a spectrum of stakeholders who facilitate and reinforce the customer experience on the ground.

Influence is the mechanism that develops insights from on-ground action to facilitate policymaking.

Impact is the result of a reinforcing ecosystem of customers, financing mechanisms, producers and service providers who take the lead in deploying solutions at scale.

The entire process involves a multi-stakeholder approach to the commercialisation of innovative solutions by working with partners and experts at different stages and levels.

## **9. Future Ready:**

Today Development Alternatives has established a reputation worldwide for its capacity to create the means to generate sustainable livelihoods in large numbers, which is the key to addressing development issues. Still, we have a long way to go before we can fulfil our vision of creating a country where everyone has the opportunity of living a fulfilling life. The road ahead for the nation includes eliminating poverty and hunger, bringing back the resource base and the environment to full health and creating an ambiance where people of all castes, religions, groups and regions feel it is their country and they have equal rights over it. We hope to contribute what we can do to construct that road.

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