

EU funded Project Nirmanshree to empower 3000 women-led households with skilling in construction sector

by Sahitya Karra — October 5, 2020 in Organization, Skill Talk

Habitat for Humanity India launched Project Nirmanshree – a project funded by The European Union. With close to four decades of service in the country, Habitat for Humanity India is a housing non-profit organisation driven by the vision to build a world where everyone has a decent place to live. As a part of its larger housing ecosystem interventions, the organisation works in the areas of WASH – water, sanitation, hygiene, and disaster response.



Rajan Samuel

In this Skill Talk, **Rajan Samuel, Managing Director, Habitat for Humanity India**, throws some light on Project Nirmanshree, skill development, and entrepreneurial training for women, enabling sustainable livelihood among others. Read on to know more.

Q: Could you please tell us in brief about Habitat for Humanity's Project Nirmanshree?


A: Project Nirmanshree is a 3-year project launched in January 2020, with a two-fold objective –

- To promote women-led enterprises around the housing supply chain.
- To impact the housing sector with enterprises and skills available in the villages.

The project will impact two lakh families, one lakh in Odisha and one lakh in Maharashtra through housing intervention. 90% of the project is funded by the European Union and the remaining 10% cost is shared by Habitat India. The project aims to enhance women's entrepreneurial skills through sustainable livelihood options linking all the current government schemes and programs in this sector.

Our progress in the project has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, we are currently carrying out the household level baseline survey and are conducting few focussed group discussions in green zones. Stakeholder mapping and identifying and mapping all the government schemes and programs are being carried out during this time.

At the village level, we would like to create market linkages with all the key stakeholders like the micro-financing institutions, skilling, and vocational training institutions, markets, and the private sector, along with developing four production distribution facilities. We want to make housing affordable and also connect all the dots, for which we want to create mobile enterprises. We have women who have joined us as Nirmanshree messengers. They travel on bicycles for community outreach and collection of information needed for the success of the project.



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Q: Please throw some light about the aspects of skilling and entrepreneurial training in the project.

A: The construction sector is the second largest sector in our country next to agriculture. However, the sector is traditionally male-dominated. The main objective of this project is to create 50 women-led enterprises around the housing ecosystem. This will empower local women and it will be an excellent income generation activity for our womenfolk. Through this project, 3000 women will be skilled and trained in technical and non-technical training. Here, technical would mean masonry, plumbing, electrical, and carpentry.

We have partnered with seven organisations that provide training. They train the women in the required skillsets. In this project, one of the angles is to – inculcate an entrepreneurial mindset among the women, which is the business angle.




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Skill Talk with

Rajan Samuel
Managing Director
Habitat for Humanity, India

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Q: What is the role and impact of technology in Project Nirmanshree?

A: Technology plays a crucial role in the project. We are currently working on a mobile application called the Nirman App. It is a one-stop-solution for marketing and branding for housing support systems which will be offered by the social enterprises.

Through technology, we will also be able to create forward and backward linkages to promote sustainable livelihood and also scale-up our work.

The whole project will be data-driven. Therefore, to promote viable enterprises, one should know what would be the capital, net profit, how much would be the reflow of capital and funds, and a clear business model for each enterprise. By having access to these numbers, women will know their turnover, their margin, and return on investment. And this will help women make informed decisions.

Through the app and web portal, we would like to bring the multi-stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders would be the government, the private sector, research teams, and organisations promoting skill development. This multi-stakeholder engagement is helping us influence decision making at the policy level to create a healthy environment for social enterprises to scale. Technology will also enable women-led enterprises to connect to the markets.

To conclude, it is a unique project for us and we are looking forward to work alongside the women from Odisha and Maharashtra. We are grateful to the European Union for the belief they have shown in our work. We are confident that through this project, we will help women at the grassroots achieve the strength, stability, and self-reliance they need to build a better future for themselves and their families.