

Mentoring Bootcamp: Bridging the economic divide, exploring possibility of livelihoods for rural women in BFSI (Banking, Finance and Insurance sector)

Organised by - SANI Mumbai and Red Dot Foundation with rural women from Maharashtra

Summary/description of the event:

An interactive online mentoring bootcamp with *Digital Entrepreneurs - (rural women trained on imparting Digital Financial Literacy to the rural - urban community)*. This was a "peer mentoring" bootcamp where we learnt from each other through sharing challenges.

Flow of the project:

The project was in three parts. The opening session, the mentoring and capacity building sessions and the final closing session. We invited SANI members, interested mentors and Swedish companies to participate.

	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
Month	24 July 2021	July to October 2021	24 October 2021
Duration of the session	2 hour session online	Minimum 4 structured mentoring sessions offered virtually	90 minute session online
Role of the Rural Digital Entrepreneur	Storytelling; shared their challenges and personal/professional projects	Set goals for the next three months and attended the virtual mentoring sessions	Storytelling on success achieved through the mentorship received
Role of SI Alumni and Swedish Companies	Listened with empathy, offered constructive suggestions and opened networks	Volunteered as mentors and offered professional expertise and personal solidarity	Listened with empathy, offered solidarity, opened networks and further support

<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Understanding challenges of rural women and their learning from the Digital Entrepreneurs program.</p> <p>Group Discussion: one to one with each Digital Entrepreneur to talk about one obstacle faced by her (personal or professional depending upon her comfort level) and gathering solutions or finding a solution to address it.</p>	<p>Identification of mentors from Swedish Alumni, Mumbai for Digital Entrepreneurs (mentorship for 3 months minimum).</p> <p>Mentoring relationships which benefit both parties.</p> <p>Network of solidarity and action.</p>	<p>Networking and access to a broader support system for the Digital Entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Through skills gained in mentorship program increase in employability in the BFSI sector as well as creating aspirations to become entrepreneurs.</p>
------------------------	---	---	--

The following were the activities conducted:

1. **Liaising** with AFARM for 10 Rural Digital Entrepreneurs (RDE). Initially we planned to host 8 RDEs in the program but finally involved 10 RDEs because of their passion and commitment.
2. **Three sessions on Art of Storytelling** for the Rural Digital Entrepreneurs (RDE) before the opening session so that they could maximise the opportunity during the program. This was facilitated by Ms. Supreet K Singh, Director & CEO of Red Dot Foundation and conducted in Hindi.
3. **One prep workshop** for the facilitators and mentors for the Bootcamp on 24 July.
4. **Opening Session on 24 July 2021** had close to 70+ registrations out of which close to 60 turned out. There were 10 Sakhis (digital rural women entrepreneurs) from an NGO based in Pune called AFARM (works in the space of sustainable livelihoods for the marginalised). The RDEs shared their personal stories and then they were assigned to breakout rooms with participants in the audience. In the breakout rooms, the RDEs posed their challenges and the discussion was facilitated by Swedish Institute Alumni. Final harvesting of feedback in the main session.

5. **Master classes** - We had five master classes -

Master Session with DREs				
	Trainer	Topic	Session 1	Session 2
1	Sabir	Computer skills	18-09-2021	14-10-2021
2	Karon Shaiva	Business skills	19-09-2021	
3	Red Dot Foundation team	Video making	05-10-2021	
4	Latha	Business skills and marketing	09-10-2021	16-10-2021

6. **Mentoring sessions** - Each RDE was paired with a senior woman leader from the private or development sector. Every fortnight for three months, the RDE and her mentor met for a one hour mentoring session. Some feedback and testimonies from the mentoring sessions are below.

7. **Closing session on 23 October 2021** - We had close to 50 people who attended the session. Ms. Anna Lekvall, Consul General, Consulate General of Sweden in Mumbai gave the opening address. Each RDE and her mentor shared their experiences from the program.

Feedback and Testimonies

Shubhangi Hulsure - Kshiti Gala

I have been a part of this project for a while now. I have learnt so much from how to increase the number of customers to marketing to understanding how my business will grow if I do my best. And I saw the results as more customers started coming to me through word of mouth. I learnt everything about how to use computers and business. I know these are the lessons I will endure for the rest of my life. Sabir sir held classes that helped me a lot. With my mentor, Kshiti ma'am I never felt like an employee-employer relationship, I can proudly call her my older sister today. Everyone felt like a family and treated me with such warmth and respect. It gave me the comfort to communicate my queries with them. This helped me a lot to stay confident with my work. I can't believe that an ordinary girl from a small village is now an entrepreneur. Big thanks to Rashmi ma'am, Supreet ma'am, Jyoti ma'am, Sabir sir and Kshiti ma'am.

Tabbu - Beroz

I've got the opportunity to learn from this project. And you have explained everything to us in such an easy form that it will be impactful for the rest of my life. Supreet ma'am lent me her ears and paid attention to our difficulties and so taught me that no matter what happens in my life I will not give up, that I will never give into the reality of life, I will create my own. Beroz ma'am has also taught me about investments, marketing, customer service and has paid attention to the smaller details of how to get the business going. How to interact with customers from the ones

Red Dot Foundation (CIN U93000MH2014NPL259081)

Reg Office: 7 Sea View, Four Bungalows, Andheri West, Mumbai 400053, India

www.safecity.in

info@reddotfoundation.org

[@TheSafecityApp](#)

who talk rudely to the good customers. I have also learnt how to solve difficulties. She also attempted to teach me English, I am still trying to get there and be more regular with it. Thanks to Jyoti and Beroz for that. I learnt so much more from Sabir sir in one session, more than I could ever learn in the past one year through my computer classes. I have got the opportunity to learn so much that I will not only utilise these lessons for business but also in my personal life. Thank you for thinking I was capable of this.

Shridevi - Soma

For the past two and a half months, I've been a part of this program. First thing I learnt was how to speak in Hindi, and so I got the opportunity to tell my story. From this project I learnt so much about how to market my business and serve the community. I couldn't find a place to set up my business, so Soma ma'am got me a place by talking to the head of the village. This helped me a lot. I faced many challenges -- how to set up my business and connect people through whatsapp, but everything was taken care of by the team. Everyone helped me out, especially Jyoti ma'am when I missed my sessions for personal reasons. The information I have gathered from this program will help me in the future as well. I am very thankful to everyone. Thank you so much!

Mahadevi - Harini

I have been a part of this for two and a half months. I have an issue with speaking in Hindi but through this program I learnt it, and did not give up at all. Jyoti ma'am helped me a lot. I have learnt how to be brave from this program. Supreet ma'am helped me write my own story and I will never forget that. Harini ma'am helped me a lot with where to set up my business, how to make a visiting card, how to market my business and how to make videos and photos for my business. Sabir sir taught me how to convert files on the computer; it really helped me a lot. Latha ma'am and Karon ma'am helped me with business plans that will help me so much in the future. Thank you so much everyone!

Mangal - Deepali

Namaste! Good evening, everyone. I am Mangal from Pune district. I have been working as a Digital Sakhi for the past two and a half months. I got the opportunity to meet the team of Red Dot Foundation - Supreet ma'am, Jyoti ma'am, Deepali ma'am. I learnt so much about business, how to do marketing, how to make a visiting card, how to make videos. Even today I still haven't got a place for setting up my business, so Deepali ma'am suggested I should go and speak to the head of my village. So, hopefully by the end of Diwali I will be able to open my business in my space. Thank you to Sabir sir as well for teaching me about converting files. Thanks everyone for helping me out.

Swati Jadhav - Zeba

I have been a part of this project for two months now. I have my own digital seva centre. I have learnt about Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and how to use them for the advantage of my business and use this knowledge to engage with more customers. I have also learnt about communication skills and leadership. Zeba ma'am has taught me so much about visiting cards,

Aadhar cards and how to make prints and adding people on WhatsApp. Sabir sir taught us with a lot of patience and about the tiniest details as to how to use the computer. Supreet ma'am and Jyoti ma'am also taught me how to make videos. Jyoti ma'am and Rashmi ma'am thank you so much!

Asma - Kiran

Before being a Digital Rural Entrepreneur, I was a farmer. I have chosen Digital Seva Centre as my business opportunity. Because of the team, I spoke to the head of my village and bank officers who further helped me to understand how to set up my business. Supreet ma'am taught me how to communicate and how these skills will help me with my business. Sabir sir has taught me so much about computers. Jyoti ma'am and Kiran ma'am have also been with me throughout the process. I promise everyone that I will make the best use of my skills.

Mohini - Rufina

Before this program I couldn't speak in Hindi but I learnt how to speak in Hindi after this program. I learnt how to use computer and convert files, fill forms, make prints, etc. I have also learnt how to make videos as well. I never thought I would be an entrepreneur one day, but with the help of this program I got the confidence to dream. I will use all my skills in the most positive way to increase my number of customers. Rufina ma'am has always been there for me, she would always light up my mood no matter what. Thank you, Red Dot Foundation, Supreet ma'am and Jyoti for this opportunity.

Shubhangi Jadhav - Rashmi

I've been a part of this program for the past two months. I learnt how to speak in Hindi through this program. I also learnt how to set the size of a photograph, convert files, open folders, etc. I have got the confidence to think about business from this program. I also learnt how to use WhatsApp for business, how to speak to the customers, etc. I still have to master my Hindi, I am practicing the same. My mentor was patient with me throughout this process and I thank her so much for excusing me at times because of my daughter's health. But I thank the team from the bottom of my heart and Red Dot Foundation for giving me this opportunity.

The following SDGs were addressed during the project

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Results and Outcomes

- This project demonstrated the need for longer sessions and also a more sustained investment in RDEs.
- The RDEs found the capacity building and mentoring sessions useful. They were not only provided with knowledge and skills but also an ecosystem of support.
- The Mentors were provided with perspectives beyond their lived reality and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by rural women in India.
- Mentoring programs have long-lasting effects - greater self-confidence in the RDE, confidence in speaking Hindi and rudimentary English and motivation to aspire for larger goals.

Sustainability of the project

- The RDEs will be part of the alumni network of Red Dot Foundation and have access to further capacity building sessions.
- Many of the mentors have expressed an interest to continue the mentoring relationship.

Video Links

- [Opening session](#)
- [Closing session](#)

List of RDEs

Sr. No	Name of Digital Entrepreneurs	Location			Age	Education	Need support
		Village	Cluster	District			
1	Reshmadevi Uattreshwar Sudake	Moha	Kalamb	Osmana bad	27	BA	marketing / outreach / field work / safety tips, management and communication
2	Swati Kakasaheb Jadhav	Mangarul			27	12th	expanding business, managing center, communication
3	Shubhangi Sanjay Jadhav	Mahalangi	Osmana bad		24	FY-BA	expanding business, managing center, online services
4	Mohini Deepak Dange	Chikarde	Barshi	Solapur	28	Bsc	interpersonal, communication and management
5	Asma Mehboob Shaikh	Raavgav	Karmala		28	SY-Bcom	financial help, communication, management of running center
6	Mahadevi Gensidh Birajdar	Darganhalli	Solapur		36	BA	open digital seva kendra, communication, management
7	Tabbu Saipan Nagare	Yetnal			24	DED	Communication, management of running center
8	Shridevi Rahul Shinde	Kardehalli			33	12th	guidance on marketing / solution oriented approach, online services training, marketing, customer dealing, communication
9	Magal Shirish Kad	Pargav	Daund	Pune	29	12th	computer education, learning services of kendra, communication, attracting customers
10	Shubhangi Ganpat Husure	Talmugali	Nilanga	Latur	27	10th	begin seva kendra(marketing & sale /interpersonal communication skills / leadership skills/), get guidance, help delete in sending girls out of the village for MSIT course

List of Mentors

Sr No	Name of Mentor	Org / Designation
1	Rufina Fernandes	Vice President - Strategic Initiatives
2	Beroz Gazdar	SANI Mumbai Board
3	Dr. Zaibunnisa (Zeba) Malik	Principal (Unaided) & HOD Comp. MHSSP
4	Sonal DSouza	Senior Program Management & Strategy Expert, Reliance Foundation
5	Kshiti Gala	Senior Manager (Research) - Sannam S4
6	Rashmi Putcha	Founder, Inaari
7	Soma Maitra	VP & Head - Innovation and Incubation, Value Format (Super Markets) · Reliance Retail
8	Harini S	Business Head - Non Traditional Partnerships and Segment Head - Corporate Solutions, Tatas
9	Deepali Nimbalkar	Senior Scientist & Head at Vasantdada Sugar Institute
10	Kiran Somvanshi	Economic Times, Journalist