WE HUB IS THE FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND AND ONLY STATE-RUN PLATFORM FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA.
WHY DO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS NEED A DEDICATED PLATFORM?

Women constitute 48.5% of the population in India, yet 11% of entrepreneurs are women and 24% of the workforce are women. It is predicted that increasing the participation of women by 10% can significantly contribute to increasing India’s GDP by 16%.

CONCEPTUALISING WE HUB

As a step towards advancing the economy through participation of women, the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) 2017 hosted in Hyderabad was themed on “Women First, Prosperity for all”. The conference laid focus on what can and should be done to foster and promote entrepreneurship among women. Identifying the need for a dedicated platform to support and guide Women Entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial journey, the Government of Telangana conceptualized “WE Hub” and announced its inception on 8th March 2018.

THE VISION

ECOSYSTEM BUILDING
Collaborate with corporates, government entities, industry and academia to encourage women to pursue entrepreneurship

TO PROMOTE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY WAY OF

INCUBATION
Empower women entrepreneurs from various sectors to startup and scale up by providing support in funding, mentoring, strategy and for growth

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
Make government schemes accessible through policy operationalization and research
The incubation program has been curated with a customized approach to provide entrepreneurs with the necessary skills, interventions, opportunities and support required to scale-up.

**Pitch Day**
25 – 26 May 2018

Spread across 2 days, the entrepreneurs pitched their ideas to an esteemed panel comprising of partners from UNDP India, IIT Hyderabad, PwC, Center for Agriculture Innovation, 10,000 Startups A NASSCOM Initiative, and a-IDEA NAARM. Entrepreneurs from Warangal, Suryapet, Mumbai, Pune, Jabalpur, Chennai and Andhra Pradesh travelled to Hyderabad to be a part of WE Hub’s first-ever pitch day. As a sector-agnostic incubator, WE Hub attracted women entrepreneurs from technology, Agritech, biotech, healthcare, FMCG, medtech, social enterprise, and fintech sectors among others.

**Cohort Launch**
17 August 2018

Each shortlisted startup met with the WE Hub team for one-on-one interventions and to understand their needs and WE Hub’s incubation services. Of the 245 applications received 26 start-ups were chosen to be incubated.

**Station Access and Mobility Program (STAMP) Challenge – WRI Cities**
27 July – 18 August 2018

WE Hub was Outreach partner for the STAMP Challenge, a business-idea competition for solutions that can be integrated with mass transit networks. WE Hub also participated in the Bootcamp for the STAMP Cohort and was a part of the expert panel to evaluate applications. Journee, a startup incubated at WE Hub was one of the three winners of the STAMP challenge. Journee’s platform aims to be a backbone to the transport agencies through smart ticketing, analysis of data, and smart commuting.

**EMPRETEC Workshop**
31-31 August 2018

WE Hub, in partnership with UNDP hosted a 2-day workshop coordinated by the EMPRETEC India Foundation with the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD). This program is coordinated through Geneva, Switzerland. In this immersive session, 20 women entrepreneurs received personal entrepreneurial capacity-building training and were equipped with thought frameworks to guide them in their businesses.

**U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) Women’s Pitch Competition**
5 – 6 September 2018

USIBC held their AGM in India for the first time, with a focus on engaging with the startup ecosystem. WE Hub was a knowledge and implementation partner for the Women’s Pitch Competition, which was conducted in an effort to encourage women entrepreneurs in the Indian startup ecosystem. 70+ applications were received from various sectors, of which Macromoney Research Pvt. Ltd, a start-up incubated at WE Hub, won the pitch competition.

**Maker Faire – Hyderabad**
09-11 November 2018

At the first Maker Faire being hosted in Hyderabad by T-Works, WE Hub participated as a diversity and inclusion partner. WE Hub helped design the start-up engagement with over 5 women-owned start-ups showcasing. A unique start-up interaction was also facilitated for the incubatees with swissnex, an organization set-up by Switzerland CG to connect with the World’s most innovative hubs. WE Hub also organized an unconference session by Mr. Deep Bajaj, Founder of PeeBuddy, and a panel on the Maker Spectrum.
Think Big 2018 by WE Connect
30 November 2018
WE Hub partnered with WE Connect, global network that connects women-owned businesses to qualified buyers around the world, to host their flagship conference – Think Big 2018, in Hyderabad. A delegation of WE Hub start-ups attended the conference and connected to various corporates. Ms. Deepthi Ravula, CEO, WE Hub, moderated a panel on “Capacity Building of Women Businesses.”

Meeting with UK Envoy to Commonwealth
12 January 2019
WE Hub in association with the British Deputy High Commission, Hyderabad hosted Mr. Philip Parham, UK Government’s Envoy to the Commonwealth Nations, and, Mr. Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner on National Youth Day. WE Hub presented to Mr. Parham on the Telangana Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, and WE Hub incubated start-ups showcased their start-ups and products during an engaging session. Mr. Parham highlighted various initiatives and goals to be achieved jointly by the commonwealth nations. Startoon Labs, Level App, Frugal Testing, MSLG Labs, NexRea and Jarsh Innovations presented to British Deputy High Commission representatives.

PROGRAMS CONDUCTED

P&G Biz Area P&G BizArena
28 January - 25 March 2019
WE Hub collaborated with P&G for ‘BizArena’ - a launchpad program to integrate startups into P&G’s smart factory initiative. Mr. Varun Akhnoor, WE Hub Incubation Manager visited individual production line, packaging and warehouse facility at P&G’s Hyderabad plant to understand the challenges faced and identify potential areas of intervention. After arriving at the problem statements, a Pan India outreach for applications was conducted through WE Hub channels. A thorough, transparent screening process was conducted to select 15 startups that will pitch their solutions on the Demo Day, and the suitable solutions will be integrated into P&G factories globally.

Social Enterprise Accelerator Program
25 March onwards
WE Hub in association with Australian High Commission’s “Direct Aid” grant will be conducting a social enterprise accelerator program. The 5-month accelerator program is aimed at helping women-led social enterprises scale up into self-sustaining businesses. Social entrepreneurs with existing startups/products/services will be eligible for this program - the objective is to enable participants to achieve tangible outcomes and acquire skills that will help them systematically approach challenges specific to social entrepreneurs in their venture to scale up. Moreover, this program will create a supportive community of resources that women social entrepreneurs can confidently approach.

INCUBATEE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Start-ups have been won prestigious awards including BIRAC Grant by Department of Biotechnology, Women Transforming India by NITI Aayog, USIBC (US-India Business Council), Samsung Global Startup Acceleration Program
- 3 start-ups have raised funding during their Incubation period - 1 start-up has raised equity funding, 3 Start-ups raised Debt Funding
- 13 Start-ups have reported an increase in their customer acquisition rates
- 11 Start-ups have significantly grown their team size, with close to 38 employees being hired across them since the start of the program
- 2 start-ups have launched physical stores, and 3 start-ups have launched their online platforms
ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

WE Hub’s current focus has been to operationalize and create awareness on existing schemes available, specifically to Women Entrepreneurs in partnership with Government Departments. Through the various initiatives conducted, strong-actionable insights have been derived to feed into policy-making.

OPERATIONALISING POLICY AND SCHEMES

During the incubation selection process, a common theme across 60+ start-ups was derived – the need for MSME interventions. Building on this, WE Hub curated a step-by-step approach to facilitate operationalization:

1. **MSME WORKSHOP**
   - 17 July 2018
     - Partnered with MSME-DI to organise a workshop to showcase the various schemes and financial assistance programs available from the Government of India, Government of Telangana and Banking institutions. Around 40 women entrepreneurs across sectors attended to seek assistance in the areas of fundraising, incorporation and licensing.

2. **LOAN MELA**
   - 10 August 2018
     - As a next step to the workshop, WE Hub organised a “Loan Mela” in partnership with SBI SME and MSME – DI. During the workshop the MUDRA and Stand-up India scheme were explained in detail, and the SBI SME encouraged all attendees to fill in the application prior to the Loan Mela to ensure that the processing was conducted seamlessly.

3. **PROCESS FACILITATION**
   - 29 August 2018
     - Recognising the need to follow-up with entrepreneurs, WE Hub organized a one-to-one interaction between all the applicants whose business proposal was marked as viable by the Bankers during the Loan Mela. This event was useful to entrepreneurs to avail the aid required for the loan to be sanctioned (such as CA services, Project proposal preparation services, Application nuances etc).

4. **LOAN SANCTION**
   - 14 September 2018
     - 16 entrepreneurs were sanctioned with loan amounts ranging from Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs. 2 crores.. The Sanction letters were awarded by Hon’ble Minister, Mr. K T Rama Rao, Mr. Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary to the Government, IT E & C. Officials including Mr. Chandra Shekar, Additional Industrial Advisor, MSME DI, GoI and from the State Bank of India participated in the event.

- Of these, **12 entrepreneurs** are provided with **Business Advisory services** by WE Hub for a period of 1 year. This program will monitor the financial health of the enterprise, and provide support required for scaling up.

- Post the success of this program, WE Hub partnered with MSME DI to begin **the next round** with more than 7 banks participating in this effort.

- **WE Hub** also works towards operationalizing other **MSME schemes** including Rental Subsidy, Sector-specific subsidies, Trade Fair subsidy.

PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

**MEESEVA APPLICATION**

15 February 2019

Mee Seva is a Government-to-citizen (G2C) and citizen-to-Government (C2G) service provided by the Government of Telangana. WE Hub has created a registration form, for Women Entrepreneurs to register themselves to be part of the WE Hub database. In the coming months, WE Hub aims to evaluate the registrations to understand the nature of the initiatives that need to be carried out, to ensure that the barriers faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Telangana are specifically addressed through policy interventions.
Telangana State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society (TSCO)
26 July 2018
Ms. Shailaja Ramiyer, Director, TSCO met with WE Hub representatives - Deepthi, Sakuntala Pranati and Durga to explore avenues to collaborate, given the large presence of women in the handloom, handicraft and textile sectors. A key takeaway from the meeting was for WE Hub to scout for opportunities to provide market support through key linkages and design interventions from experts.

Meeting with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
15 February 2019
Discussed potential collaboration areas with Julia Karst from the German Development Agency (GIZ) on accelerating women entrepreneurs in the Micro segment, developing an incubation program for women entrepreneurs outside Hyderabad, and connecting women part of WE Hub’s program to German markets. Also facilitated an interaction with Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) and Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) to further understand the progress being made in the grassroot level.

Entrepreneurship Orientation Workshop – Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA)
12 February 2019
Conducted Entrepreneurship Orientation Workshop for 40 Entrepreneurs from a varied set of backgrounds including Self Help Groups. The interactive workshop was conducted to understand each entrepreneurs background, skill level, enterprise, entrepreneurial capacity, and enterprise potential. The entrepreneurs were asked to form groups and discuss their business plans. Each group was provided with guidance by the WE Hub team on thinking like an entrepreneur, and ideas to scale-up. WE Hub and MEPMA have signed an MoU to help scale-up 6 such entrepreneurs over a period of 3 years.

ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

WE Hub has been working towards creating an ecosystem that drives social change across Telangana and India by working closely with Academia, Industry and Society to promote gender-parity in the economy. Concentrated efforts are being made towards girls in STEAM, Women in leadership and Entrepreneurship.

CREATING A CONducive ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Fireside Chat with US Congresswoman
03 April 2018
WE HUB in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs & IACC (Indo American Chamber of Commerce) organized an interactive session with young women entrepreneurs at T-Hub premises. The event was graced by the presence of US Congress women delgazation comprising of Ms. Alice diCostandina Titus and Ms. Congresswoman Terrycina Andra Sewell. The Congress Women delegation engaged in a panel with women entrepreneurs on the topic “Difficulty for women entrepreneurs: US/India Perspective”, moderated by Ms. Deepthi Ravula, CEO, WE HUB.

Walmart India’s WEDP 2.0
23 April 2018
WE Hub in partnership with ThinkThrough Consulting (TTC) organized the Graduation Ceremony of Walmart India’s Women Entrepreneurship Development Program, at T-Hub, IIIT Campus. The WEDP program is designed to help women entrepreneurs develop capacity, through a well-defined training curriculum delivered through workshops and mentoring sessions with technical experts, women-owned businesses, academics and business managers.
Scaling Up with Technology for Women Entrepreneurs

31 July 2018

WE Hub and American Corner, U.S. Consulate General Hyderabad invited Cynthia Hellen, CEO of SMPLCT Labs to address women entrepreneurs on the effective use of technology interventions to scale up their businesses. The purpose of this talk was to bring together representatives of institutions, organizations, non-profits and tech entrepreneurs to discuss the current situation and identify effective ways to empower women through technology. The topics focused on gender gap in computer science, examples of women in science, and how to best promote women in science.

UNDP Asia Pacific Workshop – Launch of Youth Co:Lab in India

26-29 November 2018

WE Hub, in association with The UNDP Bangkok and India Disha Team hosted a three-day Workshop for UN Officials across Asia-pacific on “Unpaid Care and Domestic Work.” The workshop brought together “non-traditional” partners - Apart from UNDP Officials, WE Hub hosted representatives from Academic Institutions, Enterprise enablers, NGOs, Government Departments and International Bodies present in the state, to ideate and discuss well-rounded solutions. The closing of the workshop culminated in the launch of Youth Co:Lab, a social entrepreneurship challenge for the youth. The premier edition will be hosted in Hyderabad and will be engaging youth participation across India to develop implementable solutions that are themed around the outcomes of the ideation workshop.

Fireside Chat with Komal Mangtani

10 January 2019

WE Hub, in its continuous efforts to promote Women in the Boardroom initiatives, hosted Ms. Komal Mangtani, Senior Director, Uber. She heads the Business Intelligence, Customer Service Tracking and Financial Interactions verticals and is ranked among the Top 50 Women in Tech by Forbes Magazine. As an advocate for Women in Tech and serving member and the movement towards consciously encouraging women to participate in leadership opportunities.

WE Hub participated in over 9 events to promote Entrepreneurship through Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Events, Entrepreneur Development Workshops, Leadership Development and Mentoring Sessions including – Ai for All by Observer Research Foundation, Mentoring Session by She Leads Tech – Facebook and HopperX1 AnitaB.org Conference.

PROMOTING GIRLS IN STEAM FIELDS

Voice4Girls at Maker Faire Hyderabad

09-11 November 2018

Maker Faire is global movement to celebrate invention, creativity, curiosity by bringing together tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, artisans and tinkerers and showcasing makers across all fields. WE Hub in association with Voice4Girls, an NGO in the city working towards equipping adolescent girls with life skills, brought a delegation of 52 girls to experience the Maker Faire Hyderabad as an exposure visit. One of the students who attended the workshop expressed to her coordinator “When the teachers have been telling us we can do anything – I did not know what you meant until today. Being able to experience the magic of making, has encouraged us to think we can indeed do anything we set our minds to.”
Code to Inspire
04 December 2018
WE Hub representatives interacted with graduates of Code to Inspire, Herut, Afghanistan, when they were participating at India Joy, Hyderabad. In an effort to pursue our joint goals and synergies, WE Hub team interacted with Ms. Fereshteh Forough, Founder and CEO of Code to Inspire.

Start-up Interaction with Dr. Marianne Schid Mast
22 January 2019
WE Hub hosted in association with swissnex, hosted Dr. Marianne Schid Mast, Professor of Organizational Behavior in the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. She was nominated as one of the 50 most influential living psychologists worldwide and runs an enterprise that looks to use immersive virtual reality for the study of human social interaction behavior and for interpersonal skills training. WE Hub conducted an exposure interaction for college students across Hyderabad, and a knowledge-sharing session for start-ups in the VR space in Hyderabad.

Microsoft Garage
05 February 2019
WE Hub presented at the Garage Global Offsite meeting, as a part of the Telangana Innovation Ecosystem. WE Hub representatives explained the vision, methodology, accomplishments and way forward for women entrepreneurs in the state. In addition, WE Hub has partnered with Microsoft Garage to further the “Girls in STEM” initiative, by providing school/college students access to Garage Maker Spaces, WE Hub Knowledge Framework and Exposure visits.

WE Hub also participated in 8+ events to promote Girls in STEAM through College Workshops, Technology Orientation Events, and Speaker Series including an Interactive session with Vignan Jyoti and Inspire Manak Scholars at IIT Hyderabad, IEEE Hyderabad Student Section Congress Event and College Incubator Launches.

MEET THE TEAM

DEEPTHI RAVULA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Deepthi Ravula is an Electronics Engineer by profession and passion, and graduated from San Diego State University. She has 15 years of experience working in USA with Palm, Nokia, Qualcomm among others in RF Communication roles. She joined the Government of Telangana as a Joint Director for Electronics in 2016, and has been appointed as CEO of WE Hub since inception in 2017. She envisions to create a work environment that is gender blind, and construct economic independence as a tool for empowerment. She is a strong proponent of Girls in STE(A)M and Women in decision making spaces.

VARUN AKHNOOR
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT INCUBATION
Varun Akhnoor has experience in running business incubation centres at premier institutes in Hyderabad and Bangalore and has a legacy of unique start-up ecosystem building initiatives at each institution, aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among students. Having been an entrepreneur himself, he is passionate about creating a start-up ecosystem that is inclusive, and thrives on collaboration.
SAKUNTALA KASRAGADDA
SENIOR COMMUNITY MANAGER
Sakuntala Kasragadda holds a Post graduate in Sociology, has 14 years of experience in development sector. She has previously worked with DHAN Foundation, BYST and EY with a focus on women empowerment and livelihood programmes. At WE Hub she works to scale up and strengthen women-led enterprises. She works towards making the women entrepreneur space more inclusive, across socio-economic borders.

PRANATI REDDY
OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATE
Pranati Reddy an alumni of U.C. Berkeley and LeTourneau University and is interested in gender justice, urban planning and live music. Prior to this, she worked for a Democratic Interest group in Texas, a libertarian think tank in Washington, D.C., and a boutique software consulting firm on marketing, strategy and communications. At WE Hub, she handles press and government liaising, and digital presence.

DURGA RAVINDRAN
POLICY FELLOW
Durga Ravindran is a Business Administration graduate with a keen interest in analytical problem solving, and strategy formulation. With a major in Finance, she has previously worked as an Analyst at Goldman Sachs and a start-up consulting firm. Her steadfast commitment to partake in social impact initiatives and public policy has shaped her role today. At WE Hub, She works towards deriving actionable insight for policy-making for Women Entrepreneurs.

VAISHNAVI REDDY
PROGRAM ASSOCIATE
Vaishnavi Reddy graduated from University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a focus on Finance. She has worked on student disability and inclusion initiatives and is a road trip travel enthusiast. At WE Hub, she is a Program Associate and works on Incubation programming and startup engagement.
The innovation and startup ecosystem in India have several key players and institutions with immense technical knowledge and expertise. WE Hub believes in taking a collaborative approach. In that spirit, several agreements were made in order to build a platform that can best serve women entrepreneurs from every field.