

Ford Foundation director visits Mushroom Development Foundation



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Dr. Steven Solnick, Director of Ford Foundation visited Mushroom Development Foundation (MDF), Guwahati with the objective to look into the efforts undertaken by MDF in the field of poverty alleviation in connection with a project supported by Ford Foundation through The Foundation for Social Transformation (FST). The meeting was attended by the mushroom farmers from Sonapur (SAKKS) as well as MBA students from Don Bosco Institute of Management, Guwahati working as interns and Mass-Com Students from Guwahati University.

The meeting began with a 7 minutes informational video/film which shows the 17 years work of MDF and how it have been working with the farmers to alleviate poverty. The farmers shared their experience that they had through the years with MDF and the benefits they reaped from cultivating mushroom. The gathering was further carried out with a presentation by the Management interns where they spoke about the issues they will be handling during the internship which will have a positive impact in the lives of the small and marginal farmers organized by MDF. Pranjali Baruah (Ashoka Fellow), the head and founder of MDF in his presentation gave a brief about MDF's activities and its mission, which led to a healthy interaction thereafter. Dr. Steven Solnick, in the meeting was surprised to know that some of the farmers through mushroom cultivation have tripled their annual income and asserted to make a study into this impact at large.

The initiative & efforts of MDF in implementing comprehensive employment activities has brought a significant contribution to the lives of the farmers who have volunteered with sincerity to be a member of the foundation. The main focus which Dr. Solnick cited during the meet was to promote livelihood project and on poor people scale up. The primary objective of Ford Foundation is to assist the poorest of the poor and towards sustainable development. He mentioned that the livelihood option from the learning's from the work of MDF needs to be properly documented so that it can be replicated to a larger audience at a much faster rate. He has asked MDF and the students to come up with a strategy from the learning on the impact on peoples' lives and how the quality of lives can be improved in a holistic way from this additional income generated by the small farmers. A probable collaboration of Ford Foundation with MDF in the near future has been the outcome of this meet. Kateki Bardaloi the Director of FST was also present in the meet providing valuable inputs.

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