

Institutional Management Training for SABAH Afghanistan

I. Duration of Visit: February 26 to March 9, 2011

II. Background of Participants:

Nineteen Afghan women from Bagh-e-Khazana Federation, supported by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAAR) Business Association for Home-based Workers (SABAH) Federation. There were nine members of Executive Committee of the federation and ten were leaders managing different activities within their villages.

III. Objective of the Training:

There were several primary objectives for the training, which were geared in providing the participants institutional capacity to sustainably maintain the work that Bagh-e-Khazana had begun through the support of SEWA two years back. Among the objectives of the program:

- Learn about importance of organising and Community Based Organizing
- Management of Community Based Organizing
- Preparing of Business Plan for BagheKhazana SABAH Federation
- Structuring the BagheKhazana SABAH Federation and its activities
- Development and capacity building through lateral learning

IV. Summary of Training:

The twenty-five day training was structured to provide exposure to SEWA's different projects and sites, which enabled participants to absorb the new knowledge in an interactive manner. In capacitating the new organization, Bagh-e-Khazan, which was recently registered, the training focused on strategies and approaches to successfully manage and grow their women's group membership and empower women economically.

As cornerstone to the training, there were consistent emphases on organizing federations in Afghanistan, provide training on women's rights, and stressing the importance of awareness programs to improve social and economic conditions of Afghan women. The necessity of this is evident with the years of social unrest and insecurity within the country as women have been left widowed and meant to fend for their family. Among the most spoken about concern was the amount of poverty in Afghanistan and the poor quality of education that the country offers.

However, through visits to ShriKhedaJillaSwashraiMahila SEWA BachatMandal (Kheda and Anand), SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre (STFC), ShriVanlakshmi Tree Growers Cooperative and SurendranagarMahilaBalVikasMandal, participants were inspired and eager to learn so that they could bring back the knowledge they accumulated during the training to their colleagues back home. The group learned how they could improve and conditions in Afghanistan for women who work in the garment manufacturing industry, develop vocational training for livelihood purposes, understood the supply chain management followed at SEWA through

the STFC, and comprehended what the relationship ought to be between the district association and artisans.

Further, discussions also ensued on the importance of maintaining good working relations within the SAARC countries, development of leadership and people management skills as leaders and organizers, and development of capacity building through lateral learning. The concept of Self Help Groups was also shared with the women as an avenue of saving and understanding finances.

Given that the organization is new and enthusiastic to expand its membership-base of women within Afghanistan, the training included modules and discussion with SEWA leaders on the importance of community-based organizations (CBO) and the many issues that arise with CBO management. It was shared that building CBOs efficiently and effectively they needed to think of sustainability, therefore inclusion and active participation of the community and civil society was critical. Through these discussions, the participants were able to hear about the SEWA's very own experience in motivating women and creating a movement, a set of approaches, and organization strategy geared to overcome and respond to social and economic challenges of today.

As noted, the exposure trips were very encouraging methods of sharing knowledge, by experience and seeing how SEWA operates. However, aside from the discussions that took place, there were also lectures, story telling, role-plays, film viewing, group games, and actual interaction with women in the grassroots level. This enabled the Afghan women to assimilate and exchange experience and learning with the local SEWA members.

At the end of the training, the participants shared that the amount of knowledge that the training SEWA imparted to them was not only tremendous but also, very encouraging. Some participants hoped for more days of training, given that they enjoyed the learning and exposure visit. It was common voice that all were eager to bring home their new skills, experiences, and knowledge to share with their colleagues at Bagh-e-Khazan. Amongst the topics that struck them the most as interesting and relevant were, approaches in strengthening and sustaining organizations, developing business linkages, empowerment of women through training, and importance of collective action.

V. Feedback from Participants

Aamedajan

I could understand activities deeply. All subjects were very important for us. All trainers were good. I wish to take computer education and English speaking training. Management, costing and marketing are important for our federation.

Makaijan

I am not able to read and write but this training will be very important for my saving activity.

Nafishajan

All teachers were good. Now I understand planning, marketing, government, food processing, saving activity. Garment making is the subject of my interest. I got strong information and learning in this subject. Training would be helpful to me in my work further.

Zafiyajan

I liked business planning, group meeting and management. Costing would also be helpful in activities. Loan for business is too important as our members can not expand their business due to lack of finance. I avail good experience from exposure of district association. We will surely explore this for Afghani members.

VI. Snapshots from the Training (Pictures, please.)