

Leadership and Organising Skills Training for Pakistan Delegation

I. Duration of Visit: December 17 to 27, 2011

II. Background of Participants: Fourteen members from SUNGI, Pakistan

III. Training Objectives:

The overall objective of the training was to inculcate the importance of collective action and its benefits to the participants through:

- Understanding the concept, structure, and function of cooperatives and its benefits;
- Understanding the value of supply chain, quality work, and time management;
- Learning the value of accountability and ownership of demand from market;
- Understanding the importance of communicating accurately with the group members;
- Learning through reflection and experience sharing of SEWA Trade Facilitation Center (STFC members); and
- Development of village-level business plans.

IV. Summary of Training:

The first day of the training was focused on acquainting the participants with the different struggles SEWA undertook in its early years, particularly in organizing women of different trades within the union. They were given an overview of SEWA's products and discussed SEWA's other sister organizations, such as Gram Mahila Haat, RUDI, and SEWA bank.

The SUNGI team spent a full day at STFC to understand the processing of orders, supply chain quality control, the methodology of visual merchandising. Participants had a very lively and positive interaction with the team at STFC.

Members of SUNGI were amazed as they observed the impeccable quality of work that STFC team are executing and delivering at every stage of the production process. The STFC members greatly appreciated the participants' gasps of amazement that definitely "seeing is believing". The field visit brought about an everlasting stream of motivation that will be brought back with them to Pakistan.

The Pakistani delegation visited the Vanlakshmi Cooperative at Ganeshpura. The Cooperative is an excellent model for the other Cooperatives to replicate. Through collective hardwork and dedication, the Mandli has converted fallow land into a blossoming Ecotourism center. The team was in all praises for the commitment and perseverance by the members of the Vanlakshmi Cooperative.

Four days were spent at Kamlasadan, Radhanpur to gain understanding of organizational processes and management within groups, the benefits of collective work in supply chain of crafts, and development of business plans. A great deal of the training objectives was achieved during their stay at Kamlasadan.

During the team's eleven-day program, they successfully reached the target objectives of the program. They particularly appreciated learning about the secrets of developing successful robust supply chain processes for their crafts.

"We are SEWA and SEWA is what we are." Every member imbibed the value of unity with a strong sense of ownership and affection for their work. At the end of the program, they felt they were very much part of the SEWA family and took great pride with the relationships built.

V. Feedback from Participants:

Ruqia Anwar: Coordinator, SAARC Business Association for Home-based Workers, (SABAH)

Initially I was not very clear about planning things but the training on time management imparted by SEWA Manager Ni School has given me a vision on how to plan things. I learned how to make business plans for the crafts, taking note of the smallest details that cannot be overlooked. It gave me a much clearer insight on how we could link our craft to the market. The process followed at SEWA Trade Facilitation Center is excellent.

Shahidaben: Organiser, Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO)

I make lot of field visits but after attending this training I realized the importance of doing Participatory Rural Assessment. Unless one understands the requirements of the women to the core, one cannot work well. I realized that training for women needs to be done on a regular basis to upgrade their skill set and bring them to the forefront. Awareness workshops are necessary to be conducted in every village.

The Sun spreads its light in all the four directions but the training that we got from here has opened up fourteen directions in our minds. We were just like stones when we came here, but the SEWA members have polished us so well that we turned into diamonds.

Looking at the unity here I would like to say that India, Pakistan, Nepal are all siblings of the same parent who have been separated owing to the political differences.

Madihaben: Textile Designer, Hardeep Rural Development Enterprise

I learned the functions of STFC, the role of SEWA in the lives of women, supply chain for crafts, the importance of time management, and the market of craft based products. I love SEWA's approach on self-ownership work. The supply chain at SEWA is extremely well organized, hence when I go back to Tharparkar I would want to implement what I learned. I feel that I have learned so much in a few days. When I arrived, I felt that there were too many training days, but now I feel the number of days for training were not enough. There is so much to learn. The manner in which women work collectively and bring their work to the markets is amazing.

SEWA has been working with women for more than forty years and has implemented a great system for grassroots women in India. There aren't any suggestions, just appreciation for the wonderful work.

VI. Snapshots from the Training



Self-introduction of the participants during the opening day.



Each participant documented their experiences and thoughts about the training on video.



SEWA we are one!



Training group with Reemaben after a lively afternoon discussion.



The participants had very engaging questions and discussions during the sessions.



Each trainee received certificates for successfully completing the training.