

Managerial Skills Training for Bangladesh GAT Team

I. Duration of Visit: 15 days (September 26th) ???

II. Background of Participants: Gandhi Ashram Trust (GAT) in cooperation with SAARC Business Association for Home-Based Workers (SABAH), Bangladesh

III. Objective of Training:

The objective of the training was to provide the Bangladeshi GAT team with managerial and leadership training from SEWA Manager ni School (SMS). As a result of the partnership formed between GAT and SABAH, this GAT team was invited to managerial training program at SEWA. This training would improve organization and leadership skills necessary to form cooperatives and enterprises at a grass-roots level.

IV. Summary of Trainings:

The fifteen day long training provided exposure visits demonstrating the challenges and leadership and management skills necessary to build women based cooperatives, organizations and enterprises.

The first few days were used as an introduction of SEWA as well as SABAH. SEWA presented how it was able to overcome challenges in organizing and training women workers at the beginning. The GAT Bangladesh team could see how SEWA met those challenges, as they went on complementary site visits of SEWA's different activities, such as the SEWA Trade Facilitation Center (STFC) and the Mahila SEWA Co-operative Bank.

SMS provided trainings on self-help, group formation and the necessary skills for banking and group coordination.

A significant portion of the training days focused on Community Based Organization (CBO) management. They learned what is required for an organization and the potential obstacles it may face. Leadership qualities were discussed in multiple activities and team building exercises demonstrated importance of trusting relationships between members of the group.

Another training session presented the fundamental elements of accounting. The participants also learned about the different kinds of costs, such as fixed or variable costs. This understanding allowed them to keep financial ledgers as well as apply these concepts to their own businesses. All of this information was related to how women could use it in their personal enterprises and organizations.

The fifteen-day training ended with a complete business plan and a projection of work for 3 years based on four primary occupations of tailoring, handloom & dyeing, food processing and agriculture.

Methodologies used in these training sessions included role playing and video. The group used personal experience as well as real-life case studies as examples to work through. Homework allowed time for personal reflection, while training session gave the participants the opportunity to work through problems and discuss concepts like leadership qualities as a team. Trust building exercises and games allowed for a fun and interactive group learning.

The participants' feedback described the training as useful, but too short. They suggested a yearly update on similar training and that the material and session be taught in their local language.

V. Participants Reflections

Parveen Begum shared her experience:

“I learned a lot from the trainings and am eager to go to Bangladesh and share the knowledge with the members. I am already tailoring and chattai making and plan to upscale the activity.”

Shefali Rani shared:

“I learned about organizing, networking and the skills a leader should possess.”

VI. Photos of Training