

Afghanistan visit on training and evaluation strategy of SHGs operation was conducted by a group of three of SEWA team from 22.08.2014 to 29.08.2014. The team had visited SABAH centres in Kabul & Mazar-e-Sherif, field visits to Noor Khuda in Balkh province & Sharak-i-Qalenbafan, Market exposures in Mazar and conducted training programmes for five days.

Objectives of the visit :

1. Understanding on the functions and workings of Women SHGs in Balkh province and Mymanna district, assessment on their skill levels, products, markets, raw-materials
2. Photo documentation of their products
3. To do consultation work on latest designs, sampling, quality checking, costing, packing and labeling, logistics for national and international exports and shipping
4. Brief Orientation of ACTED and SEWA, the importance and role of this collaboration on HBWs lives and its contribution to their upliftment

FIELD VISITS TO HOME-BASED WORKERS



The team conducted a field visit to **Noor Khuda village of Balkh province**. There are total 20 groups of 20 members in each group that makes the women members no. as 400. Out of 20, 8 groups belong to stitching, 7 carpets, and 5 embroidery groups. The common factor amongst all the groups is that they are doing job work mainly. Only two members have their own shops in the vicinity and only 10% of their total productivity is related to their own shops.

All the stitching group members work on hand machines and their stitching talents need to be taken care of on priority as their prevailing skills can only cater local markets of their area only. They have very poor sense of designing, colour - combinations, cutting & styling and raw materials.

Most of the Embroidery groups we had visited we found that majority is equipped with multi-stitch talent like Graphdozi, Khanjardozi, Khamakdozi, Charmadozi,

Owiyakari and crochet. Most of the women have passion to learn and groom their existing skills. Leaders of the groups have a great sense of exploring the markets for raw materials.

Carpet groups are doing fabulous job-work. They are doing woolen carpets with Biljik and Merino wool from Germany which is processed into threads in Afghanistan. They make carpets with 25 to 100 knots. We have suggested them to do silk carpets also for International market.

All the three groups have some common problems like unawareness on costing, profits and margins, market accessibility and their own monthly income. They need strong orientation on all these aspects.

The second field visit was Sharak-i-Qalenbafan. There are 110 families who belong to Carpet-weaving as their main occupation. They are making carpets and gilms. Apart from carpet some of the members are doing “A” class bead work. All the 110 families are emigrants from Pakistan and Iran who had left their native land during Taliban, now they are inhabited again. Most of the people have learnt their skills in Pakistan and their main market and buyers are in Pakistan only for whom they do the job work.

FIVE DAYS TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CONSULTATION WORK ON BELOW ASPECTS FOR 30 WOMEN INVITED BY ACTED



- Orientation of ACTED & SEWA
- Audio Visuals of SEWA, STFC, SABAH for experience sharing on need & benefits of organizing women
- Make them understand the concept of “Supply Chain Management” for streamlining their product related activities

- Special detailed sessions on Costing, Quality checking and packing & labeling methods
- Logistic methods for domestic and exports markets
- Market linkage
- Photo Documentation of the samples brought by women and also done during field visits. It was prepared as a slide show and later feedback on each sample was given to the members on big screen so that they understand it well. Sending the pictures of samples separately.
- The stitching group members were shown modern design samples too which are made with available clothes in open markets and stitched in Afghanistan. They have to come way up from existing traditional designs only



- As part of the five-days programme, selected women were taken to market survey in Mazar whom SEWA team minutely observed the way they handled purchasing, selecting, negotiating the raw materials. Then after a strong feedback and suggestions were given to them on improvisation
- The market survey members were taken to modern shops also so that they get ideas for competing with International markets with contemporary designs



- After each subject, group discussions and question-answer sessions were held so that to clear their doubts in simple manner
- They were played games related to their trainings so that they understand the concept and long hours don't get monotonous for them



- SEWA team had taken all the ACTED members to our CFC centre in Baugey Zanana to make them aware of the evolution with modern concepts with stitching



- At the end there was a wrap up session with all the members and officials of ACTED
- Needs assessment forms were filled

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Stitching Group members need strong orientation and trainings on cutting, styling, stitching, designing, colour combinations
- They should be groomed on costing factor strongly. They have their own unscientific ways of calculating the costs
- Sense of awareness for profit/loss needs to be developed to run a sustainable business
- Most of the members have no idea whether they are getting correct wages for their work
- Unable to calculate their monthly income
- Mymanna group women seem much smarter and their skills are also quite polished
- All age-group Afghani women we had met during 5 days programme have urge to learn more and more to groom their existing skills and most of them are very smart for market exposures and adapting innovations

At the end SEWA team is thankful for safe & secure stay arrangements by ACTED in their comfortable guest houses and also for their hospitality and co-operation. Special thanks to IT department without which things would have been different.