



## A. News from SETU Africa

### Exposure visit of SEWA team to Ethiopia

A team of twelve SEWA grass-root team leaders will visit Ethiopia from 14<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup>, September 2014. The objective of this exposure visit is to understand and promote an integrated approach of poverty reduction and self-reliance for women and their families through microfinance, microenterprise and livelihoods promotion, micro-insurance, health and child care and capacity-building for leadership and management by local people, especially women. This visit aims to promote mutual learning and sharing about these issues, to promote further organising, undertake collective action and build their own membership-based organizations.

## B. Voices from Africa

### WISE gets an award from Addis Ababa city administration

Organization for Women in Self Employment (WISE) SACCO Union got an award from Addis Ababa City Administration for its outstanding efforts in poverty reduction, especially its work with women and girls.



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**SETU Africa on occasion of Ethiopian New Year (11<sup>th</sup> September) wishes Happy New Year to our friends in Ethiopia.**

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## C. Happenings at SEWA

### SEWA Bharat Youth Programme

To empower women, we need to touch their lives at an early age. Therefore, the SEWA Polytechnic and Vocational training centers were started in 2011 to offer courses for marketable skills like computer training, fashion designing, embroidery and cutting and tailoring.

It was seen that just class room training is not enough to empower these young girls, daughters of our members. In a study conducted by SEWA on 100 girls from SEWA Vocational Centers and Polytechnic, the girls were asked about their dreams and aspirations. In India and for poor people specifically, young girls are often treated as adults and given adult responsibilities – working and marrying at a young age. They are rarely given the time and space to enjoy being young and to develop them in a way that could lead them to a better life than those of their parents. Thus, the **SEWA Youth Programme** was started in Delhi to support young girls, undertake activities and ultimately support them across the life-cycle..

The Youth Programme was started in the form of **Youth Clubs**. It is a space for the young girls in the age group 15-25 years to get involved in activities they enjoy and at the same time direct their energy towards learning something productive. Through Youth Clubs we wanted to keep the young girls connected with SEWA even after they have completed their vocational training courses. At present there are three Youth Clubs in SEWA Delhi that run in the SEWA Polytechnic (New Ashok Nagar) and Vocational Training Centre (Rajeev Nagar and Sundernagri). Each Youth Club meets once in every 15 days. Through the Youth Clubs, we give the youth the space, guidance and opportunity – to express themselves, increase levels of knowledge and awareness, showcase their talent, and build their confidence, through discussions, career counseling, and activities like painting and events like the youth festival. The last activity in Youth Club was called “I am proud that...” where girls were asked to share their moments of pride in front of all in the group. A volunteer from Germany was taken for a visit and they were asked to teach her few Hindi sentences with the message that somebody wants to learn your language and you can teach her that, all with pride!

*“I never thought I will be able to relive my youth through Youth Club”, Rukhsar, Sundernagri*

To celebrate youth and take pride in being what they are, a **Youth Festival** is celebrated every year since 2012. Girls eagerly wait for this event where we not only involve the young SEWA members but give a chance to young girls associated with other NGOS to participate as well.

*“I want to learn new things and be a part of SEWA Youth Programme”- Rihana, Sundernaari.*

The festival comprises of competitions and performances by the youth. Last year the youth festival was held on the 13th of December 2013 at the Shah Auditorium, Civil Lines, New Delhi. The competitions were: Creative writing, Painting, Debate, Dance and Fashion Show. A total number of eight NGOs

participated. SEWA youth club members participated in every competition. To boost the confidence of every participant certificates and awards were given.

On the occasion of the Youth Festival, to bring these girls from the urban slums closer to the world outside their communities, to bridge the divide between the two Delhis, where on the one hand, some girls lack basic guidance in life and another section of youth is privileged and have the potential to give back to the society, the **SEWA Youth Connect** was launched as a pilot program. SEWA Youth Connect engages committed women studying in Delhi University to mentor our SEWA Youth, aged between 17 to 25 years. Through our program, we work directly with the younger generation of marginalized women to break the cycle of poverty, while simultaneously tackling the systemic problem of class, caste and religious prejudice by building personal relationship between the participants. With the active support and attention from the university students, we hope that the mentees will begin to see their dreams as a reality and develop their social capital to work towards their goals. In the pilot project we had 11 pairs of mentees and mentors, who met every week for 6 months till June 2014 at a place of their choice and discussed various topics with the objective to share knowledge, build skills, develop their personality, set a goal and prepare them for a better job. The results were positive and motivating. It has been a two-way learning process for both the girls from two different socio-economic backgrounds. The mentees say that this programme has given them experiences that have increased their level of knowledge, confidence, made them independent and gave them a vision to do something in life. The mentors have seen a completely different life situation that has changed their understanding, their attitude towards life, built their patience and leadership skills.

*“Youth Connect gave me the confidence to speak.”- Gulnaaz, New Ashok Nagar.*

Currently we are working on starting our next batch of Youth Connect for the period Sept 2014-Aug 2015. Seeing the interest in speaking English among the girls and its demand in today's world, we will focus on activities that enhance their communication skills. The Youth Club model is soon starting in other parts of SEWA Bharat.

Young girls have many dreams. SEWA Youth Programme tries to empower them to turn their dreams to reality.

### **Girls moving forward to touch the sky - A campaign for adolescent girls organised by SEWA Academy**

One day campaign was organized at Manipur training center of SEWA Academy and a total of 493 girls of Aakash Ganga club from rural / urban areas participated into it. The objective of this program was that these girls get an opportunity to share, present their skills, and take leadership roles for development in their respective areas.

### **Akash Ganga Club**

Akash Ganga is a Gujarati monthly magazine published for the adolescent girls. The first issue was published in 1996, and every forthcoming issue focuses primarily on mental and physical development of adolescent girls. Akash Ganga was born out of the demand from SEWA members to spread women's empowerment and the SEWA movement to their own children.





In response, SEWA created Akash Ganga, literally meaning “the Milky Way”, for adolescent girls. There are about 1500 girls who take a monthly subscription of Akash Ganga.

To provide a forum for these adolescent girls to come together to read and share stories, the literacy team of SEWA Academy runs Akash Ganga Clubs both in urban and rural areas of Ahmedabad and other districts. Daughters of SEWA members attend these clubs to increase their knowledge and

understanding of many issues related to their lives. This also provides them a place where they can share their personal feelings and free themselves from the responsibilities they hold at home. Akash Ganga club strives to share useful information as well as organises activities that they can use in their day to day life, through different methods like by arranging drawing classes, confidence-building exercises, story-telling etc.

Sunita from Zaloda village of Mehsana district shared that she left studies after 7<sup>th</sup> standard but when her mother was selected to run a literacy class and also to run Aksha Ganga club, she realised the importance of education. Now she is going to school and with other girls of her village.

Poonam is attending an Akash Ganga club every day. Her day starts with an all-religion prayer, followed by reading AkashmGanga Magazine and playing different games. Poonam says that in her community (Bharawada) child marriages are quite common: “My marriage is also fixed but my dream is to become a teacher. I cannot full-fill my dream because in my village, the school is up to standard eight only and if anyone wants to study beyond standard eight, then she has to travel to 8-10 kms away. My father will not allow me to go for further education so I will not be able to continue my education and become a teacher!”



In the theme “I am the best” one of the girls said that girl’s education is most important. She said that meetings with parents should be conducted regularly, so that those who are opposing girls’ education understand that

education for the girl child is very important. Today in many fields, girls perform well and often are much better than boys.

### **VimoSEWA: financial support during crisis for informal sector workers**

Jashiben Maheshbhai Patni, age 38 years, stays in Ahmedabad city. She sells fish, and her husband collects scrap for a living.. She has two daughters and two sons, and all are going to school. She is member of SEWA's fish co-operative.

Jashiben was insured with VimoSEWA for many years renew her insurance policy regularly. She attended training at VimoSEWA and understood the importance of insurance in detail. After attending training, she understood that her husband should also be insured. She has taken two policies for her husband---one is a savings-linked life insurance policy and the other is a term life policy. She spreads the message of insurance to others in her neighborhood.

One day, Jasiben's husband, Maheshbhai, had severe chest pain and suddenly passed away. VimoSEWA gave her the claim of INR 60,000. VimoSEWA was able to be of some support during this crisis.



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