

WLP AT SEWA Leadership Training 2019



- *The flow of the training was good. The information related to personal information and personal insight is very interesting as you get to know what is important, what they want out of life and how it is linked with SEWA goals.*
 - *The way the planning exercise was done was very good.*
- *The planning pyramid - planning from top to bottom was a good tool and can be used in team.*
- *During planning to proactively see the obstacles stage wise and be ready with solutions.*
 - *Impact of moods topic was very interesting.*
- *What do you care about, what do we want out of life and base that plan to your vision and define goals activity was very intuitive and insightful.*

Swami Vivekananda ““it is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved”

The Women’s Leadership Program, a project of Indians for Collective Action was invited by Self-employed Women’s Association (SEWA), a trusted and well-established NGO in Ahmedabad to conduct a workshop on transformational leadership to its selected members. In this partnership between the two organization, the predominant program aim was to strengthen the capabilities of rural women micro-entrepreneurs in the community, increase the financial sustainability of their enterprises and the fostering of personal growth of these rural women. The candidates were all from low-income grassroots communities, with an aspirational element in their readiness to participate in the workshop, full of dreams for themselves and for their businesses.

The picture above shows one group of women selected by SEWA to be trained. All are Coordinators of SEWA Programs, managing smaller units of businesses and have been members of SEWA for at least 10 years. They had first been trained at SEWA's Manager's School and over the years risen to the position of Coordinators, each one overseeing several small business owners involved in crafts, animal husbandry, village veterinary help, bore well repair, catering, small retail outlets, etc. A few of them were college graduates, speaking a smattering of English, but most had high-school-level educations or less. All spoke and understood Hindi and Gujarati.



The second group of women were Master Trainers managing single units. These women were having difficulties taking advantage of the training and workshops offered to them. They were eager to learn but did not feel confident or empowered to do so. Even though there were several resources available they didn't know how to access them, also they had concerns about sustaining themselves as viable businesses. Their biggest challenges were how to have a work-life balance, which led to a lot of frustration and low productivity. Our workshop showed them ways to address these and other related issues systematically.

Many of the attending women had faced challenges most of us here never have to experience. It was SEWA that had first offered them the lifeline for a more secure future. They were able to build a better future that provided them with economic independence, and a life based on dignity and respect for themselves and their families - something that was earlier unthinkable for them. That was enough to start them on a journey towards independence. Now they needed more, more support and knowledge to succeed and sustain themselves. They needed to understand the new market place and how to get up to speed to thrive in that environment. We conducted 2 three-day residential sessions. Most participants had travelled about 3 hours that morning with 2 of them coming from Kutch with a 5-hour travel.

Instead of just tips and tools there were guided exercises, group discussions and peer-supported dialogues. Included were opportunities to explore their motivations and gauge their own strengths and weaknesses to become more confident, trusted, and capable leaders. This proved to be an effective Leadership program to help women identify and develop their leadership abilities, help find the participant's inner compass and discover their ability to anticipate and learn in order to lead. In the process they explored their motivations and gauged their own strengths and

weaknesses. Even during that short span of time, we could see them becoming more confident and courageous in their responses. This customized curriculum was specially designed to reflect a transformational approach to our training, considering local cultural systems in which the women lived and worked and conducted by WLP team members. It focused not just on driving their confidence and measuring personal growth but helping them find the power within themselves to realizing their leadership capacity. An unexpected benefit was an opportunity for them to foster a deeper, meaningful connection with each other as part of a larger team at SEWA.



The workshop concluded with the women's commitment to pursuing opportunities to thrive as a leader and capable of transforming themselves to facing challenges. Impact of this training will be measured via feedback post-workshop as well as follow up interviews with program participants for a period of six months by trained coaches to track changes in their mindset, self-value, and a sense of control and hope over their lives and their accomplishment.

Women's economic empowerment as part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals has been prioritized by ICA as a strategic focus for many years, supporting women-serving social enterprises. The Women's Leadership Program works in variety of ways to drive this strategy for the advancement of women in India.

We are grateful to our funding partners for supporting this training.

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