

**Agents of Change ,  
marching ahead towards  
empowerment** —a monitoring  
report on the Self Help Groups Of  
Manipur , supported by Project G86



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The 4 day Manipur monitoring cum documentation visit, from 27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May, covered the G86 intervention in the following districts : East and West Imphal, Senapati and Ukhrul.

The visits were facilitated by Training Coordinator, RRTC-1 and State Support Person. The tools used were tape recorder, group discussion and activity and one-on-one interviews.

The other objective of the visit was also to establish linkage dialogues with the existing financial institutions in Guwahati . The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd May was fruitfully spent attending a series of meeting with institutions such as NEDFI( North Eastern Development Finance Corporation and Assam Grameen Bank) and NGOs such as Centre for Rural Development and RGVN (Rashtriya Grameen Vikas Nidhi) working in the area of micro credit and finance. They were very receptive to the idea of integration and building the capacity of the SHG under the various schemes they currently have. NEDFI, under their budget of Rs. 50 lacs, is interested to provide 2 months training to the SHG members who already possess traditional weaving skills either . They have requested UNODC to help them in identifying a designer possessing knowledge of looms and willing to travel to North East.

RGVN and NEDFI are willing to give loans to the supervisory NGOs and SHG members and also build their capacity on book keeping and SHG management.

### **Assessment and Recommendation on Output I and Output II**

Output II needs to be streamlined. There is lots of confusion regarding the respective roles and responsibilities. The Training Coordinator is identifying and training the Master Trainers and Peer Trainers. He also collects reports from the Peer Trainers. The Peer Trainers are not aware about the 20 multiply approach (Peer Volunteer, Community Volunteers and Community). They verbally report their activities to the attached NGOs or to the Training Coordinator. They feel they need guidance and training support on a periodic basis.

The SHGs under Output III are encouragingly progressing towards income generating activities and showing successful result. Out of the 9 SHGs, 5 from Imphal and 1 from Senapati can be showcased as best SHG models. This empowerment, they believe has purely come from the Project, which brought them together on a common platform and helped them in sharing their problems and seeking emotional support. The income generating activities are weaving and knitting, pickle making (Imphal), on farm activities (Senapati) and petty trade (Churachandpur).

However, the Peer Educators feel it is a challenging task to bring the women together, due to the huge stigma and discrimination that prevails in Manipur.

**The main findings about Output II, assessed through the interactions with Training Coordinator, NGOs and Peer Trainers are as mentioned below:**

- The Training Coordinator has been training the Peer Trainers without any training materials. He feels he needs more knowledge and information on primary information.
- The Peer trainers do not have any reporting format. They give verbal reports to the NGOs, with who they are attached with. Most of the time, the Training Coordinator collects it from them
- The Peer Trainers are not aware about reaching out and forming a cadre of Peer Volunteers and Community Volunteers
- They lack understanding, knowledge and information specially on primary prevention on drug use and HIV AIDS
- They need specific messages to share with the community members
- They need more training and IEC materials to support their advocacy meetings
- Some of the Peer Trainers from NSS and NYKs were found to be more motivated and willing to continue this process of social change even after the Project was over

**The main findings about Output III, assessed through the interactions with State Support Person, Peer Educators and all the 9 SHG groups**

- The SSP joined the project on December 2006. She finds reporting on both G86 and I49 very confusing
- The SSP didn't receive any formal training on primary prevention on Project G86. The Training Coordinator has been guiding her. The SSP also lacks knowledge about the management of SHG
- The Peer Educators felt that the amount being paid to them is very less since they have to go to very far places for client and home visits
- The SHG members emphasized their need for capacity building on book keeping, recording minutes, management of the group, preparation of business plans, marketing of their products and skill based trainings
- All the groups except in Churachandpur have been maintaining revolving fund and micro credit.
- The Senapati based SHG has a group savings account with SBI
- Most of their revolving fund is spent on medical aids of their group members, since they are not given any financial support from their family
- Two NGOs, Chain Group of Positive People (Imphal) and Rural Development and Agricultural Fund (Senapati), have given grants to their SHG groups
- The SHG members feel their status and acceptance in their family and community has improved to a great deal after becoming SHG members

## Profile ,activities and progress of G86 SHG

**Sinthalup SHG** formed in November 10, 2006, has 10 members. They have a nominated executive body, comprising of President, Secretary and Treasurer. The group meets once a month. Their group saving is Rs. 700 .The group is in talk with the Manipur Rural bank for opening up of a group savings account and availing a loan of Rs. 5000.

They plan to use this money for undertaking weaving based income generating activities. They requested for training on SHG management and book keeping. The Peer Educator took 5 months to form an mobilize this group, since the family members were not very receptive to the idea of the woman stepping out of their houses and forming groups.



**Sinthalup SHG members**

**Anoubha Asha** has in total 10 members formed by widows and spouses of IDUs. This group had received a loan amount of Rs. 2000 from some other SHG group. They have already repaid Rs. 1000 to the group. The money was utilized to undertake income generating activities such as weaving shawls and bed sheets. The skilled group members weaved round 70 shawls, and they have already managed to sell

30, for a price of Rs. 100 each. Out of the total amount of Rs. 3000, the group is left with a profit of Rs. 2,100 (Rs. 700 was given to the weaver and Rs.100 was spent on travel to the local market).



**Anoubha Asha members with their products**

The group is planning to spend the profit to help the members met up with their medical needs and expenses. This group requested capacity building on new designs and skills to draft business plans.

The Peer Educator, who is a daily wage earner, feels greatly empowered after joining the project. She feels becoming a Peer Educator has tremendously improved her status in the family and community.

**Chain Group of Positive People** is a male self help group with 10 members and they their monthly meetings at the G86 Drop-in-centre. The members are basically recovery users and IDUs .They use this platform to shared and discuss their problems regarding health, stigma and discrimination faced and about recovery. The Peer Educator, counsels the group on positive living .They also provide community services like free health camps targeted at members of PLHWA and providing voluntary labour to clean the community drains.

They feel this way they can spread the messages and also inform the community about drugs and HIV AIDS. So far, the group has a saving of Rs. 472 ( they have not maintained any ledger). The group is planning to take a loan of Rs. 26,000, for setting up a screen printing outlet .They have also liaised with a computer training institute, willing to provide the training for a period of 45 days .The institute has decided to waive the fee to Rs. 4,500.

**New Light for PLHWA**— was formed in 2006. The members are spouses of Drug users and recovery users. Presently, there are 11 members. The group under the able leadership of Peer Educator have started engaging themselves in income generating activities. They received a grant of Rs. 3000 form New Light PLWHA to dye shawls and bed sheets. Their total investment per shawl is Rs. 70, inclusive of the cloth and the dyeing materials. The have sold 34 pieces for Rs. 3,400. They have Rs. 2000 to 4 SHG members at an interest rate of Rs. 1 per month . The members are very keen to get trained on home made soaps and detergents, since it has a



**Products made by New Light for PLHWA**

## Gaihen SHG

This SHG has 13 members and was formed on. They are all widows of IDUs .The members are very happy that forming the group has given them confidence and determination to fight for their rights.They members are contributing Rs. 20 per month .This group specialises in making traditional beef and pork pickles , which are sold at Rs. 10 per packet. Out of an investment of Rs 400, they made a profit of Rs. 200 . The members are keen to invest it further . The attached NGO IWCD has given them internal training on basic book-keeping and ledger management. They are planning to apply for loans from micro finance institutions.

## Leishamba SHG

Leishamba has 10 members. The members have recently started weaving traditional Manipuri clothes, as an income generating activity. Out of the 5 garments made, they have managed to sell 2 for Rs. 250 each.

The members of this group are very high on aspiration. They are very happy to be members of the SHG. They eagerly wait for the LeishambaSHG conducting a meeting monthly meetings to take place.



## Senapati District

**Teijii SHG**-The women of this SHG have by far surpassed the others, in terms of group management and undertaking of income generating activity. The group has already initiated both on farm and off farm activities such as turmeric and ginger cultivation to rearing livestock. The group produced 200 kg turmeric, out of which 80 kg is being sold in the local market and they have saved the rest for the coming harvest.



They have opened an SHG account with SBI branch in Senapati. Presently, they have Rs. 58,000. They have also repaid the loan amount of Rs.10, 000 within a year to Rural Development Foundation NGO. They charge 5 % interest on loans taken by the SHG members. The SHG need capacity building in terms of book keeping.

## Churachandpur District

**Samaria SHG-** They have 20 members in their group. They are very thankful to the Peer Educator for bringing them tighter on a common platform and for receiving information on prevention, HIV/AIDS etc. The group charges Rs. 50 as membership fee. They had a corpus fund of Rs. 1000, out of which Rs. 500 was given as a charity to one of the SHG members. The members are planning to save more so that they can open up a petty shop.

This group is disorganized and also, they need to be broken into two groups. The Peer Educator is very motivated to continue with the work of spreading information and helping the vulnerable women.

**Naomi SHG-** This group has been formed by two Peer Educators. The members are a mixed group; some recovered and recovering users, sex workers and partners of drug users. This is a very mixed group. The members have very low level of self-motivation. They are new to the concept of SHG and its role. Some of the members have started a small enterprise of door-to-door selling of salts and soaps



**The Peer Educators of Naomi SHG**