

Establishing and Running of a Women Group in Junbesi

18. September - 26. September 2000

Anne-Marie Lomborg and Ang Kanchhi Lama did a survey on the women's conditions in Beni VDC. They visited 15 houses in ward no. 1, 2, 4 and 5 which gave an impression of the women's situation. It also stimulated the women to think about their situation and ways to change it.

Friday 22. September 2000

A workshop was arranged with participation of key figures from the whole Beni VDC. Among other needs of the society the women expressed a need of a Women Group.

Saturday 23. September 2000

A workshop for women were called in for at 10 a.m. and at midday 20 women had turned up.

Anne-Marie Lomborg was chairwoman of the workshop

Ang Kanchhi Lama and a young woman were interpreters

Anne-Marie Lomborg introduced the meeting by giving an overview of her impressions from the interviews she had performed, followed by her own reflections about what the women in this society would need to change.

The workshop did thereafter run in four stages:

1. Which problems do the women have in Junbesi:

- S most women can't read and write Nepali
- S almost no one speaks or understands English
- S many would like to be able to help their children with school knowledge
- S they have to little knowledge about cultivation and crops
- S they have a lack of knowledge about more healthy and varied cooking
- S they are very bound to their home by the children care
- S almost no one can sew or knit
- S the young women are working too much to be able to study
- S the health post is insufficient to give proper help with diseases
- S two women is complaining about suppression and lack of support from their husbands

2. What do the women of Junbesi wish:

- S possibility for adult woman education - specially in Nepali and English
- S more knowledge about cultivation of vegetables and cooking
- S to learn sewing, knitting and other handicrafts
- S to prevent diseases and work for improvement of the health post, specially for pregnancy

They were asked about a wish to take influence on their society by participating in existing committee's, but no one wanted that for the moment.

They were suggested a "basis group" which could work with family life, relations in couples and raising of children, but it seemed too abstract to them.

3. What could be done:

- S more talking with each other about problems and to exchange knowledge and experiences
- S if economic support would come from outside, some will be active in projects
- S all wanted to spend time and work on qualifying themselves
- S establish working groups

4. What shall be done here and now:

Four Working Groups were established:

- S Health Group (Chairwoman: Sani Lama Tamang)
- S Education Group (Chairwoman: Kanchhi Sherpa)
- S Knitting-Sewing Group (Chairwoman: Ang Phuti Lama)

- S Agriculture Group (Chairwoman: Dadi Lama)
- A Coordinating Group/Committee were established with Ang Kanchhi Lama as Chairwoman.
- S This committee shall initiate, support and coordinate the Working Groups
- S It shall set up meetings.
- S It shall exchange informations in between the groups and the chairmen
- S It shall exchange informations and referee for foreign contacts (Himalayan Project)

Monday 2. October 2000:

- Meeting in the Coordinating Committee:
 - There is 10 members in the Committee
 - Subscription-rate of the Women Group:
 - Members of the Committee pay 200 Rs
 - Other members pay 100 Rs
 - Knitting needles is bought and already in frequent use
 - A sewing-machine shall be bought

Saturday 14. October 2000:

- Meeting between Himalayan Project and Women Group:
 - HP: Gisela Franke, Merete Jensen and Kurt Lomborg
 - Women Group: Ang Kanchhi Lama, Ang Phuti Lama, Kandu Lama, Dadi Lama, Pama Lama a.m.
 - Interpreter: Ang Pasang Lama
- A manifesto shall be produced and it shall be registered in the district to formalize the group.
- It was discussed if the group should work under other committees or independent.
- Independence was decided
- The area of interest of the group is Beni VDC, Solu-Khumbu District.
- Contents and needs for each Working Group was discussed:

1. Health Group:

- S Education is the need
- S And after that we will give education for others
- S A well educated teacher from Kathmandu for the whole day for 2 weeks will cost 300 Rs/day
- S Stove, Chimney, Toilet, Family-planning is the most needed subjects now

2. Education Group:

- S To learn reading and writing Nepali is the most needed now - can start internally right now
- S To learn English is also necessary but need an external teacher (from the school)
 - Daily every morning for two hours - probably 2.500 Rs/month
- S Some would like to learn about keeping an account

3. Knitting, Sewing Group:

- S Knitting has already started and it is nice to have a talk at the same time
- S They want to start learning sewing as soon as possible
 - Already 1-2 private owned sewing machines in Junbesi but better to have it in group
 - Some rooms are already available, in Library, some members rooms
 - Some better rooms can be hired for 1.000 Rs/month
 - Sewing machines with foot pedal cost 6.000 Rs and hand machines 3.000 Rs
 - A tailor should be hired to educate the group in the beginning
- S Some want to start knitting carpets, no need for help about this activity
 - Later they want to learn about real weaving

4. Agriculture Group:

- S New methods and products in vegetables and fruit
- S About the old products they need education in cultivation and new methods

S They wanted to start looking on growing tea here locally

Sunday 15. October 2000:

Excursion for Pemba Gyelo's tea garden in Narshing with Gisela, Merete, Ang Kanchhi, Dadi, Ang Phuti, Pama, Kandu and Ang Pasang.

S Told by Pemba Gyelo's wife about:

S how, when and where to plant the tea bushes

S the bushes demand to soil and growing conditions

S cutting and trimming of the bushes

S plucking, cutting and drying of the tea leaves

S where to buy new plants in the spring - it is easiest in Jiri

S winter-covering

S They were allowed to pluck some leaves to take for home to prepare

Monday 16. October 2000:

Meeting in Library with, Gisela, Merete and many local women and some children.

S Ang Kanchhi brought her sewing machine in a slight disrepair which she couldn't manage
It was adjusted in common and did function and was tested

S The tea leaves from yesterday were chopped and put in plasticbags for two days of fermenting

S The most needed projects were discussed:

S Language training in Nepali for 3 months followed by English for 3 months was decided

S It was decided to buy two hand sewing machines and to find a tailor for education

Hand machines are easier to transport

Foot pedal machines are rusting easily in the humid houses

Bhaga Bati offered her help in teaching the women how to sew

S It was decided to buy 50 tea plants in the spring, and who to buy it, and who to grow it

Thursday 17. October 2000:

Meeting in Library with Gisela, Merete, Ang Kanchhi, Ang Phuti, Thtee Lama, Pasi, Kandu Minm Doma, Pama, Laham and Bhaga Bati, where a contract were set up about the future plans:

The Himalayan Project has agreed with Upper Solu Woman Project:

1. Pasi Lama will find a teacher teaching Nepali and English

1. 3 months Nepali lessons: 1.000 Rs/month 3.000 Rs

2. 3 months English lessons: 1.500 Rs/month 4.500 Rs

Each woman will pay 15 Rs per month for joining the lessons

Has explained Kanchhi that that is their money they can be used for things they need or saved for something else they think they need

2. About the sewing machines. They decided that we could buy them in Kathmandu and

Mingmar Kazi Sherpa will bring it here. We do give 2 machines: 6.000 Rs

Bhaga Bati will teach them 1 hours per day for two months and we donate: 1.000 Rs

3. We do pay for 50 plants 10 Rs a piece: 500 Rs

The agriculture group buy the plants in marts

4. The women of "Upper Solu Women Project" will find out if there is a doctor or a nurse who can teach them about health, what it will cost, when it can be and for how long time

Total: 15.000 Rs

Today the 17th of October year 2000 we do give the Upper Solu Women Project: 9.000 Rs

signed by : Gisela Franke and Merete Stentoft Jensen

We have today the 17th of October year 2000 received from the Himalayan Project: 9.000 Rs
The money has to be used to the above mentioned projects.

signed by: Ang Phuti Lama, Thtee Lama, Ang Kanchhi Lama, Pasi Sherpa, Kandu Lama,
Minm Doma Lama, Pama Lama, Laham Lama and Bhaga Bati

Monday 20. November 2000:

In a telefax from Ang Kanchhi Lama she tell that she is almost ready for registering the Women Group. She ask about we like the name of the group being: "Himalayan Project Upper Solu Women Project"

We reply that Himalayan Project should not be mentioned as the group should be free to cooperate with other donors. And we also find Upper Solu to be too broad, as it is only Beni VDC, which is the area of interest. We suggest them names like: Beni Women Group - Beni Women Project - Women Activity Group - Women Activity Group, Beni - Beni Women Activity Group - Beni Sisters Group - Beni Active Sisters Group - Shining Women Group - or something like that.

Saturday 20. October 2001:

At a meeting with Anne-Marie Lomborg the Committee of Beni Women Group gave a report about the activities in the year which has passed. The activity of the group had shown disappointing, as too few took part in the activities which were launched. The chairman expressed that she wanted to resign after next election, as she feel she have done a lot of work, but only a few women had taken up the challenge. The reason seems to be, that women in Junbesi are too busy in running their hotels and other works, and also that most of them seems to have enough. But anyway the decided programs had been launched and a report from each group was given.

Seewing Group had received two sewing machines from HP. One was working fine and one didn't work, but no-one had taken action to settle the problem. Only two women had taken part of the sewing education by Sushila. They did sew the trousers and skirts of the uniforms for Chhumbu Primary School. But as they had difficulties in sewing the tetungs (shirts), they did hire a tibetan tailor to do the work. Unfortunately he did a very bad work, so there was a lot of complains from the parents of Chhumbu. Some other inappropriate conditions from the parents side also was the reason. This has been looked for to avoid by a new contract with Chhumbu School Committee (the contract can be found under the files of Chhumbu Primary School).

The first activity of the group was knitting but this has stopped during the year.

Agriculture Group did buy around 60 tea-bush-seedlings in Bhandar in the spring and distributed them among 12 members, who now are taking care of each 4-6 bushes in their gardens. One woman herself did buy 20 extra bushes. The group also are doing experiments with strawberry. As a new initiative there have been talks in the group about building greenhouses like the ones which is functioning very well in Lukhla.

Educational Group had launched one class in English Language Training. Three women and two pupils from Junbesi School started the class but before one month they had to stop it because of irregular attendance. The Nepali Language Training never launched because of too little interest. This was really disappointing as 10-15 had promised to want taking part.

Health Group had not been active at all.

As the women group had not registered yet they were proposed to work under the umbrella of Upper Solu Development Committee. But the group decided to register in near future under the name of **Beni Women Group** and to work independently. They wanted to cooperate with USDC but no man should be above the organization to influence the work of the women.

Account was held by the chairman. She did complaint that only 6 out of 11 members of the Women Group had paid the membershipfee, and only 2 out of 5 had paid for their language training.

Account of Beni Women Group for 2000-2001

(in the period the currency rates have been 1 US\$ = 7,8-8,5 Dkr = 70-75 NPR)

<u>date</u>	<u>subject</u>	<u>income</u>	<u>expenses</u>
29.09.2000	A committee meeting decided to collect 200 Rs yearly each head (membership fee) (6 members have paid - 5 members have not as there is no work to do)	1.200	
06.11.2000	Gisela Franke and Merete gave for projects	9.000	
26.11.2000	Register Books - 2 pc		120
13.09.2000	Tools and strings for knitting		590
13.09.2000	Expenses for going to marked		50
15.09.2000	Committee meeting expenses		165
06.11.2000	Committee meeting expenses		144
13.06.2001	One month english teacher - Yadap		1.500
	Two students paid 50 Rs for english lessons	100	
25.06.2001	Tea for meeting		100
25.07.2001	Sewing teacher (Sushila) should have 1.000 Rs but she did not accept so 2.000 Rs should be given		2.000
	Two students paid 100 Rs for sewing lessons	200	
	Money given for teaplantation		500
15.09.2001	Tibetan sewer took in cash for sewing tetungs		1.500
	Accomodation for tibetan sewer		1.500
	Porter charge for delivering the uniforms in Chhumbu		150
31.10.2001	Income from Chhumbu Primary School for uniforms	6.000	
	Sewing charge for Ang Kanchi		800
	Sewing charge for Lhakpa Lama		800
31.10.2001	Closing Account	16.500	9.919
	Balance	6.581	

Budget

Registration of the organization	100
Income school uniforms	9.000
Expenses for sewing uniforms (education etc)	4.000
Expenses Chhumbu for first visit and delivery	700
Salary for women sewing	4.500
Collection of donations	3.000
Total	12.000 . . . 9.300

October 2002

Dear Papa Kurt,

Namaste and remembrance!

We all are fine here and hope that you are fine, too. There is a report regarding the registration of Beni Women group:

The Beni Women group is not registered because the Maoist rebels have destroyed the head district office. However, we are preparing the rules and regulations of the group.

We also changed the previous women committee in April 2002. According to Nyamgel, the new committee is full of literate youths; hence, it is easier working with them. We will try our best for this contract. We will keep you updated about the progress made in the future via e-mail.

Sincerely yours,

Kanchhi Sherpa

Report on JWG by Namgyal Jangbu October 2002:

01. All the document needed for the registration of JWG has been prepared by Secretary Ang Kanchi Junbeshi. But the work of registering the association could be done because all the member of the JWG did not have citizenship and also prior to our registration, the District office has been

completely destroyed by Maoist.

02. All the member of the JWG were busy for their own personal work, which made the work of registration unsuccessful.
03. The new committee has been formed and all the formality for registering the association has been made ready. We had to formed new committee as the previous member been found inactive.
04. STITCHING & KNITTING: The reason for not being able to stitch Chhumbu primary school dress is that the JWG were busy and also did not have proper training. Many complain has been received for the work done by the JWG. We are unable to do the work because of the shortage of needle. But we have already made arrangement for it. Though the JWG is incapable of doing the work of Chumbu Primary school, they have been doing the work like stitching pillow cover, bed sheet, curtain etc. As per Ang Kanchi the group member are more interested in knitting than stitching. To raised the fund for JWG the members are showing culture program, playing Daushi and simple clothes stitching.

October 2002: Questions asked by Kurt and replied by Ang Kanchhi

Has Beni women group fulfilled the contract?

The Beni women group did not fulfill the entire contract due to the unstable political situation

What has been done to the spoiled machine?

We will try to repair it as soon as possible.

Has any sewing been done since autumn, 2001?

Since all the tailors were busy, the sewing was not possible.

How many persons are there in the sewing group?

Total of eight women. Among them, Tsering Yangzum and Ang Chamu are more active.

Is there any new account for sewing group since autumn, 2001?

No. There is no new account for the group.

How active and interested is the sewing group?

The Beni Women group is actively interested in sewing.

Account of Beni Women Group for 2001-2002

(in the period the currency rates have been 1 US\$ = 7,3-7,8 Dkr = 74-77 NPR)

date	subject	income	expenses
2058.07.21	Balance left after 2057-2058 expenses	6.581	
2058.08.01	Raisen by playing Deushi	3.450	
2058.08.03	Raised through the Sherpa Cultural Program at Sagarmatha Lodge	3.100	
	For tea-coffee incurring during the cultural program at Sagarmatha Lodge		810
2058.08.04	Raised through the Sherpa Cultural program at the Apple Garden	1.387	
	For tea-coffee incurred during meetings and seminar		200
2058.08.05	Raised through the Sherpa Cultural program at Junbesi Guesthouse	1.200	
	For tea-coffee for the cultural troop		100
2058.08.06	For 2 pairs of kerosene batteries	60	
	For tea-coffee and khatak incurred during the cultural show at Junbesi Guesthouse		360
2058.03.11	Travel expenses also included ticket and photocopies incurred during the procedure Of registering Beni Women Group. However the registration is still pending		288
2058.12.26	For tea-coffee for the cultural group while practising for the cultural program Being organized by the Himalayan Yeti Club, Dumzi		500
2058.01.23	For tea-coffee incurred during the committee meeting		100
2058.06.06	For tea-coffee incurred during the committee meeting regarding computer and better sewing facilities		200
31.10.2002	Closing Account	15.718	2.768
	Balance	12.950	