

Evaluation on the exposure visit of HDO

Six staff from Human Development Organisation, a Sri Lanka based non-governmental organisation, visited AREDS between 20.02.2009 and 25.02.2009 for an exposure.

Context of exposure:

Human Development Organisation is a non-governmental organisation that has been working with marginalized and underprivileged communities in the plantation and rural areas of Sri Lanka for the past 13 years. In order to make its staff work with multi pronged strategies and to enhance their capacity, HDO has sent a team of its staff to Association of Rural Education and Development Service (AREDS) in Tamil Nadu on an exposure visit.

Vision:

To establish socially just, equitable and peaceful civil society through sustainable development programmes.

Mission:

HDO seeks to fulfill its mission through people centred, participatory, sustainable development with the concern of:

Environment

Human Rights

Gender Balance for a social change.

Why AREDS:

HDO, being aware of AREDS' successful but challenging journey 'towards one humanity' all through thirty long years, decided to replicate the way AREDS has been following in bringing in a social change. Therefore, in order to facilitate its staff to learn the techniques of organizing people, forming movements and capacitating them to function independently, HDO sent its staff on a six-day exposure visit to AREDS.

The expectations of the participants:

- To learn the techniques and methodologies to be followed for enriching oneself so that one can function effectively.
- To relate the objectives, interventions and the strength of AREDS, AREDS' linkage with the communities, government agencies, local bodies, interrelation among the staff and the linkage between the grassroots people and the field staff.
- To become aware of the self-sustaining execution of activities planned, in order to practice it in the future.
- To become aware of the evolution of SWATE groups and their independent functioning for sustainability.
- To distinguish between AREDS and HDO and to mend the ways of functioning of HDO for result oriented execution of works.

The ways and means – theories and exposure - followed to make the exposure fruitful:

Theoretical aspects:

- Screening of documentary film: It helped the participants know of the philosophy of AREDS. The entire film was 'looking backward to progress forward' process.
- The vision, mission and objectives of AREDS were explained.
- HDO is also intervening on non-formal education. However, AREDS' way of intervention is different. The methodologies and strategies followed by AREDS in spreading out NFE were clearly portrayed in the documentary film.
- HDO implements savings and credit programmes only as an income generation venture. But, SWATE, besides savings and credit programmes, fight against violence on women, sexual abuse and for social change and women empowerment. The need for integrating movements and programmes were clearly explained.
- Need for gender equality was explained in a lucid manner.
- The need for viewing development as a process and not as a project works was explained.
- The importance of being a movement oriented NGO than a charity oriented NGO was understood.
- It is explained - Instead of believing in fate, people should believe in fellow humans and collective action for bringing in a social change.



Exposure aspects:

- The team members visited SWATE and became aware of the ongoing micro credit programmes, SWATE-led movements and its linkage with government.
- Cultural programme performed by the AREDS Cultural Team was witnessed.
- The participants participated in the Children' Festival organised by TTSM.
- The members interacted with the activists of K arur District All Labourers' Union (KADALU) and Dalit Rights Awareness Liberation Movement (DRALM) and became aware of the evolution and functioning of the movements.
- The team visited AREDS Play Way School
- The team visited Self-Help Groups and witnessed the income generation activities.
- The participants visited the houses built under AREDS Dalit Housing Scheme.
- The team visited SWATE Industrial School

Learning:

- Importance of courage, confidence and perseverance were realised. SWATE members showed much courage and perseverance when they were arrested and prosecuted for



fighting against illegal sand mining and for preserving the livelihood resources.

- Importance of identification of self-interest with the organisational interest was realised. SWATE members introduce/identify themselves not with the name of their native village but with the name of SWATE.
- The need for fighting spirit against atrocities and exploitation understood through the interaction with SWATE members. They were determined, dedicated and ardent as they stood against atrocities and exploitation of natural resources and their fighting spirit was made apparent during interaction.
- The need for objective based struggle was understood. Though there were sector-wise people's movements, all of them have a common objective. There is no compartmentalization of movements but they work in an integrated way. If there is problem for dalit member, activists belong to different movements join their hands together to address the problem.
- The importance of unity is realised.
- Cultural programmes learnt
- The need for monitoring and following-up our activities realised. The staff of AREDS closely monitor the savings and credit programmes and see to it that the bookkeeping in each SHG is perfect. Further, periodical meetings of field staff and programme coordinators are regularly conducted in each week. Review on the works done and action plan for the future are done in the meetings. More so, accounting system also monitors and links the action planned and the activities executed.
- The importance of visiting people on door-to-door visit is understood. Calling on people will cement the relationship between the organisation and the community and, ensure community participation in the developmental process.
- It was understood that realizing the objective of the organisation is more important than earning credit to the name of the organisation.

