

The Hushe Valley Women Take Charge of its Development Model

- Despite the heavy workload and responsibilities of the women, they also want to join the bandwagon of development
- They have created a team of 31 women from different towns of the valley
- Maternal and child health, a training centre for women, education and transport have been identified as major needs

Machulo, Baltistan, Pakistan – 13 May 2011

For the first time in the Hushe Valley, a team of thirty-one women has been created in order to promote a model of sustainable human development, which from the beginning includes the perspectives and needs of women.

The team was formed following a previous process of social mobilization of communities in the valley by the local organization FIFBM (Felix Baltistan Machulo İnurrategi Foundation.) This resulted in the first workshop on training plans and accompanying associations and popular economy for the women of the Hushe Valley (WCAP) between 10th and 11th of May

The workshop took place in the town of Machulo, where the women shared their views and visions of how they would like to improve their quality of life and that of their families; to build a more just future for one and all.

After a long debate involving all the women of the Valley, they agreed that the highest priority arising from this workshop was the need to improve health services, particularly during periods of pregnancy, where there has been complete neglect in the past. In the last month this neglect has caused the death of two women.

The women decided that their second priority is the requirement for a dedicated building which will allow them to enhance their skills and to grow both professionally and personally, such as a Vocational Centre for Women. A Vocational Centre would offer the possibility of different types of training and open a new range of possibilities for the women. It would allow them to share their problems and would be a step towards achieving autonomy in the future.

The women identified the third problem preventing further advancement as the lack of education, since a high percentage of the women are illiterate. This was followed, amongst others, by the need for better transport (which is also vital for hospital access), the lack of inclusion of women in the new model of agriculture and the difficult access to drinking water in some communities.

The workshop was held in the Balti language, (because most of the women cannot speak Urdu), and was led by Kaniz Fatima, responsible for Gender, and by Mehdi Razia and Akhona Ali Shah who are responsible for Social Mobilization within the FIFBM (Felix Baltistan-Machulo İnurrategi Foundation.) The Coordinators were Tayyab from CHIP Training and Consulting and Sarai Martin and William Maceiras, both from the Felix Baltistan Foundation.

The workshop was developed through the participation of groups for different subjects and in different villages, as well as showing other experiences and best practices implemented in various cities of Pakistan. This allowed the workshop to see that another future is possible within their community.

The workshop came from a previous process which was developed over the last month in the Valley, through various meetings with the women in villages such as: Kanday (attended by 36 women, 4 children); Khane (with 34 women and 6 children); Marzegone (with 68 women and 8 children); Balegone (with 15 women and 4 children); Thalís (with 31 women and 4 children). In Saling there were two meetings with women in different locations, because of the extended length of the village (with a total of 34 women and 7 children) and in Machulo, which also held two meetings with a total participation of 35 women and their children.

During these meetings for women in the Valley, one can note that despite the heavy workload and responsibilities in the community and within their families, they also want to join the bandwagon of development and take part in all that it has to offer. In addition, some communities have had several joint meetings where the women have openly discussed their problems before the men, without any shame.

The workshop is part of the WCAP, and is part of the second phase of local building and organizational development (PROFODO). It focused on the promotion of community based associations through training and training activities, advocacy and social mobilization. This is done with the aim of strengthening community structures and to promote organizational development, based on incentives - in the following phases of the program - generating micro-projects both as popular and cooperatives and as self-employment.

For more information: Felix Baltistan Fundazioa
Xixili Fernández - komunika@felix-baltistan.org
94 402 89 15 / 673 96 98 77
www.felix-baltistan.org