

Policy Advocacy Women's Workshop

At the end of February 2012, PENHA in partnership with PEAKS held a Policy Advocacy workshop with four of the local Women's Leagues as part of the PENHA funded regional Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (WEEP). The groups were from Kassala City, Kassala Rural, Griba and Halfa.

The main purpose of the workshop and exhibition was both to develop the women's handicraft skills using local material, and to demonstrate what they had done. The material used included palm leaves and techniques such as sewing, suk suk (?what is this??) and other methods.

The specific aims were:

1. To exchange experiences and techniques between women from the different leagues and so enthuse them and help to develop their handicraft skills. This was based on the training the women had received from the WEEP.
2. To give the women the opportunity to develop new and alternative handicraft items aimed at new customers.
3. To build the capacity of these groups in order to raise funds, particularly for micro-finance.
4. To find and develop openings in the market for their products.
5. To support schemes developed under WEEP.

An added benefit was the continued deepening of the relationship between PEAKS, PENHA and other organisations working among pastoralists.

A total of twelve women from the Women's Leagues attended the workshop.

Organising the workshop

At the end of January 2012, a team of three PEAKS members (Mohammed Ali Mustafa, Fatitya and Umdoren) visited the Women's Leagues and explained the purpose of the workshop. They then provided both material and money to the groups with instructions that they produce good items which would be attractive and of interest to visitors and potential purchasers. These were to be produced by the middle of February. The display was finally made from 27th. to 29th. February in the PEAKS office. An invitation was sent widely – to government bodies, community based organisations, non-governmental organisations and to professional and other prominent individuals.

The following organisations were represent by visitors who came to the display and workshop (along with the twelve women):

1. Ministry of Social Affairs
2. Humanitarian Affairs Commission

3. Kassala Community College
4. Ministry of Animal Resources
5. LIBNA (a new organisation – started in relation to PEAKS)
6. United Nations Development Programme
7. Japan International Cooperation Agency
8. Plan Sudan
9. EPDO
10. RERA

On the morning of 27th. February, the display and workshop was opened by the General Manager of the Ministry of Social Affairs in front of a large crowd of people. The event was covered by Kassala TV and Radio. A presentation was made describing the work done by PEAKS together with PENHA to combat the poverty of poor Sudanese through the action of the women themselves. A vital gate had been knocked on. The visitors, including some professional women, viewed the exhibition of handicrafts and were able to ask the women about how they were made and the use of local materials. The items on view were both traditional and new. They came from a variety of places. Some were from well trained groups such as the Women's Leagues from Awad or Sayedna Abdu Rahim which brought fine items with them. Some (for example, from Sharify and Abu Alaga) were exhibiting for the first time. Training also took place, particularly for women from Abu Alaga and Ad Fadul.

The handicrafts on display were also available for sale – and the most popular were items made from palm leaves (Saaf).

Practical Results

1. The women learnt from each other.
2. The different Women's Leagues got ideas for new handicrafts that they could make.
3. The Women's Leagues also began to build relations with other community groups, such as LIBNA and GO.
4. Following on this, women were able to contribute to the Kassala fair in February following on from the workshop and then in the Women's World Day in Khartoum the capital of Sudan .
5. PEAKS and PENHA began to build new relationships with organisations such as FAO, Practical Action, GOs, etc.
6. *Not clear what this is about.*

Lessons Learnt The view of the Chair of PEAKS

The value chain analysis and the Guide Book and Manual are the most important items to be followed by the women as they tried to do in the display.

The PEAKS office needs to be activated by making funding (?) proposals and by joining with LIBNA and other organisations working in the same field.

Report by Mustafa Fayd, edited by Kees Maxey

Notes

The original was in English but was difficult to understand. Where I am not sure are as follows:

End para 1: The original said: "...among 4 localities (Kassala – Rural – Griba – Halfa)." Is what I have put OK

Para 2 "suk suk" – do you know what that is?

Various places: I do not know (and cannot find via Google) what the following abbreviations mean:

LIBNA (probably the most important as it comes up more than once – a potential partner)

EPDO

RERA

GO

Last word before "Practical Results" heading. What does "saaf" means?

Practical Results – item 6 – I spent some time trying to understand what he meant – can you interpret the English?

Under Lessons Learnt – have I understood the first paragraph do you think?