

SEWA Youth Connect

SEWA Movement:

The Self-Employed Women's Association was established in Gujarat in 1972 as a trade union of informal female workers by Smt Ela Bhatt. SEWA was an original innovator, drawing ideas from their members and creating new projects based on their needs. This model became a role model and gained recognition all across the world. In 1977 Ela Bhatt won the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award and SEWA spread quickly to other states India. Thus in 1984, **SEWA Bharat** was established as a national federation to highlight issues at the national level, support existing SEWAs and help new SEWAs become sustainable. Today SEWA Bharat works in 9 states with over 17 lakh members.

General Problem Statement

Young girls from poor backgrounds have many dreams - often unheard and unrealized. At a very young age they are made to succumb to the expectations of the society and take on the roles that they will perform for the rest of their adult lives. These girls have a lot of potential but no opportunity. They need the time, space and guidance to express themselves, build their confidence, enhance their personality, and learn about the world, allowing them to developing their self reliance and self awareness.

SEWA Youth Development

SEWA has been working in Delhi since 1999 with women workers of the informal economy. During community meetings our members continuously voiced their concern about their daughters. They asked SEWA to take up work with the younger generation, to give them skills and training to prepare them for gainful employment and thus give them a better life than their mothers. In order to address this need, SEWA runs vocational courses in 3 centers in slum areas around Delhi and additionally started a Polytechnic in 2011 for advance vocational training. Since then our Youth Development program has expanded to include a holistic approach to skill development through *Polytechnic*, including programs like Youth Explores - which brings well-respected professionals to talk to students about their career path, *Youth Club* – a place for young women to hone their skills and develop their personalities through fun and engaging activities, *Youth Festival* – a forum for underprivileged girls from multiple NGOs in Delhi and other states to interact with each other and important officials and guests and showcase their skills to the world, and most recently **SEWA Youth Connect, which provides the opportunity for the girls to enhance their confidence, knowledge level and personality enabling them to face today's competitive professional world.**

SEWA Youth Connect Goal

Develop and empower girl youth and prepare them to engage in the mainstream job market and economy so they can break the cycle of poverty.

Youth Connect Activities

SEWA Youth Connect engages committed women studying in various universities in Delhi to mentor our SEWA Youth, aged between **15 to 25 years**. Girl empowerment programs provide a unique opportunity to shape the future and the world. Girl-centered programs are widely recognized as high impact. Through our program, we will work directly with the younger

generation of marginalized women to break the cycle of poverty, while simultaneously tackling the systemic problem of class, caste and religious prejudice by building personal relationship between the participants. With the active support and attention from the university students, the mentees will begin to see their dreams as a reality and develop their social capital to work towards their goals. Meanwhile, mentors will learn leadership skills, increase their understanding of a different way of life and understand the value of volunteering.

SEWA Youth Connect facilitates the relationship between 25 mentors and 25 mentees over the course of a year. Each mentee meets her mentor twice a month for a few hours at a mutually convenient location decided before hand. Mentors additionally keep in touch with their mentors on the phone every week. During the meetings the pair discusses a variety of topics focused on knowledge sharing in order to increase the capacity of the mentee as well as create mutual understanding. They will engage in additional activities to increase the capacity of both the mentors and mentees and increase their interaction with the world around them.

The mentor-mentee pair will engage in the following activities with the dual objectives of developing the mentee into an independent, self-reliant and job ready woman, and bridging the social divide of the “two Delhis” to create a relationship of mutual awareness and respect:

1. *Knowledge sharing*: This is the primary objective of the program, crucial to fulfilling both goals of creating mutual understanding and broadening the horizons of the mentee. Through different forms of teaching and learning on the part of both the mentee and the mentor, the worlds of the women will open up to each other, showing the mentor a way of life that she did not understand previously and giving the mentee the knowledge and exposure to engage with the mainstream job market.
 - a. *Social*: Mentors and mentees are encouraged to tell each other about their respective lives, leading to an understanding about how both of them live and the kind of problems that they face. They look for similarities and difference and generally discuss things in order to deepen their relationship. The mentor will also support her mentee through social problems as they arise, giving advice and support. Mentors and mentees will also visit each other’s homes.
 - b. *Educational*: Mentors will support their mentees in the pursuit of studies or other educational interests. These include English practice, creating timetables for studying, sharing sociology notes, doing research, and generally providing resources to help the mentee focus her efforts towards her goals. The key to this type of knowledge sharing is to support the mentee to be able to pursue her dreams in a self-reliant and therefore sustainable way. The mentors support, they do not tutor or provide coaching.
 - c. *Global*: Despite living in Delhi, the youth growing up in slums lead an incredibly insular life, without much knowledge or awareness of the world around them. Through discussion, supported by articles, videos and exposure visits, the mentor will open the mentee’s mind to the larger world. One particular focus is safety concerns and the state of women in India. By discussing this topic, the women can find common ground, brainstorm solutions and learn more about gender justice and what can be done to further the cause.

2. *Personality Development* – Through their interaction, the mentees will develop into more worldly, aware and exposed women. They will not be vulnerable to the exploitation

and manipulation that their mothers are. These youth are very rarely asked what they think and believe. They are not engaged as individuals who matter and whose opinions and interests matter. By engaging the mentees on an emotional and intellectual level, while still maintaining an atmosphere of fun and friendship, mentors will facilitate the development of confidence, independence and self-reliance.

3. *Health and Nutrition* – Poor people are often plagued with health problems. Through learning and discussion the mentors will guide the mentees towards appropriate nutrition and health choices, thus informing them about the necessity of regular check-ups and a balanced diet. These discussions will also serve as good reinforcement for the mentors as fast food and processed food becomes an increasing reality in their everyday lives and diets.
4. *Skill Building* - In collaboration with US Embassy, the mentors will receive training to improve English speaking in their mentors. The mentors have to devote time for these trainings once/twice a month depending on the curriculum to be developed after selection of the mentees based on their needs. Using materials catered by SEWA, they will focus on improving spoken and written English with a special focus on the specific field that the mentee is planning to go into. Mentors will work on basic skills, including using the Internet to look for jobs, establishing an email account and sending emails, building a CV and writing a cover letter.
5. *Goal setting and job readiness* – The mentors will engage mentees about their individual future plans and dreams. They will provide support and assistance to the mentees so they can successfully enter into the mainstream job market. Access to these types of jobs is often out of reach for poor and marginalized people. Mentors will help mentees find lanes in and actively prepare them through behavior and etiquette correction for interviews and the professional world. *All the activities listed will contribute the youth's ability to bridge the gap, especially prevalent in India, and overcome adversity and prejudice in order to join the mainstream economy and pull themselves and their families into a higher socio-economic status.*

Overall Impact

Through SEWA Youth Connect we will impact the lives of both the mentee and the mentor.

The mentors will:

- Learn about a different section of society- class/caste/religion that is different from their own by building a meaningful relationship with her mentee.
- Be an advocate for the economical and socially disadvantaged because of the understanding that they achieve, creating bridges that are imperative in Delhi and India as a whole.
- Enhance their leadership skills.
- Learn the importance of engaged volunteerism and mentoring, and being a spokesperson and role model to their peers and universities.
- Gain a life-long relationship with a young woman from a very different background.
- Learn a different aspect of life and grow as an individual.

The mentees will:

- Receive space, scope and guidance to build their knowledge, confidence and personality

- Get exposure to the lives of women from a different background and facilitate a two way learning
- Receive one on one help and advice to help them build the specific skills they need and work towards fulfilling their professional goals
- Build a targeted realistic plan for achieving their professional goals
- Become women who are empowered to challenge the gender norms in their communities.
- Become advocates and role models, paving the way for other aspiring youth in their community
- Bridge the gap through skill and capacity building that gives them the advantages of someone who has grown up with more privilege
- Gain a life-long relationship with a woman that will continue to serve as a guide and resource in the years to come.
- Become women who are prepared to face the larger society outside of their insular home and community lives.

Few words from our mentors and mentees-

“Today I am a much more responsible person. My mom is amazed at the change that has been brought about in me by this programme.”- Prerna, Mentor 2014-15

“Many a times we want to do something for a cause. This programme provides us that to actually have an impact on someone’s life”. –Kriti, Mentor 2014-15

“Through this programme I realised it is not only about me, myself but I need to also keep myself in other’s place. I developed patience and have understood life better”.- Anureet, Mentor 2013-14.

“Today I know I am not alone and I have someone to look up to.”-Sarita, Mentee 2013-14.

“I am much more confident today and have gained experiences I would not have found anywhere”.-Jyoti, mentee 2013-14

“I got through M.A Political Science, Delhi University. Today I am doing post graduation through correspondence along with a job. My mentor guided me a lot on how to prepare for the entrance examination”.- Pooja, mentee 2013-14

Application

The SEWA youth are girls born into less privileged families and communities who lack exposure and guidance in life. They are often bound by the traditions and customs of the family. They are young, talented girls who despite their family background dream to do well in life and look for opportunities to move forward. We aspire to guide them in their endeavor towards a promising future and that guide could be YOU!

This programme is for every student who wants to devote some time to help somebody in need and also develop her skills and knowledge but often don't get a platform or enough time. Our programme's flexible approach makes it well manageable for students to offer their voluntary service without disturbing their studies.

Highlights-

1. The fellowship starts from **Feb 2015** for six months till Aug 2015 or 12 months till Jan 2016.
2. The mentors need to devote 8 hrs a month. They can meet weekly or thrice a month at a place as per the choice and convenience of both mentors and mentees. Most of the times Sundays are suitable for the mentees. Semester examination break is given as per University time table.
3. One meeting will deal with English language learning specifically.
4. The mentors should be open to going to the community where the mentees stay in case she is not comfortable and confident enough to travel alone initially. But mentor has to inculcate the habit of travelling.
5. It is need specific programme. So as a mentor you need to figure out what way you can guide your mentee. Be open to challenges and innovations!

SEWA Youth Connect engaged 14 mentors and mentees this year Sept 2014-Aug 2015. We want committed female students from Delhi University to be a part of the change SEWA has been working towards.

Want to change the life of someone lesser privileged than you? Want to contribute in a small way towards someone's life? Come join us!

For more information please visit our website:
www.sewabharat.org

Watch our video on YouTube:

SEWA Youth Connect-connecting two worlds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjLEqY8TVZk>

To apply please send your CV and Letter of Intent to tanvee@sewabharat.org and sewa.youth.connect@gmail.com

Contact: 8377025235
