



# How to be efficient Community Mobiliser: The Basics of Community Based Organizing



Part  
**1**



## How to be efficient Community Mobiliser: The Basics of Community Based Organizing

### Ramilaben

When I was given the responsibility of forming 1,25,000 members in my association, I was very tensed as this was a very big target. However, as I was given such a big responsibility, I accepted the challenge and started working towards achieving this.

Obviously, I could achieve this only with the help of my team. But when I gave this target to my team members, they immediately started arguing with me that this was an unachievable target. As I had acquired training from SMS on How to be a Smart Community Mobiliser, I had learnt the topics such as how to do effective planning, team work, delegation, time management etc.

I quietly listened to all of my team members and heard their concerns. We took each concern one by one and started delegating tasks properly among the team members. With the discussion and detailed planning, slowly all of us had divided the tasks amongst us and each felt that this was not at all difficult. Thus we shared the burden and with close monitoring, each of us easily managed to achieve our targets. I am proud to support 1,25,000 members of my district and this could only happen because I had been trained by the SEWA Manager Ni School.

**Ramilaben, Anand**



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### Foreword

Community Based Organizations (CBO) play an important and relevant role in providing services at the local level. Community based organizations are self help groups, youth associations, trade associations, farmer forums, cooperatives etc. They facilitate access to available services and inputs for development of members in the societies; CBOs provide structure & support through which people can influence the direction and implementation of development activities working in variety of different fields, such as health, education.

This training manual will assist in programme implementation and in capacity-building of communities. It will enable communities to identify and prioritize their needs and will help members to develop more effective interaction and coordination by facilitating effective implementation of various development activities relying on the use of local resources to provide solutions to local problems and to ensure sustainability.

We, at SEWA, have been providing the trainings on “The Basics of Community Based Organizing” and have developed our members and organizers from the rural and urban areas into “Community Mobilisers”. As stated by Ramilaben from Anand “I had undergone a training of Community Based Organization training organized by SEWA Manager Ni School in which I learned about delegation, time management & work management tools. When I took up the task of forming 1, 25, 000 members in my association, I used all the learnt tools and was able to achieve targets on time & that has enabled me to strengthen my association.

It is our goal now that you use this module and develop as Community Mobiliser and also become a master trainer to create thousands and thousands of Community Mobilisers.

Hence, SEWA Manager Ni School (SMS) presents this highly simple, user friendly, interactive Training Module on “How to be efficient Community Mobiliser: The Basics of Community Based Organizing”.

This training module has been developed by SMS with the help of team of experts in the field, skilled master trainers of SMS, and of course incorporates the rich experience of our members.

We are thankful to the World Bank Institution, who has provided us with continuous guidance and the financial support to finalize this module.

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**Reema Nanavaty**  
**Director, Rural & Economic Development, SEWA**





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### SEWA Manager Ni School

SEWA's approach has always been need based and demand driven. The birth of SEWA Manager Ni School was the result of the experience of SEWA members over the course of more than three decades. The need for capacity building was initially realized in the context of the goals of perspective building and organizing. As SEWA members began new activities (economic or supportive), technical trainings became necessary.

Founded in 2005, SEWA Manager's School (SEWA Manager Ni School) is a branch of SEWA that serves as a capacity building institution, facilitating economic self-sustainability by developing a cadre of grassroots managers. In this era of globalization, the mainstream market has grown larger and more competitive. Therefore, in order to be successful and keep up with the global markets, rural people must learn to organize, streamline their processes, and gain management-related insight so that they can compete using their own products and services.

Based in Ahmedabad, SEWA Manager Ni School has partnered with various other organizations ranging from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad to the World Bank Institute to help rural people do just that. By training individual members to become managers and leaders, SEWA Manager Ni School strengthens other organizations and contributes to a greater level of financial self-reliance among the women. SEWA Manager Ni School has also multiplied and fortified the relationships that SEWA and its members have with many private sector organizations. The women trained by SEWA Manager Ni School are chosen by their peers, ensuring that they will be respected and receive a high level of ownership and accountability within membership organizations. This adds to the structure



and helps centralize the leadership of SEWA's various cooperatives and organizations.





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### USP of SEWA Manager Ni School

In the era of globalization, in order to achieve inclusive growth, the informal sector and the rural members should be brought in the mainstream. Through the SEWA Manager Ni School, the micro enterprises developed by the informal sector members are being professionalized. As of now, there is no training institute in India which works towards building the capacities of the micro enterprises of the informal members. The courses are designed based on the socio and economic situation, thereby making it need based and demand driven. The training courses are conducted centrally in the classrooms at Ahmedabad, as well as decentralized in various Community Learning Centres or even below a tree in the villages.

SEWA Manager Ni School uses a very unique training approach. As most of SEWA's members are illiterate or semi-literate, and they come from various backgrounds, it would not make sense for trainers to simply give the members complex readings or verbose lectures, as might happen in a typical academic setting. SEWA Manager Ni School has developed many innovative strategies to work with such women. The trainings do not just have long lectures and classroom sessions. On the contrary, they are highly interactive lessons which utilize practical cases and examples from the trainees' own enterprises. Various methods and tools from short films in their native languages to simple pictures and diagrams are employed to ensure that the women can understand and relate to the material.

Also, most of the women in SEWA need to spend the majority of their time at home for various reasons, whether they are taking care of their children or involved in domestic handcraft activities. Therefore, they cannot often travel too far from their homes or stay away for long stretches of time. That is why SEWA Manager Ni School trainings are usually



conducted within their communities, often on village streets, in several installments of just a few hours each. This ensures that the women do not have to sacrifice their livelihoods or significantly disrupt their family schedules.

The trainers SEWA Manager Ni School uses are also integral to the program's success. The trainers are experts on the subjects, and typically at least one trainer is a member who has been developed as a trainer by SEWA Manager Ni School. She shares her experiences as to how she is now applying the knowledge she acquired to develop her own enterprise. Trainees are usually able to relate to her experiences with ease and thereby understand the examples properly and effectively.





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### What is in This Module?

This module is divided into four sections



#### Part I: Introduction

This first section contains the information necessary to prepare for the course. It contains background information on SEWA and SEWA Manager's School (which created the module) as well as information on what is needed to run the course effectively.



#### Part II: Trainer's Guide

This section serves as a manual for the trainer of the course. It contains detailed instructions on how to structure the course and teach the material.



#### Part III: Participant's Guide

This section holds all the information necessary for a trainee in this course. Among other things, it contains the primary content of the course lessons, with definitions of key terms, diagrams, and exercises to reinforce the concepts that are taught.



#### Part IV: Resource

This final section contains any additional material that is necessary to supplement the other sections of the module. For example, it may contain handouts, posters, surveys, or a compact disc.

### Overall Objectives

**SEWA's modules have the following objectives:**

- To increase the full employment of women. This includes having stable work year round as well as access to healthcare, childcare, social security benefits, food security, etc.
- To increase the self-reliance of women in a sustainable manner. Women should be more empowered, educated, and independent, thereby strengthening their overall well-being and quality of life.
- To spearhead organising and strengthening members' economic organisations in other states and countries
- To empower members at the smallest level of organisation within SEWA into "grass root leaders" through enhanced basic membership training
- To transform the intermediate level "spearhead leaders" into a cadre of "barefoot managers" capable of training and managing individual and group activities inside and outside of SEWA
- To impact the efficiency and organizational behaviour of member-operated economic organizations.





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### Who is a Qualified Instructor?

An instructor for this course must be well-versed in the subject so that he/she can explain the content and importance of the subject in an effective manner. He/she should be able to relate the subject matter to effective examples that are applicable to the participants and their experiences.



### Target Trainees:

This course is designed especially for the informal sector workers. They may be rag pickers, paper pickers, farmers, agriculture laborers, poorest of the poor members, illiterate or semi-literate.

- Grassroots members
- Small and medium enterprise managers
- Self-help group leaders and members
- Federation coordinators

However, if others are present, the course can be tailored accordingly



### Toolkit: What is Necessary to Run This Course?

As this course is designed for approximately 25 members, a training hall will be necessary that is of an appropriate size to seat all members and have space for conducting games. Any open space with the following materials would also be suitable:

- Black/White Board
- A small table to place the training materials
- A chair for the trainer
- Name tag for each trainee and also for the trainer
- Chalk, Marker Pens, Papers, Scissors
- Tapes, Chart Papers
- Liquid crystal display or overhead projector
- Transparency sheets
- Prepared handouts
- Laptop





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### Kuwarben Bhimani

I am Kuwarben Bhimani, Salt farmer, from Surendranagar District. I am a member of SEWA since last 10 years. Earlier we used to sell our salt to traders but after acquiring training from SEWA, we are now organized and know how to plan our production and also know how much minimum salt price each member should get. Considering all the costs we fixed up Rs. 135 as the sale price. The traders were paying Rs. 120 per ton. In the trade committee meeting this year, we decided we will sell only at minimum of Rs. 135 ton. So, salt workers demanded the same from the traders. We all got united and the traders had to agree to pay Rs. 135 per ton. Now we are benefited by getting Rs. 35 more per ton from traders.

**Kuwarben Bhimani, Surendranagar District**

### Jamuben Aiyar

I am Jamuben Aiyar, a village leader, from Patan district. After acquiring trainings from SMS, I am now able to better coordinate work with women in my assigned villages. I have learnt the art of talking and presenting myself better. I am able to convince other women in a much better way. After being trained, I have been able to organize more women in my village and thereby support in the development. I conduct the meetings in the villages on regular and systematic basis. In one of the sessions, SMS taught me as to how to conduct meetings. I was very impressed by that session. Now, I conduct the meetings as per pre-decided agenda and also maintain proper minutes of the same. By doing my work in such a systematic manner, my performance has simply increased. I feel less tensed and am able to finish my work on time and in a better way. I was also taught how to make the meetings interesting. I now see that all the women participate in the meetings while earlier I had to force them to come for meetings.

**Jamuben Aiyar, Dhokawada village, Santalpur block, Patan district.**



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