

CASE STUDY - 1



"For all these days we just were told what we supposed to do but this is the first time we are asked to think what we want to do ourselves for our own benefit – this is painful process but at the end of the day we all felt happy because our plans developed on the basis of our own thinking and needs."-MS EC member, Gangavaram

and not sure how to tackle the problems they did know about- loan repayment rates were frighteningly low, and the federation had taken on a number of failed business practices. One APMAS staff member explains; "as the members went through the process many of them felt ashamed that they did not even know the performance of their member SHGs and VOs."

This process has unquestionably made an impact on the MS members who attended the meeting, the federation as a whole, and on the direction of activities being undertaken. The awareness of members about the institutional and financial status, as well as the different roles of each level of the federation has significantly improved. They are now aware of the low repayment rates, and have taken steps to improve them- repayment rates have increased by as much as five times in some VOs. Along with tangible benefits from the visioning process, there is also a general feeling of motivation among both the members and APMAS. This mutual learning experience has inspired APMAS to undertake the visioning of federations on a larger scale.

Perhaps the most telling sign of the impact the vision building process has had on Gangavaram is that the executive committee is now planning to work with each village organization (VO) so they have their own action plan towards achieving the overall vision. The MS has had such a positive experience with the exercise, and has seen such improvements in performance, motivation, and direction, that it would like each VO to have the same opportunity.

Building the vision statement and creating an action plan has given the members a sense of purpose and set of achievable goals which has inspired them to strengthen their MS. In the words of one member; "Now we know the performance of our member institutions, it's our own institution and we must strengthen our member SHG, we have clarity of role and clarity of purpose – thank you APMAS for taking us through this process."

for further details, please contact :



Mahila Abhivruddhi Society, Andhra Pradesh
Plot 20, Rao & Raju Colony, Road 2, Banjara Hills,
HYDERABAD -500034. A.P., INDIA
Tel: +91-40-23555864, 2354 7952 / 27, Fax: +91-40-2354 7926
Website: www.apmas.org **E-mail:** cbox@apmas.org

CASE STUDY - 1



Visioning in Gangavaram - Creating a Collective Future

"All the poor women in the mandal form into sustainable institutions and come out of the poverty by improving their social, financial and health conditions through maintaining good relationships with government and other agencies". -Vision statement developed by members of Gangavaram Mandal Samakya

One of the most important elements in creating an institutionally sustainable self help group federation¹ is that the members have a shared vision for their organization; something that binds them together and inspires the pursuit of their federation's success. It is from this common vision that the members gain a sense of ownership and pride, and serves as a foundation from which all other activities arise. It is with this in mind that APMAS developed a participatory vision building process, based on the dream-discover-design-deliver methodology of appreciative inquiry, to be completed by the mandal samakya (MS) executive committee and staff of Gangavaram, a mandal in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. This participatory procedure starts by creating a vision for the MS. From this, members work together to outline goals for the next 5 years, as well as a detailed action plan for how to achieve these goals. The entire process takes 6-12 months with strong facilitation support from APMAS, and these efforts lay a strong foundation for the institution.

"For all these days we just were told what we supposed to do but this is the first time we are asked to think what we want to do ourselves for our own benefit – this is painful process but at the end of the day we all felt happy because our plans developed on the basis of our own thinking and needs."-MS EC member, Gangavaram

During the winter of 2004, the Gangavaram MS was the first federation in Andhra Pradesh to undergo the vision building process facilitated by APMAS. Prior to the visioning process, members were unaware of many problems in their federation,

¹ Self help groups (SHGs), are informal groups of 10-20 women who are joined together for a common purpose. These SHGs come together into federation of 5-35 SHGs to form Village Organization (VO). VOs are then further formed into federation of 20-40 to form Mandal Samakya (MS), or a 'federation of federations'. Each level of the federation provides different services and assistance to the members. Moreover, a network of 400 SHGs with more than 5,000 women together in one mandal samakya creates strength in numbers from which the women can tackle larger social issues within their communities.