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Homebased Worker Stitching Football

**HomeNet South Asia Group**

HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) Group comprises of HomeNet South Asia Trust and Associations of Homebased Workers in South Asia. It is a regional network of organisations of homebased workers (HBWs). HNSA Group currently has presence in eight countries of South Asia – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It aims to build regional solidarity among HBWs, especially women workers, and empower them to lead a life of dignity, free of poverty, through obtaining decent work and social protection, within a rights based framework. HNSA Group strives to make HBWs and their issues more visible to ensure secure livelihoods for them and to strengthen their collective voice and organising efforts in the region. It also advocates for inclusion of HBWs in the existing policies and laws; the implementation of national, regional and international policies; as well as promotes access of HBWs products to local, national, regional and international markets.

Background and Vision

HNSA evolved as a focal point and the collective voice of the homebased workers in South Asia. It was conceived in 2000 in Kathmandu, Nepal when the Kathmandu Declaration was adopted by government representatives, civil society and trade unions of South Asia. It led to the formation of HNSA by The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Federation Dutch Labour Movement (FNV). Impetus was also provided by ILO Convention 177 for organisation of HBWs at national, regional and international level. The regional network was registered in Mauritius, in 2007 and has a liaison office in Ahmedabad, India. At the same time national HomeNets in countries were set up in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

As HNSA grew, it was imperative to review its progress, revisit its strategies and provide new directions including structure/model for HomeNets and facilitate the development of its vision. A detailed exercise was undertaken for this purpose in 2010. This included review of past documents; consultation meetings with Board/Governing Body, staff of Country HomeNets (CHN) and South Asian Business Association of Homebased Workers (SABAHS), organisations/network members of CHNs, trustees and enforcer of HNSA, individual HBWs, trade unions, donors, and NGOs. On the basis of these deliberations as well as a brainstorming workshop on 'Strategic Vision for HomeNet in South Asia' held in Dhaka, Bangladesh a vision for HomeNet South Asia for 2015 was adopted in 2011.



Homebased Workers Making Brooms

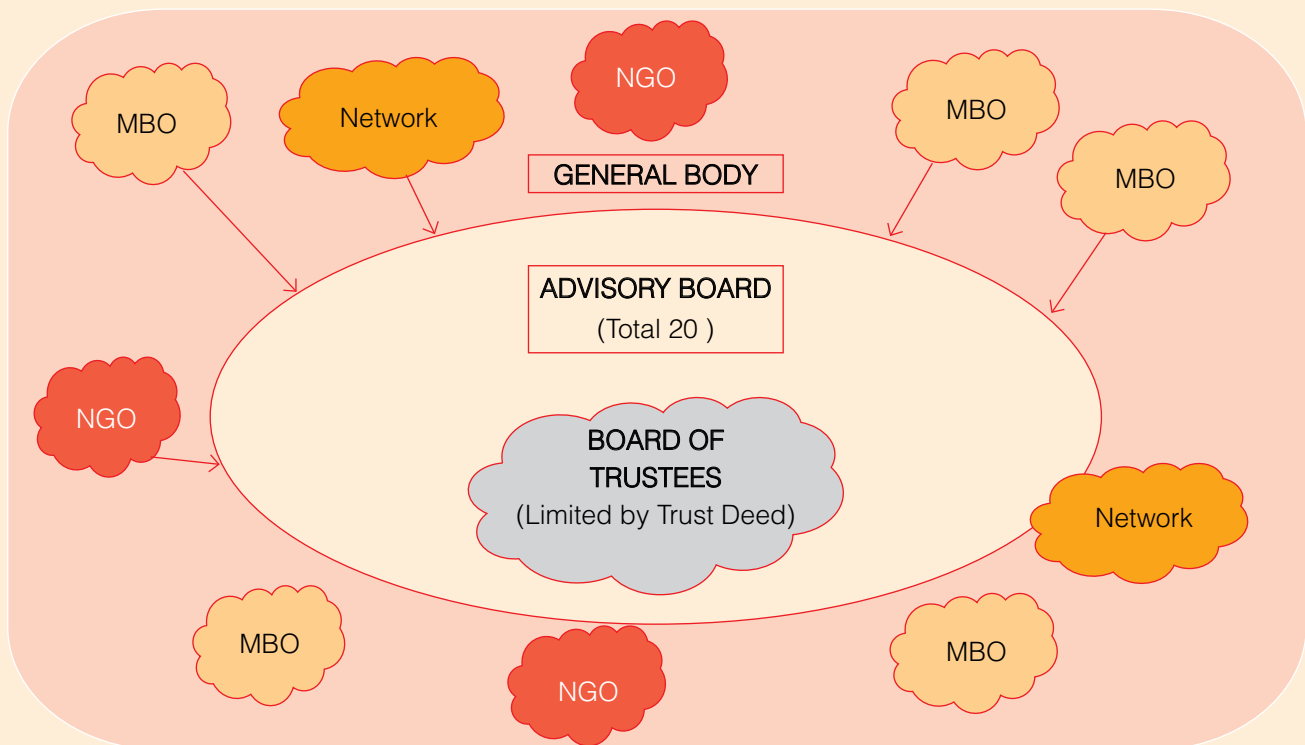
The vision has been conceived as a house with strong foundations based on

- Solidarity across South Asia;
- Enactment of a comprehensive policy for homebased workers and
- The development of membership based organisations (MBOs).

The House is supported by five pillars – Visibility, Capability, Security (economic and social), Mobility and Connectivity. The foundations and the pillars must take into consideration all key aspects affecting HBWs (depicted on the pillar on the extreme left of the house) i.e. organising, leadership, fair wages, literacy, health, social security, skills, technology, raw materials, credit, production, markets and trade.



Structure of HomeNet South Asia



Structure and Composition

One of the major aspects of the vision development process was to revisit the existing structure of HNSA. HNSA aspires that its institutional designs, structures, processes and decision-making must be representational and governed by the HBWs and their organisations directly, in accordance with the philosophy of MBOs. Accordingly, the HNSA structure underwent a change in 2012 and again in 2014.

Purpose: The broad purpose of HNSA is to improve the lives and livelihoods of HBWs. In doing so, it aims to function as a network rather than an organisation. The functions of the network are to benefit the network members by information sharing and learning; creating solidarity, removing isolation and facilitating networking; and advocacy by enhancing voice and visibility. HNSA also has a role in raising resources for itself and its members. However, it is not the purpose of HNSA to itself implement projects.

Governance Structure: HNSA has been envisaged as a network of

(i) MBO of HBWs,

(ii) Non government organisations (NGOs) working with HBWs and

(iii) Networks of homebased worker's organisations (either MBOs or NGOs or a mixed network of MBOs and NGOs) that work with and for HBWs. All members of HNSA form its General Body and will meet once every three years. The figure below depicts the structure of HNSA where the large blue rectangle signifies the General Body comprising members from MBOs, NGOs and Networks.

There is an Advisory Board with representation from all countries, comprising of 20 members. The HNSA Board of Trustees will initially co-opt 20 members on the Advisory Board from the General Body. The Advisory Board will advise the Board of Trustees on all matters. The Trustees may consider delegating programmatic functions to the Advisory Board. The tenure of Advisory Board cannot exceed two terms or six years. The Advisory Board is served by the HNSA Liaison Office. Only MBOs and networks of MBOs on the Advisory Board will have voting rights.

The composition of the Advisory Board has to be according to the following guidelines.

- i Two members from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka of which at least one of the members has to be a MBO. The second member could be from any category, including MBOs (10 members).
- ii One member from Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives, who could be from any category but should preferably be a MBO. (3 members).
- iii One representative from a network in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. (maximum of 5 members)
- iv Two nominees/professionals nominated by HNSA trustees. (2 members). Special invitees may also be invited for specific meetings, depending on the agenda at hand.

Members of categories i, ii and iii will initially be co-opted by the Board of Trustees and their selection placed before the General Body for approval.

Member's Category and Fees Detail: All membership requests are to be properly screened and finally approved by the trustees. The membership will be renewed every three years, after verification. The criteria for membership and fees are detailed below:

- i. **Membership Based Organisations (MBOs) only of HBWs** or of other workers but where the majority are HBWs. Minimum number of HBWs in the MBO should be 200 members in the case of MBOs from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, 50 members for MBOs from Nepal and Sri Lanka and 15 members for MBOs from Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives. The annual membership fees is between US \$ 50 to 100 depending on the number of members.
- ii. **Non Government Organisation:** The NGO should be a registered, national NGO working for/with homebased workers (either for support services or service delivery etc). It should have at least five years experience. The reach of NGO should be to at least 1000 HBWs per year in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and at least 100 HBWs annually in Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives. Annual membership fees is US \$ 100 for NGOs.
- iii. **Networks of Homebased Worker's Organisations:** The network should be duly registered as per the law of their home country. It can either be a network of MBOs or of NGOs or a mixed network of MBOs and NGOs that work with and for homebased workers. It should have at least 10 organisations in its network, with at least a total of 2000 HBWs. The annual membership fee is fixed at US \$ 200.



Homebased Workers Making Pots

Events Conducted and Upcoming Event

“Strengthening the Movement of Homebased Workers – Sharing experience and learning together” Workshop & Field Visits (NAIROBI, Kenya): This workshop and field visit were organised by Women in Informal Economy – Globalising & Organising (WIEGO) in collaboration with World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) in Nairobi, Kenya from 12th -15th August, 2014. The main objective of the workshop was to bring together representatives of HBWs and support groups from the two continents (Asia & Africa) at an international forum in order to share knowledge and experience on organising HBWs. The workshop was attended by participants from South Asia – Nepal, Pakistan & Sri Lanka & Africa – Kenya, Uganda, and Egypt. The participants from South Asia were mainly homebased worker leaders who have been organising HBWs around civic-urban & livelihood issues in their respective areas and have been trained on “Organising & Leadership”.

The first two days of the workshop focused on sharing issues of HBWs and challenges faced while organising them into groups. The last two days were visits to rural and urban areas in Nairobi and its surrounding villages to gain first-hand experience on issues of HBWs. A plan of action for the groups and support organisations of homebased workers in Africa was also chalked out.

Visit of Ethiopian Embassy to HomeNet South Asia: Two senior officials from Ethiopian Embassy in India visited SEWA from 31st July to 2nd August, 2014 to experience first hand the SEWA movement. They were also keen to understand HomeNet South Asia's structure as a Membership Based Organisation/ Network at the regional level. During discussion on HNSA's programme and policy initiatives being taken up for homebased workers, the officials showed interest in exploring livelihood initiatives undertaken

Strengthening the Movement of Homebased Workers Sharing Experiences & Learning Together



Field Visit to Bega Kwa Bega Self Help Group, Nairobi

under the outreach programme of SABAH. The officials also provided an overview of HBWs in Ethiopia, mostly engaged in handicrafts work and who rely on the tourist market to sell their products. They echoed similarity between problems of HBWs in South Asian countries and Ethiopia, particularly pertaining to occupational health hazards. The meeting provided an opportunity for exchange of information and was a step forward in building international solidarity for homebased workers.

Visit of Homebased workers from Bhutan to HomeNet South Asia: In August, 2014 group of weavers (18 homebased workers) with two staff members – (Marketing and Designing) from SABAH Bhutan visited SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre for a 7-day exposure. The group was provided an orientation on HNSA's programmes in order to acquaint them about interventions being taken at regional level for homebased workers. HBWs from Bhutan emphasised the importance of organising – something they learnt after joining SABAH Bhutan.



Visit of Ethiopian Delegation to HomeNet South Asia

"Today, we are able to earn our livelihood and we can support our family. We would want HNSA to work in Bhutan for homebased workers to advocate for child care centre, health insurance and housing. Housing in Thimpu (capital of Bhutan) is becoming very expensive. As rooms are small, our weaving quality is affected, hence, we want to have a collective work centre".

The group also highlighted the need for a national policy on homebased workers. They also expressed their need for more information on designing and various weaving techniques of South Asia through publications as well as exposure visits.



Exposure Visit of Bhutan Homebased Workers to HNSA



Upcoming Events
The First General Body Meeting of HNSA is to be conducted on 10th February, 2015 at New Delhi, India.

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