

CHISELLING SKILLS

“With the increase in women literacy women in Chitral, they are also entering into job market in large numbers. However, fresh graduates find it difficult embark upon professional path due to lack of experience. To compound the difficulties, there is a dearth of private institutions that could provide internships to graduates to chisel their raw skills. This is a story of a woman who was inducted into EELY’s internship programme at AKRSP. During her internship she refined her knowledge and enhanced her understanding of development sector and processes. This provided her an opportunity to gain experience and insights into working mechanism of organization. Consequently, she was able to find a regular job in a non-governmental organization.”

Sun Rose is the eldest daughter of Afzal Aman from Gasht village of Laspur UC tehsil Mastuj, which is 140 km away from Chitral town. Most of the people of Laspur area depend on agriculture and government services for their livelihood. Sun Rose's father is a contractor who has to look after a large family including his wife, four sons and two daughters. All the children are studying in private schools and colleges in various cities. Since her childhood, Sun rose was eager to get good education. Therefore, she got admission at the Aga Khan High School for Girls Chapali, Mastuj and stayed in a relative's house for four years. After matriculation she got admission in Pearl College for Girls Chitral for intermediate and City College for Girls Chitral for her Bachelor's degree.

After completing her master's degree in Conservation Studies from Hazara University, Sun Rose started searching for jobs, but she could not find any for almost a year because wherever she applied, she was asked to provide relevant experience, which she lacked. During those days Sun Rose participated in a workshop of EELY where she came to know about the Enhancing



Figure 1 While conducting legal awareness session in community

Employability and Leadership for Youth (EELY) programme of AKRSP. After hearing about Youth Internship Programme (YIP) offered by EELY, from the local newspaper, she applied for that and got selected after a test and interview.

The internship brought various changes in Sun Rose's personality. Recounting her experience of YIP she said, ***"I used to feel shy while speaking in gathering. Now I have the confidence and can communicate in a better way."*** During her internship she was assigned various tasks like interaction with communities, report writing, and field visits. Sun Rose tried to fulfill her tasks on time. All these assignments polished her skills and enhanced her sense of responsibility and punctuality. She became aware of the rural development process and witnessed poverty from very close quarter, which made her more enthusiastic to work for the vulnerable sections of society.

Soon after the completion of her internship, Sun Rose started teaching in Abdul Qadir Khan School for two months during which she continued applying in various organizations. At last she was selected as legal organizer in the organization working for women's equal rights and human dignity named as Legal Awareness for the Protection of Human Rights (LAPH). ***"Every organization prefers experienced person and I was not shortlisted by any organization before internship because of lack of experience. However, things changed after my internship as I was able to get a job because of my experience. All the credit for this change goes of Youth Internship Programme of EELY project."*** says Sun Rose. She is satisfied with the job and adjusted to the new working environment easily and quickly as she had learned many things during the internship. Now Sun Rose is the most punctual employee in the ~~organisation~~organization and completes all the tasks on time.

Sun Rose wants to continue her education in near future. For that purpose she is saving some amount from her monthly salary. She intends to take admission in any reputable institute for her M. Phil studies. Apart from this she also financially supports



While legal consultation with a client

her siblings in their education. It has lessened the burden on her father to a great extent.

The successful journey of Sun Rose from internship to job is an example of socio-economic empowerment of women, for she sets a trend for other girls who may get inspiration from her and will follow. This would ultimately lead towards economic empowerment and high rate of employment of women in the area.