Porgera Joint Venture
Community Development and Women

Abstract

Porgera Joint Venture supports women of Porgera through its Community Development Section. This section was set up to organize women to participate in women's development programs.

The section organized the Porgera women in a network (Porgera District Womens Association- PDWA) where it is easy for the mine to work through and serve as advisory body for the women and the company. Community Development also plays a key role in providing social welfare service to the mine employees and the community.

PDWA is a registered non-profit organization and has membership of more than 2000 women. It has a constitution where it operates under. The association have projects such as an Artifacts shop, Screen printing, Canteen, vegetable buying, credit scheme and a Troop carrier hired by the company to generate income to support their families instead of waiting for hand outs from the mine.

The Association sponsors workshops, Training programs and Awareness campaigns on issues affecting women and children in the community. It holds executive and general meetings every month and also employs people to run the association’s projects. The company supports all these projects. Currently, the company is working on ways to make PDWA independent socially, economically and organizationally in all its operations as an NGO.
1.0 Introduction

Community Development was set up in response to the need to consider problems faced by women as the mine developed. Initially, this concerned relocation of families into their new houses as well as teaching the women how to clean and care for their new western style homes, but as we progressed, problem areas were exposed that needed to be addressed to ensure harmony within the home. In particular, the women experienced the breakdown of their society plus the loss of food gardens. In addition to the trauma of relating to the impact of a high tech mine, there was also an invasion by thousands of outsiders who were looking for work. With them they brought many of the social problems associated with mining areas. Traditional values were replaced by a new set of values, centered round the new cash economy. While the men-folk were chasing money, the women had to continue in their traditional roles with little or no support from the men and no way to express their grievances to the mine authorities. Considering the nature of the locals, failure to address these issues would have resulted in social instability as the women continuously complained to their men-folk, which in turn would impede the smooth running of the mine.

The Community Development section assists and supports the women through the Porgera District Women's Association or Ipili Wanda Yame meaning, women of the Ipili speaking language. This was established on 18th October 1989, with seven women's groups, Wanda Yame from the seven SML clans. It now comprises more than 150 registered groups in the Porgera Paiela district. The Association has expanded to accommodate the Government Reforms. Porgera has eighteen council wards and the Association is organized following the government political structure. Porgera Joint Venture (PJV) and Porgera Development Authority (PDA) recognize Porgera District Women’s Association (PDWA) as the authority that represents the views and interests of the women in the district inclusive of SML. Women have one of their members on each of the decision-making boards or committees in the area. PJV and PDA have provided the Association with women's resource center. Unfortunately, the women have outgrown this and have transferred many of their activities to the Community Development office.

PDA makes funds available for women's training and projects occasionally and PJV provides support through the Community Development section. This section is headed by woman and has qualified female staff as Social Welfare Officer, Community Development Officer, Community Health Extension Officer, Agricultural Officer, Bookkeeper, Special Project’s Officer and Women’s Trainer. Community Development staff work very closely with the community (male & female) and the company management and employees.
The monthly meetings of the Association are well attended. PJV senior management frequently attends when requested or when they wish to pass on important first hand information to the women. All ideas for projects as well as complaints are brought to the meetings and the way to address each issue is discussed. The Association also networks with Provincial and National Government agencies and outside organizations and NGOs. The Association is incorporated and registered as a bona fide charity and business group. It is also affiliated to the Enga Provincial Council of Women and then to the National Council of Women. All the above was the initiative of the Community Development to serve as a network to reach out to the women and as a framework within which to work with women. As a result of exposure over the years to other women's networks, the Association is more independent of Community Development, and is stronger in making its own decisions and running its own affairs. The women are more outspoken and more aware of the power they have as an organized group. Community Development still works closely with the Association, but in more of a trouble shooting or advisory or training and technical assistance capacity. The day to day running of the Association is no longer the responsibility of Community Development.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 To promote the development of women’s groups in the Porgera District

2.2 To help organize education and training courses for women.

3.3 To assist member groups in the education of their members in order to improve upon the programs and projects carried out by those groups.

3.4 To educate on their legal and social rights and responsibilities

3.5 To educate women regarding the basic health and nutrition needs of their families.

3.6 To promote and develop leadership in women through their education and the education of others, so as to ensure their participation in decision-making at both local and district level.

3.7 To work with all levels of government, churches, businesses and the community in Porgera District to ensure education, training and development continue to meet of the people of the Porgera district.

3.8 To represent women in the district in all matters relating to or affecting the rights and welfare of women and their children

3.9 To equip women to live a better spiritual, social, physical and economical post mine life.
PDWA is financially sustained by running income-generating projects like the Mini Credit Scheme, vegetable buying, screen-printing, Drapery, Artifacts, Canteen, Embroidery and Troop carrier Hire to company. Regular training, workshops, seminars, extension community visits and working in partnership with the company, Government and the non-government organizations help the women to achieve the above objectives.

2.0 Financial Empowerment of the Association

The company through its Social Development section has assisted PDWA to set up and run a number of small businesses for the Association. All the projects are managed by the women of Porgera and serve Porgeans and outsiders.

Porgeran women are slowly trained over the years to run their projects and also to do book keeping.

2.1 Credit Scheme
A total of K50, 600.00, profit from the income generating projects was used as a mini credit scheme for the women since 2002. One hundred and fifty one women are participating doing various projects like raising broiler meat birds to selling pancakes on roadside markets. The credit scheme is running very well with a repayment rate of 99%.

A similar micro-finance scheme is set up by one of the registered wards of PDWA with a membership of 100. Women have benefited from the scheme to provide basic needs for the family and also advance to other programs.

2.1.1 Success story: Mrs. Judy Tangeria
Judy is one of the many women who got the first credit scheme of K500 in 2002. She bought herself a hand sewing machine to sew simple garments that she learnt through the sewing training provided by the training officer of PJV. From the hand sewing machine she bought a electric sewing machine to washing machine, several household items as well. She is also contributing towards her children’s school fees and provides food for her family. She plans to expand on her program and she said if there is any way of getting more loans she would tap in to do what she had started in a slightly bigger way.

2.2 Troop Carrier
Porgera Joint Venture hires a troop carrier purchased by the PDWA from the money made from the income generating projects.

2.3 Canteen
PDWA canteen sells goods (grocery, soft drinks, cigarettes etc) to the company employees, families and contractors.
2.4 Screen Printing & Drapery Shop
Quality screen-printing is done for all sporting groups, company and individuals in the mining area. Women also do several screens upon customer’s request and T-shirts / laplaps are printed for sale. Materials for curtains and garments are sold at the drapery shop.

2.5 Vegetables
Vegetables are grown by Porgerans and nearby districts to supply to the mine. Consistency and the quantity are some times can not be met due to tribal fights and for some unknown reason. This project is struggling to pick –up around the mine as better quality vegetables are supplied by nearby areas where commercial agricultural activities are active. Positively, the company provides a standard order where the women supply various types of vegetables that brings small amount of income.

3.0 Training

Improvement of Family Life through Women’s Education
Following are the regular training session conducted for women

3.1 Health HIV/AIDS
There are health awareness training in villages on problems affecting the women and the community. Mainly the focus is on Sexual Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS. Medical Experts from outside of Porgera like IMR Goroka are invited by the Mine medical centre to train people in the community on the spread of the killer disease HIV/AIDS by conducting Peer Educators training. Also counselors are train to do follow-up on victims. The women, youth, pastors, and company employees are trained to be peer educators. The women network is used to for conducting awareness and village-based training. Highlights of the HIV/AIDS are Day Care center is in place and Counselling services provided for the victims.

3.2 Vocational
Women receive training on sewing of garments, curtains, cushion covers, mending, screening printing and sewing machine maintenance. The company assists in identifying skilled people who are hired to meet training needs for the women. Sewing machine maintenance and advance garment making training was organized for approximately120 people four times in three different areas (Porgera, Mulitaka and Laigam).

Vocational Training used to be attended by female but things have changed and few men including councilors have attended the training. They are able to do basic to advance sewing and maintain their machines
3.3 Micro-finance
Porgera women are provided with basic bookkeeping training to run their small businesses. Both PJV personnel and professional volunteers from outside PNG conduct business training. Recently there has been an introduction of grassroots micro-finance program that is easy to manage. There are twenty (20) groups with 5-7 trusted members in each group from six different places.

3.4 Agriculture Services
Main aim of agriculture for Porgeran women is to provide food for the family unit and extras for sale. Farming is not a new thing for Porgera like any other PNG areas. Porgera like many other places in PNG, it is unique with steep mountains, water logged soils and unexpected weather changes with an inactive government DPI. At times in certain areas tribal warfare become a stumbling block in agriculture. Despite the challenges, Porgerans always have enough food to eat. One can tell that Porgerans have enough food by witnessing watercress in waterways and beans growing on roadsides that people are not interested in as food. Agriculture extension is provided through the established women's network. Women are called through the women's network to meet in Central locations for organized training like agriculture field days mainly to transfer new technology and show superior crop/animal performance. Our main challenge is how can one motivate people to get into agriculture in a society with plenty of money available to buy food from market and stores and where there is influx of people from more advanced agricultural nearby communities with quality produce.

We believe the gold will be become exhausted one day and cash flow will be decreased in the area and people will back to the land for survival. Agriculture is and will always be the source of survival in Porgera and PNG.

3.5 Adult Literacy – Success Story
Twenty-nine established schools with one thousand, two hundred and seventeen adults and elementary school aged students taught by forty-two trained adult literacy schoolteachers. Ten schools are funded by PDWA while PJV supports eleven and the community (self-supported) supports the rest. So far 115 students are able to read and write. Churches are actively participating in the running of the literacy program. From the adult literacy seven children are continuing on with elementary, while and graduated from a Bible college and he working as a Pastor.
3.6 Social Welfare
The company provides counselling services through a counselor who visits site often from Port Moresby but women feel free to talk to Social Development staff. Women with family problems are assisted with appropriate advice from the company. Advice on law and order and social problems such as rape, polygamy, domestic violence and child abuse, maintenance for deserted wives and children are provided to the communities. The company provides child-minding center for PJV employees. Nearly all maintenance cases come through the Social Development office.

4.0 Conclusion
To conclude Porgera Joint Venture has helped women very much to put programs and projects together. Currently, PDWA is working very well with the company’s input and the company would like to see women are independent as an NGO during the post mine life. Therefore the company and PDWA are seeking partners who are able to assist PDWA to be economically, socially, organizationally equipped to be own their own as an NGO after the mine life.