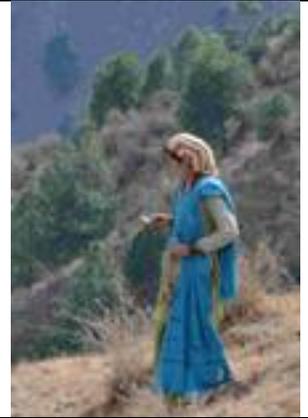




EWOK

Enabling Women of Kamand



Newsletter

Jan 2017

EWOKing a better quality of life

Wishing friends of EWOK a happy and fulfilling 2017!

This year promises to be both exciting and challenging for members of the IIT community and the local residents in the Kamand Valley. Eight years ago, the local residents first started hearing that something called IIT was going to be established in their valley. It must have seemed a distant promise then. Some hoped it would arrive quickly and provide jobs and income. Others worried how their lives and customs would change.

Now that vague promise and perhaps threat has a very physical reality. The residents in Salgi village look down on an impressive campus with housing for faculty and staff, hostels and messes. Academic buildings and the campus centre and guest house are rising daily.

In 2017, IIT Mandi will become a fully residential campus in the Kamand Valley. The advent of hundreds of faculty, staff and students to the valley opens up many opportunities for the local women residents of the Kamand Valley. The new residents will require a variety of shops and services. At the same time there is great untapped potential for the development of local small scale production units which utilise local skills and products and tap into the tourist, urban and international market with IIT mentors.

This edition focusses on EWOK's activities to assist interested women to set up shop to supply the growing market close to home and move into markets further afield.

About EWOK

EWOK is an initiative to bring opportunities to the hardworking women of Kamand valley, enabling them to develop employable and marketable skills and access relevant information.

Lend us a hand

If you wish to donate or know more, please contact us at

ewok@iitmandi.ac.in

Fundraising



₹ 0

₹ 5L





Meet & Greet Session

We organised a meet & greet session in November 2016. We wanted to hear from the local women residents how they felt about the sudden spurt of opportunities in their neighborhood with the expansion of IIT Mandi. From our previous interactions we had gauged that many of them were apprehensive of self employment. Until now, government employment is the preferred avenue for a guaranteed income.



The meeting had two objectives. The first was to allow the women to interact with some of the residents of the campus who spoke of the services they missed. The second was to encourage the local women to think about potentials for self employment. Till now local women's employment on campus has been limited to the lowest paid jobs both in IIT and on construction sites. We invited a few women from successful self help groups and women entrepreneurs who had long running establishments like tailoring shops in nearby villages. These women directly addressed questions of the audience. A local expert helped demystify the basic foundations of any business in simple terms.

Productions & Services

The EWOK team now includes a small network of campus residents willing to guide the local women's endeavours. While the women figure out what business to get into, the mentors provide inputs to the varying needs of the market inside IIT Mandi and beyond, offer technical advice and guidance to find financial assistance, training etc. Mentors choose to work on a particular line of service or production with local women sharing their interest.



Home cultivated mushrooms

Seeing the next few months as a brief window of opportunity for establishing businesses providing services to the quickly growing IIT community, we are presently focusing primarily on those businesses. Women and mentors are working to set up beauty salons, tailoring and laundry services, and to provide home cooked meals to the residences and offices.

Establishing small scale production industries will require some more time and does not face the same potential loss of opportunity if not taken up immediately. One team of mentors has identified two women interested in getting

trained in mushroom cultivation. They will be joining training shortly after the class strength is sufficient. Another team is working on processing some of the local fruits and vegetables for marketing on campus with the aim to move into the tourist urban market shortly.

Looking ahead

Many projects are in the pipeline including processing of corn into a profitable form, producing mementos and ivory-like statues from epoxy and locally grown fibre, recycling campus waste, and producing soaps and lotions using locally grown scents and additives. EWOK will work with the IIT Mandi Entrepreneurial Cell to bring these schemes to fruition.

EWOK will also be working with the National Rural Livelihood program, a government initiative, to see how our women can effectively avail of public schemes. One of their main aims is to empower women through self employment. The task to implement this scheme fairly and successfully is a huge challenge in itself. We see a high possibility in collaborating with the local public bodies in achieving this common goal.

We also continue to work on building an information portal that will help the women in networking and marketing their skills.

Look forward to the next newsletter to keep up with EWOK's progress in 2017! We are very grateful for your continued support.