

Long-term Policy Plan

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Abstract

This document contains information on Stichting Jalihal (SJ) and its partner in India Yerala Projects Society (YPS). The next paragraph describes briefly YPS's history and how SJ came into being. Subsequent paragraphs describe SJ's goals and mission, lessons learned from our past activities and what this means for our future activities.

Background

Yerala Projects Society has been operating in 22 villages in the Jalihal area since 1998. So far 70+ projects to help people live in remote villages have been successfully implemented. A solid foundation was created to take up complex projects. As all the projects taken up by YPS in the Jalihal area are people centered and beneficial to local people and the area, YPS gets an enormous amount of participation from people in every project.

Dora and Huub Bosse visited Jalihal in 2004 at the invitation of YPS, to buy products especially those handmade by women for their International trade. When Dora saw the poor condition of Jalihal women she decided to take up the betterment of women in the Jalihal area. Dora and Huub set up Stichting Jalihal (SJ) in the Netherlands and have ever since supported this cause.

Through the 20-year association of YPS and SJ, a good understanding of the families living at Jalihal was built up. SJ became a backbone of developmental initiatives of YPS. Whenever YPS was faced with problems such as providing a food kit to poor and support-less families during the 6-months' drought, SJ always stood firm with YPS. SJ understands that Women Empowerment means betterment of both socio-economic and environmental conditions (including ecological wellbeing) in order to support the women living in adverse conditions.

The first project started in 2004. On October 10th, 2023, Dora and Huub resigned from their board positions in SJ.

SJ's mission and goals

SJ's mission is to improve living conditions for the poor, especially single, destitute, deprived women, in rural India.

In many cases this means offering the women of the target group the opportunity to start activities themselves, allowing them to increase their income; not incidental but structural. If the women can set up and keep their own microbusiness, they will become financially independent and their children will go to school (which is a condition of YPS). This increases prestige within their own village.

Because SJ works together with the Indian development organization YPS, it can provide support exactly where and how it is needed, while avoiding the culture gap. Together with YPS, SJ develops projects that are tailored to the target group. SJ collects the funds to facilitate these projects and YPS takes care of their implementation.

SJ's goals are:

1. Improving the living conditions of vulnerable women by means of sustainable projects
2. Supporting environmentally friendly initiatives concerning climate change
3. Increasing awareness in the Netherlands as to the challenges facing the global south.

Evaluation and lessons learned

In the year 2024, YPS and SJ decided to evaluate their position in the Jalihal area and to redefine their mission and goals.

SJ identifies the following lessons learned from the start of the activities in Jalihal until 2024.

1. Education was a key point in many activities. SJ's support involved organizing stitching training, goat rearing training, fodder development training, backyard poultry training and fruit processing training. The secondary school SCOPE was founded on the Jalihal campus in 2014. SJ supported YPS for paying teachers' salaries for about two years when YPS lacked the necessary funding.
SCOPE has proved to be a very useful and stimulating school for students from 13 to 18 years old. YPS also organized a lot of activities and actions to help people gain knowledge and get more information about all kinds of topics concerning their daily lives. YPS envisions taking up new ideas for the better development of learning. SJ is always involved in terms of knowledge sharing, support for exposure and so on.
2. From 2018 to 2024 One Million Trees was the main project. The Trees Project was necessary to combat the drought prone area and improve the microclimate around the houses of many families in Jalihal. This project mainly targeted the farmers and their families, but some plots were reserved for destitute women. Women played very important roles in nurturing the plantation as it meant for them obtaining daily food, cattle-feed, nutrition for the family. The local communities like schools, temples, holy places, Gram panchayats also added to the project to achieve more impact on the environment.
3. In most of the projects supported by SJ, restrictions were imposed by YPS in order to fit them into the local regulation, ease the execution and secure the intended goals. Examples:
 - a. In the Sewing machines project, along with the poorest women, some women whose basic living conditions were good compared to the poorest women were supported because they were not able to improve their situation without help. These tailor-made solutions were made by YPS in close contact with SJ. Transparency promotes better understanding among the two organizations.
 - b. In the Backyard Poultry project SJ shared expertise with YPS to improve the implantation so as to reach the goal of helping the poorest women to be self-reliant. During this period SJ supported YPS by facilitating team exposure in The Netherlands, focusing on poultry. The team then reshaped the local activity under the guidance of

a board member of SJ. The team also worked with local hatchery to improve the breed of chicken and make it successful in the region. As a result, YPS now has an in-house expert to handle the poultry project. This kind of sharing of knowledge and expertise helps both organizations to improve support to the community.

- c. One Million Trees requires availability of water near the farm. People living in parts of the region where there is no direct water available are still forced to work in the sugar cane cutting. It is also required to own at least 1 acre of land. The poorest families quite often do not have that much and cannot participate. This came up in a meeting of YPS and SJ board members and is an area where there is still work to be done. Open interaction happens especially when SJ visits YPS but also online meetings contribute.
 - d. The Housing project is based on the concept of “availing her right in land of the family she is living with” which means that a woman is given a piece of land to build her own house on. This right is ignored in many places in India and women have to live very neglected and dependent lives. If her family or family-in-law does not want to give land to her, or if she simply has no family or her family doesn’t own land, a woman cannot participate in the Housing Project. At the end of 2023 the first case occurred of a local community providing land for a woman that would otherwise have been excluded.
 - e. The food preservation training (Recipe Training Program) started as a spin-off from One Million Trees. The training is given to willing participants from the project that can harvest their fruit. Interested parties outside One Million Trees could not participate until now, although YPS recognizes their wishes.
 - f. YPS does not think favorably of micro credits because of the harsh conditions and a totally unpredictable environment where people cannot (probably mostly temporarily) meet their obligations. Instead, YPS has a credit cooperative, friendly loans and economic empowerment of SelfHelpGroups.
4. YPS has taken many initiatives to improve situations that the government (local, district or state) did not cater for. Due to good contacts YPS could show governments good examples and over the years governments have taken up some of these initiatives.
 5. Though ‘Women Empowerment’ is a focal point of SJ, they supported YPS when needed in other matters as well. Both YPS and SJ are very aware of the fact that women and men have their roles. These roles have their roots in ages of cultural, religious and economic tradition. Women Empowerment means that both men and women have to accept and adopt changes.

Position of YPS

YPS firmly established itself in the Jalihal region. It created a lot of facilities and ongoing activities. YPS also defined a long-list of plans for the years 2025 to 2030, divided into 14 main topics.

SJ appreciates YPS as a strong, reliable and well-organized NGO. Both the staff at headquarter Sangli and the local staff working from the YPS campus and the YPS farm in Jalihal have thorough expertise, high motivation and a fine social antenna.

YPS has its own income sources. These financial resources are sufficient to maintain the organization and to continue important activities such as Yeralavani radio, the school, the girls’ hostels both at the campus and at YPS head office, the curiosity center, chicken breeding, agriculture demonstration center, and more. Also, YPS has local contacts and donors to support small scale initiatives and

limited projects. Moreover, YPS carries out projects under the Corporate Social Responsibility Act in the Jalihal area and at many other places in the state.

To start (other) new projects YPS needs funds from external donors. Apart from SJ (supported by Wilde Ganzen), YPS got funds and has good contacts with Rotary Den Helder, UNDP, CEE.

Management and training of staff of YPS were originally provided from the headquarters in Sangli. For physical contacts a trip of 140 km (3 hours) single distance is needed. Over the years the staff in Jalihal has been gathering experience and confidence. In both leading roles and executive tasks women are a small minority.

Future mission and goals

YPS and SJ want to maintain a long-term cooperation. Mission and goals remain unchanged.

Future activities

Our evaluation showed that even if the focus is on destitute women, it is wise to provide support to matters concerning the context. Therefore, SJ's activities will cover a very broad spectrum.

- SJ will share ideas and experiences based on the long-lasting relationship with YPS. This is already done in the regular video meetings between YPS management and SJ board members and when we visit each other.
- SJ can organize meetings with Dutch people and institutes during visits of YPS team members or through online meetings to provide YPS with ideas, knowledge and to broaden its network.
- SJ can also participate in YPS initiatives such as Global Connect.

Most importantly, SJ will support new projects. SJ will prioritize these projects as follows.

1. Preferably projects will serve the goal of Women Empowerment. Projects not directly related to this goal will be considered when it is recognized that their impact on the community is such as to improve living conditions for the entire community, including the poor women. When SJ needs to choose between equally important projects, the project with a more direct impact on women is chosen.
2. The main (but not exclusive) aim is improving the conditions of poor, destitute women. Whereas helping women is most important, help in other areas is offered when and where needed.
3. An important purpose of the projects will be to facilitate income-generating activities that are proposed by the women themselves or their social community. The so-called "cream women" should play an important role in this.
4. YPS will stimulate broad participation of women in the management and staff of the projects.
5. If a part of the project is a direct and well-defined concern of the government, the project team will put maximum effort in stimulating the government to do their job.
6. We will value and appreciate trust higher than control, restricting reporting and accounting to the minimum.
7. There will not be emergency aid. SJ is not equipped for and has no experience in this field.
8. Fundraising for projects requires certain qualities and skills. For this SJ depends on willing persons in its organization.