


Exposure and Dialogue Programme Association

Development has got a Face

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Exposure and Dialogue Programme Association
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This is a book to
which everyone
adds themselves.

Christa Wolf





Development has got a Face
Paniben, India

Observing, Looking, Comprehending

We have to distinguish between three different ways of perceiving a person living before our eyes. The **observer** is eager to remember and to memorize every detail of the person observed, to 'note' this person. The **onlooker** is not eager at all. He assumes an attitude enabling him to see his object and waits without any expectations to see what he is offered.

The observer and the onlooker have certain things in common, namely the wish to perceive the person living before their eyes, and this they do in such a way that they see this person as an object separate from themselves and their personal lives, who can be 'properly' perceived for the very reason that he is separate from them.

Something different happens if, in a receptive moment of my personal life, I meet someone with something about him, something I can neither define nor understand, which 'speaks' to me. What this person 'says' to me may be something about himself, for example that he needs me. It may, however, be something about myself.

The effect when something is 'said' to me is completely different to that of observing or looking. This person has ceased to be my object: I have become involved with him. I may have to perform a task for him, or I may just have to learn something - what is important is only that I 'accept'. I may have to respond immediately, directly to that person. Or, it may be that a long and complex transmission precedes my response and that my response is to be given in another place, at another time, to another person, in who knows which language, and that now the only thing that matters is that I accept that I am the one who will respond.

This way of perceiving shall be called **comprehending**.

[Martin Buber](#)

Situations of injustice are created by people and therefore it is people who are able to bring about sustainable changes

Shaping the future together

Mass poverty and the growing gap throughout the world between the poor and the rich are factors which are increasingly jeopardising the internal stability of many societies and endangering world peace. Creating decent living conditions for everyone in the world is a global challenge, which requires us all to join forces.

Exposure and Dialogue Programmes address women and men who are actively engaged in helping to improve living conditions and secure the basic natural and material resources necessary for sustainable holistic human development, primarily in the countries of the South. They wish to intensify their commitment because they see their work as a deeply humane task, and one which helps secure peace.

A particular aim of the programme is to involve personalities from the worlds of politics, economics, society, the churches, science and the media, who are able to exert an influence in their own spheres over development policy and national or international economics in general, or who can shape development co-operation at various levels in their institutions. A central design principle of sustainable development co-operation is the full **participation** of the poor.

« So when you look at poverty as a whole, you can see this is an enormous human waste. The capacity that is inside of a human being not being recognised, not being utilised, not being able to be translated into action for the good of all human beings, not just for oneself but for all human beings. »

Muhammed Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh 1997

Goals

Solidarity is indivisible, like the dignity of each human being, it is inalienable - this is more than ever true given the positive and the negative effects which attend the steady advance of globalisation nowadays. Solidarity can be effective world-wide, if all forces work together to design a strong society capable of consensus. Our strength as a society becomes greater, the more the interests of the poor and marginalised become firmly fixed in our minds as part of our own economic, social and political interests: **our own future also depends on solidarity.**

In accordance with this goal of solidarity, the Association for the Promotion of North-South Dialogue arranges **direct** meetings between people from the industrialised countries and people from Africa, Asia and Latin America who are trying to overcome poverty through their own initiative.

The whole point of these meetings is to enter into a dialogue. This personal meeting with the hosts in their own environment makes poverty more tangible for the visitors from the North. The hosts and the visitors are the participants in a dialogue which has at its centre the disadvantaged and their survival strategies.

The aim of the exposure and dialogue programme is to act as a spur for a process of reform which is carried from within, in which key figures from various sections of the population, a range of professions and different generations use their respective possibilities for action to benefit the disadvantaged.

« We have a fundamental interest in abolishing or reducing the flagrant disparity between our wealth and their poverty, or at the very least in ensuring that the gap does not increase, because it is the greatest danger for the political, social and economical order of the world and hence also for our own future. »

Oswald von Nell-Breuning, *Our Responsibility for a World based on Solidarity*



The hands of Paniben, a tobacco worker
- member of the board of directors in her union
until her death

The exposure and dialogue programme seeks to have a socio-political effect in the Federal Republic as well, one which goes beyond its developmental or economic and social goals in the countries of the so-called Third World. The direct meetings between the visitors from the North and the actors of successful self-help initiatives in the South can strengthen the visitors' competence for action and motivate them to make constructive contributions towards solving social problems at home as well.

The key elements of a sustainably effective policy which supports this process and to which the exposure and dialogue programme aspires to contribute include:

- the acknowledgement of the dignity of the disadvantaged as people who are capable of taking action and of taking responsibility for themselves;
- their participation in the sense of **taking part in** and **being a part of** the economic, political, social and cultural development of their country;
- the shaping of a general framework based on participation and of decentralised and solidarity based structures, e.g. through laws and, decrees, social security systems and guaranteed civil rights.

The visitors receive an insight during their stay in the exposure country regarding how these key elements are put into practice despite many limitations. They learn about the obstacles which have to be overcome and about the effects of successful self-help processes in fighting against poverty and exclusion. These are **authentic** experiences. They enable the participants to have a better understanding of the links between the micro-economic and socio-cultural circumstances which they **experience** on the one hand and the way in which the international social and economic framework affects the poor on the other. This is a crucial prerequisite for effective action within a global context.

Motivating to take action and strengthening competence to act – through meetings and dialogue

The Exposure and Dialogue Programme Association offers people and institutions, who pursue these goals, a methodological and organisational framework within which they can develop their own contributions to development and social policies including suitable implementation strategies.

« The poor can be reached, if one goes to them.
They have a face, a name and mostly a firm address. »

Sybille Tepper, participant, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh 1997

To achieve this, the Exposure and Dialogue Programme Association carries out, together with recognised self-help organisations, exposure and dialogue programmes in countries of the South, either implementing them itself or organising them on behalf of institutions which are active in the fields of development and social policy as well as for ecclesiastical institutions. The programmes last from three to eight days, not including travel time.

The individual programmes, with 10 to 25 participants, are tailored to the personal or institutional expectations of the participants based on preparatory talks. These are aimed at helping them understand what is happening more easily when faced with what is usually for them a foreign environment. The programmes deal with areas and experiences which correspond to the participants' tasks within their organisations, to which they can relate and through which they get the possibility to learn about innovative solutions to problems in their own fields of competence, encouraging them to act creatively themselves.

These goals are also served by the composition of the groups of participants in the individual programmes: each group of participants covers the broadest range of experiences possible, with an equal balance between women and men, specialists and personalities from the fields of politics, civil society and institutional organisations.

meeting

Paniben's Song

« On Monday SEWA organised the workers union in Mogri.

On Tuesday we had our meeting.

On Wednesday we went to the owner of the factory and demanded our minimum loan.

On Thursday the owner barred the workers from entering the factory.

On Friday we went to court.

On Saturday the court ruled in our favour.

On Sunday we had a holiday and were happy. »

Paniben has written and composed this song. Today it is the song of SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) and they sing throughout SEWA. Exposure Programme with SEWA, India 1992

The key elements in each and every exposure programme – irrespective of the individual design - are **meeting, reflection and dialogue**. They are what makes a process possible whereby, via reflection on what has been experienced, the participants are able to derive **consequences** which they consider necessary and realisable in their personal environment and in their own fields of responsibility.

The individual Exposure Programmes are designed in accordance with their aims. They can be like advanced training courses and can be directed towards orienting the participants towards the tasks of poverty alleviation and making them sensitive to them. They can also serve more operational purposes, e.g. the development of sectoral concepts for sustainably securing the vital resources needed for holistic development, of specific promotional instruments to build up independent savings and credit institutions, and the designing of cooperative relationships between autonomous groups within society and the government. Moreover, exposure and dialogue programmes with an ecclesiastical and pastoral orientation are also carried out. Of particular interest is the replication of innovative approaches to solutions and the systematic evaluation of lessons learned in the individual Exposure Programmes.

The aims and focal areas also determine the design of the different phases of an exposure programme: preparation, implementation in the exposure country and evaluation after the participants have returned home. The contents are agreed between the organisers and the participants or the institutions on whose behalf the exposure is being organised.

Meeting - Exposure: being exposed to the reality of life of the poor, learning from the poor

The central core of an exposure programme is the direct **meeting** with poor or socially excluded people, who are actively trying to improve their living conditions. For a short time, usually three days, the participants, generally in groups of two (one woman and one man) are the guests of a family. They live with the family, experience their daily life – as far as circumstances allow – in the home environment, at work in the fields or in the factory, going to market, or at the meetings of a self-help organisation. They are exposed to the reality of the world in which their hosts live, hence the name “**exposure**” programme.

Through the “life stories” of their hosts, which they learn about during the course of conversations (with the help of interpreters, known as **facilitators**), and through their own observations, the participants understand the road their hosts are travelling in order to leave poverty behind them. They get to know the perspective of the poor, see the positive changes and get an impression of the many economic, cultural and political obstacles which must be overcome and the strength needed to do this.



Doña Manuela, wife of the mayor of Ayo-Ayo (Bolivia), is sharing her everyday life with Karin Kortmann, German parliamentarian

Three guiding ideas mark the days of the meeting:

- **Contextual conditions:** The long and weary path from poverty and oppression to freedom gives the visitors important insights into the links between the individual fate of the host family and the respective social situation and general economic and political conditions at home and abroad.
- **Help towards self-help:** The exposure allows a meeting to take place between two human beings: the guests meet the self-help actors. These are innovative people, who have developed strategies for overcoming obstacles in their situations, and as such they carry in their heads wisdom and knowledge.
- **Holistic human development:** The visitors experience that within their efforts to sustainably overcome poverty, the host families are not only concerned with improving their economic situation, but also with their holistic development in a cultural, social and political sense.

«It is a life on the brink of disaster, a life that the least little thing can threaten and that does not just apply to certain individuals, in principle it applies to the whole village. »

Angelika Sülzen, participant, Exposure Programme with ORAP, Zimbabwe 1994

«What impressed me most was an elderly, extremely thin and emaciated woman I had met at the centre already in March and the way she had changed. At that time she had just joined the group. Tear-stained, stooping, completely exhausted and drained she had spoken of her suffering in the family. In the meantime she had changed beyond recognition. Upright, graceful and cheerful looking, she told us how she had freed herself from all burdens, she now takes her own decisions in life, she no longer allows her husband and her adult sons to maltreat her. I spent the whole afternoon looking at this woman in amazement. In March, I had said she probably has neither the disposition nor the power to change. It is too late. »

Marlies Thalhammer, participant, Exposure Programme "Solidarity action against violence to women", Brazil 1997

The **practical** means which the participants can use to help themselves see things from the perspective of the poor and excluded and understand their self-help efforts are the **life stories** they write about their hosts and the reports which record their learning experiences in a very subjective way.

« To influence politics, that will be the job of our children. That is why we want to give them a good education. »

Sahera, host, Exposure Programme with Grameen-Bank, Bangladesh 1989

« These stories cannot simply be collected as donations are collected. Sharing the lives of others requires deep respect and grateful reflectiveness. »

Leo Schwarz, participant, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh 1997

The Poor and I

You came to experience it yourself:

How do the poor survive?

How far can you follow...?

Will you soon be fed up of injustice, suffering and pain?

Or do you immerse yourselves in the simple joys of the poor?

The First World lets itself into the reality of the Third...

A world which is very different, – and still

we are all human beings – some are allowed to be it more than others...

One question: Do we see, do we experience the same reality?

Are your fears the same as mine?

Your tears the same as mine?

Where is your heart?

What do you cling to? What is really important for you?

Do we follow the same direction – together?

Or am I – too slow?

You can choose...

But the poor and I remain.

Ernesto V. Baskinas, Exposure Programme with CENDHRRRA, Philippines 1987

understanding

Reflection and Dialogue – involving the participants in the process of poverty alleviation

The meeting is followed by a phase of **reflection** and **dialogue**, generally at a location not too far away, which lasts about two days. By reflecting together and alone, talking with one another and with representatives of the participating self-help or partner organisations, and with knowledgeable local and international experts, the participants deepen the personal impressions and experiences gained during the meetings.

The phase of reflection and dialogue, which is set against the background of life as experienced by a poor family, is concerned with

- learning about the mechanisms and rules which determine the way in which self-help systems function;
- understanding the concepts and strategies of the self-help organisations which support these people;
- identifying generally applicable factors of success denoting replicable self-help approaches which are relevant for structural change.

« Bring the bank to the people and not the people to the bank. »

Prof. Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh 1987

« Participation, support, reciprocal control: these are the elements which need to come together for successful self-help. A rule of the Grameen Bank is that the third and fourth member of a group – the order is defined by the group members themselves – can only get a credit if the first two members have been punctual with their repayments during the first eight weeks. So the group members are linked together in success and in failure. »

Karl Osner, Success or Failure, New Ways to Fight Against Poverty in the Third World. Die Zeit, Nr. 52, 1987.

exchanging

The responsibilities of a workers unionist:

« She goes from door to door.
She keeps contact to the people.
She does something for them.
Therefore she has credibility.
She is patient and persevering.
She intercedes for them. »

Namrata Bali, Director of the SEWA-Academy, Exposure Programme with SEWA, India 1992

Within this wide thematic framework, the individual Exposure Programme is designed according to the local possibilities and with a view to specific goals and interests among the participants. Technical, institutional, methodical or personal aspects are plucked from a whole range of problems relating to self-help oriented, participatory poverty alleviation. The focus of attention here is how **significant** and how **typical** these aspects are.



Dialogue: Dr. Ela Bhatt and Renana Jhabvala (SEWA) with Karl Osner (Association for the Promotion of North-South-Dialogue)

Two guiding ideas mark the reflection and the dialogue:

Becoming part of the process oneself: The participants encounter a foreign way of life. This opens up the possibility for reflecting on the range of their own personal and professional experiences. Bringing this background into the dialogue enriches the exchange. It is simultaneously the discovery of the unique way each individual tackles a given situation. The dialogue demands openness and respect in order to meet the poor as human beings and as the **subject** of their own development.

Development has got a face: The personal meeting in the exposure and the platform which the dialogue creates belong together. They open up a chance for both sides, those directly affected and the policy-makers, to get nearer to a point from which they can perceive the same truth. This can be the starting point for a process which offers alternatives which are creative and free from pressure and manipulation.

«By the way, I soon realised that Mir Hussain – except for a few occasions – kept to very exact times of praying. He unfolded his prayer rug next to his bed: the perfect example of a devote Muslim. His desire to say his prayers fitted in well with my saying the breviary and so we prayed in parallel. Mir Hussain's prayers were certainly much more characterised by symbolic gestures, embracing the ground, low bows. My praying position, sitting on the bed, is more a static readiness. The prophet has done a good job as far as the timing is – praying in parallel works well. »

Leo Schwarz, participant, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh 1997

« But there is something else: in some moments I feel like stepping out of myself and taking another point of view, by which I re-encounter myself in India. One's internal geography has changed, it has been enriched. New pictures have developed, they "form" in their totality a new scenario of the world. To what extent, parallel to that, I myself change perceptibly – I don't know. Maybe friends and colleagues perceive changes better and more clearly than I. »

Thomas M. Müller, participant, Exposure Programme with CENDHRRRA, Philippines 1987

Acting, networking: a workshop for practical solidarity

Meeting and dialogue create the foundations for individual and joint action: in the final phase of the exposure programme, jointly examining and deepening the collective experiences and evaluating the programme and the actions which the participants decide to take as a consequence are in the foreground. Depending on the length of the programme up to two days are spent on this section.

Guiding ideas which mark the goal-oriented objectives of an exposure programme

- **Creating impulses:** participation in an exposure programme is meant to provide an **initial impulse** towards a path which the participants will take and further develop themselves. In their efforts they have in mind the example of the person they met during the exposure: they see this person in their mind's eye, as the focus of all their efforts.

With the other participants from their exposure, and past and future participants, they can become links in a chain, which stretches from the person they met until it finally reaches German taxpayers and voters, who must be won over to the notion of providing enough funding for development policy.

«In the middle of the conversation Amena puts her cutter aside. The material provided has been manufactured and carefully laid together in a bundle. She stands up, goes out of the shack and comes back with a truss of bamboo strips, all of the same length. She carefully lays the first two strips together to form a cross and determines with the help of another strip the exact middle of the cross. Some more strips are plaited together with the others. From the centre outwards a woven object with a star shaped pattern gradually forms. The surface beneath her skilled hands grows fast. In the course of the conversation a beautiful basket takes shape, just as our vision of Amena's life which is full of privation becomes clearer. »

Jochen Drumm, participant, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh | 1997

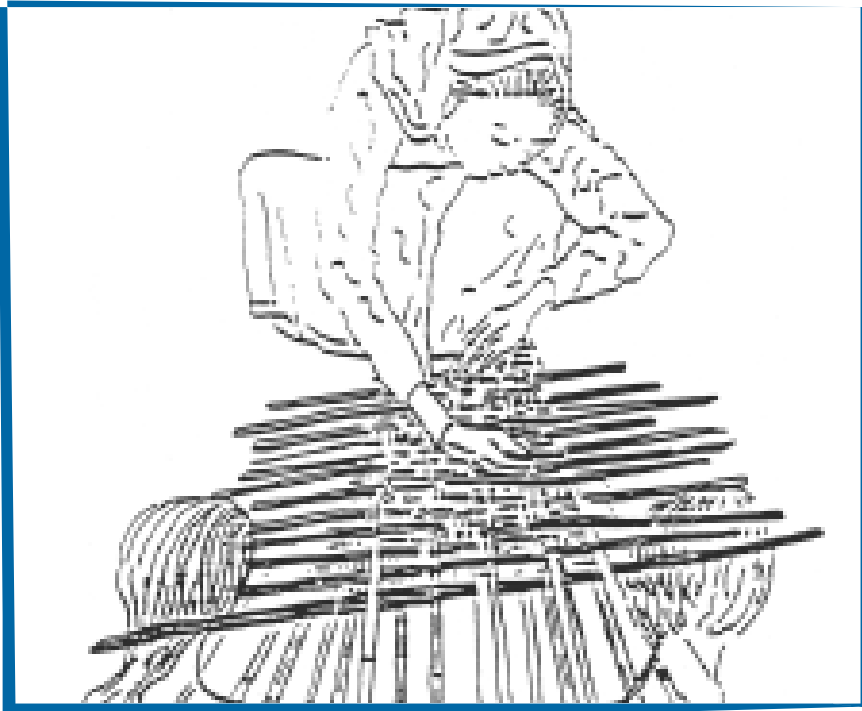
- **Forming new alliances of solidarity:** The dialogue can be a means of developing “social energy”, which is important for building alliances. The individual programmes are already directed towards this end through the complementary composition of the participants. The organisers of the individual programmes also help, creating together with the partners of the South a **framework** for the individual exposure programme, which helps the participants to overcome uncertainties and let their creativity unfold.
- **Achieving synergistic effects:** The **workshop of solidarity in practice**, which is how the exposure programme sees itself, aspires to contribute to the development of humanely decent structures, in which personal alliances form the cornerstones: the will to give one another mutual support is an expression of solidarity in practice and typifies the joint learning process.

«What will be of use to the experts in the institutions? It will be the “experience derived from everyday life”. As the participant from the German Bank for Reconstruction stated, the professional and personal decisions guided by reason should also be influenced by emotionally gained experiences. »

Participant, Exposure Programme with ORAP, Zimbabwe 1994

These guiding ideas also determine the steps which follow after the participants return home: since systematic evaluation of the manifold experiences which are recorded in the life stories and personal reports requires time and a certain temporal distance, the stay in the exposure country is followed a few months later by a follow-up meeting in Germany. The central focus at this meeting is on the **consequences**. Furthermore, the evaluation of the programme, which is done together with representatives of the partner organisation, is also important. With regard to the implementation of the results, the final part of an exposure and dialogue programme is the recapitulation of the many steps which make up an exposure programme: the preparations, the meetings, reflections and dialogues during the programme in the exposure country and afterwards.

acting



Interweaving
Egbert Verbeek, Bonn 1998

Examples from the workshop

A few examples may show the breadth of contributions from participants in past exposure programmes:

Within the framework of **economic, social and development** policy tasks

- launching political initiatives, such as parliamentary inquiries and the initial steps leading to hearings and parliamentary decisions;
- contributions to policy dialogue with groups within society and political parties;
- development of adapted promotional concepts, instruments and methods for promoting self-help processes;
- contributions in national daily papers, magazines, radio and television programmes;
- elaborating of academic papers.

Within the framework of tasks within their **own society**

- development of teaching material for young people and adults;
- contributions to the design of academic education and training in German institutes of higher education;
- involvement in the development of strategies directed towards overcoming unemployment in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Plans for future activities show that the development of exposure and dialogue programmes is by no means concluded: in terms of topics, the focus is increasingly on development strategies which are directed towards holistic and sustainable development and have a **system-building** character.

Background history and experiences, areas of application, publications, agencies

Background history

The first so-called **exposure programmes** were developed by the Catholic Church in Asia following the Second Vatican Council. Bishops, who mainly came from the middle and upper classes, lived for several weeks or months among the poor. From this, a method of **exposure** or **immersion** was developed. It was directed towards orienting development according to the needs of the poor, as demanded by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and is today mainly used within the context of the dialogue between confessions and religions.

Background experiences

In Germany, exposure and dialogue programmes have been implemented since 1985, first by the German Commission for Justice and Peace and later on by the Association for the Promotion of North-South Dialogue which was co-founded by the former, in connection with the reorientation of official development co-operation more towards self-help oriented poverty alleviation, which was introduced by the German government and parliament in 1983. Up to the end of 2001, a total of 35 programmes of various kinds and lengths involving some 800 participants altogether from the worlds of politics, economics, society, the churches, science and the media have been implemented in Africa, Latin America and, above all, Asia.

Fields of application

The range of goals and anticipated results which can be pursued with the exposure and dialogue programme is not fixed, rather it can be tested on a case-by-case basis using concrete set tasks – or in the case of new approaches or partners a pilot exposure can be used. Whilst initially the motivation and sensitising of key decision makers was in the foreground, nowadays exposure programmes are also used as a means of achieving specific **operational** tasks such as feasibility studies, investigating the preconditions for sustainable development approaches or the preparation of a policy dialogue. One effect of the programmes is always personal learning for the participants, thus enhancing their qualifications.

The exposure programmes carried out since 1996 for example within the framework of national and international development co-operation (e.g. on behalf of the World Bank or the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development) and within the framework of the world-wide mission of the church have concentrated on the following topics:

- the design of organisational processes and social security systems;
- social development as a precondition for the sustainability of household businesses promoted with micro credits and as a component of holistic development;
- examining the possibility of replicating the Grameen Bank (Bangladesh) approach in other Asian countries from the point of view of the compatibility of the goals: orientation towards **poor** target groups and **sustainable** financial services;
- the sustainability of projects when it comes to securing the vital natural resource base and their replication;
- new concepts of preaching the faith and of social pastoral commitment.

Publications

The results of the exposure programmes are systematically processed and either appear in the series of books published by the German Commission for Justice and Peace or are incorporated in work aids, methodical guidelines and teaching materials. They are based on the contributions made by the participants and include the life stories of the people visited, personal experience reports, artistic contributions, geographical maps, economic analyses, photographs, films and original materials of the partner organisations. The list of publications and an overview of past and planned exposure programmes can be obtained from the offices of the exposure and dialogue programmes or looked up on the internet.

The Exposure and Dialogue Programme Association

The implementing association of the Exposure and Dialogue Programmes is the equally named and non-profit registered association. It is composed of people whom the German Commission for Justice and Peace has appointed from among its own ranks or those of its partners. The latter include the Conference of Bishops, the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) and Misereor, the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Germany. The aim is to widen the circle of agents and agencies responsible for the programme, also in order to make it more ecumenical. Further bodies within the Association are a policy advisory board with a cross-party and inter-denominational membership and an interdisciplinary expert advisory board. The legal holder for the programme is a non-profit society registered under the same name. The exposure and dialogue programme is financed with using project funds from the German Commission for Justice and Peace, supported by contributions from the German Conference of Bishops, from Misereor and Missio, income from contracts, and donations and participants' contributions.

Signs of Hope

« What I have seen during these days has been transformation in an elementary sense, in a further sense:

Hopelessness turns into hope,
Hamila:

« When I held the first credit in my hands, I felt as I had jumped into a river. Either I would drown or finally everything would become better. »

Injured poor initiated a healing
process, Habaddan:

« Sometimes, when I think back and remember how depressing my childhood was and with how little off I was able to survive, I am really proud of myself, because today I have three warm meals a day. »

Dependence turns into
independence, Sefura:

« I never want to depend on my sons, I want to work as long as I can and get more credits from the Grameen Bank in order not to be humiliated ever again like when I was a child and a young woman – about half of my life. »

Voiceless people could express
themselves, Hamila:

« Whoever doesn't take the risk can't win anything. Whoever doesn't live dies. »

Faceless people turn into
personalities, Habaddan:

« I have grown as a person, through the faith the Grameen Bank has had in people like us. »

Drifting and misery are turned into
goals, Habaddan:

« Until now I felt like I was blind. Now I will see the future through my children. If I can make my children happy, I will be very happy. »

Indifferent people turn into people
who have dreams, Habaddan:

« We have all changed because we have changed our living conditions. We have plans for the future. »

“No future” is converted into future,
Sefura:

« To live is a delight because the daily uncertainties of what the day will bring and if I and my family will have enough to eat this day are gone. Thus I have been alleviated from a heavy burden. »

Leo Schwarz, participant, Exposure Programme with Grameen Bank, Bangladesh 1997
Hamila, Habaddan, Sefura, woman borrower, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh

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(updated January 2007)

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