

**A REPORT  
ON  
“TRANSFORMATIVE NUNS’ LEADERSHIP THROUGH  
NONVIOLENCE EDUCATION”**



**Organized by Active Nonviolence Education Center (ANEC)**

**Funded by Ladakh Nuns Association (LNA) and The Swedish Tibetan Society for School & Culture**

## ***TRANSFORMATIVE NUNS' LEADERSHIP THROUGH NONVIOLENCE EDUCATION***

The 10 days Transformative nuns' leadership through nonviolence education, a collaboration between ANEC and Ladakh Nuns Association supported by Swedish Tibetan Society for School and Culture was successfully conducted from 13th - 23rd May, 2022 at Ladakh. The training saw a total of 24 women participants from different walks of life including 18 nuns, 3 Ladakhi working women and 3 young Tibetan women who are fresh graduates. The facilitators redesigned the eligibility of the participants for the nuns training with an inclusive idea of bringing diverse groups of women to help enhance the long-term vision of our Nuns community collective, therefore the idea of welcoming working women and college graduates in the same locality was developed. The age demographics of the participants ranged from 12-55 years old.

Throughout the process of designing the training modules, facilitators carefully planned sessions that are participatory, participant centered, and filled with activity-based-learning over lecture-based-training. Posters, banners, standees (Both English and Tibetan language), identity cards, booklets and certificates were printed and prepared for the participants and facilitators well before the start of the actual training.

The facilitators went to the training location on 12th May and conducted an environmental scan at the training location. On 13th May, the participants registered with their names, age, phone number, and email. During the registration process, a verbal survey was conducted by the facilitators to gain knowledge about the participant's language proficiency and their preferences. This was followed by a special tea break and a little ice-breaking activity to ease the workshop environment.



***Fig. Training facilitators (Mrs Tenzin Choezin & Ms. Migmar Dekyi) at the registration desk. 13th May, 2022***

The first day of the training started with a formal introduction by Amchi Tsering Palmo, president of Ladakh Nuns Association (LNA) and Mrs. Tenzin Choezin, Executive Director of Active Nonviolence

Education Center (ANEC). Followed by an orientation on ANEC and the NCC program by Ms. Migmar Dekyi, Project officer of ANEC. The session began with a few introductory ice breakers activities including; drawing, story-sharing and act-on your friend's hobby to get to know each other. Although there were few participants who felt emotional while sharing their life-story, they did not stop and continued to listen to every single story in the room.

A community of care & learning was formed through collective agreement to provide a safe and respectful learning environment. Also, secret friends were allotted to each participant to develop kindness through friendship which is intended to last lifelong.

The facilitators then asked all of them "Are you a leader?" and "What is leadership for you?", they were shy and looked around to find if there was anybody but as expected there was not a single hand in the air. The concept of leadership was slowly deconstructed through Gregoric mind styles survey and self & social Awareness worksheet. Every participant was very reluctant initially while the discussion identified everybody as leaders, in their own way.

The next day, participants delved deeper into the concepts of leadership through power, communication, opportunity and change. Everyone was divided into four groups; Tara, Peace, Happiness and 5 Flowers who each were randomly provided the aforementioned four concepts of leadership and took part in a heated debate which came down to one mutually accepted realization that all four are equally important aspects of leadership. While participants had a hard time understanding the domains of change, the concept was grasped a little later in their group discussions on the practical outbound that took place by the end of the 10 days. During the debates and discussions, many personal experiences were shared about the lack of opportunities for the "Jhomos"(nuns) in the Ladakhi community and how subserviently they were treated. Few emotional nuns stated how nuns were equivalent to servants in each household.



**Fig: Group discussions within team members. Team peace in the picture.**

From the third to fifth day, Ms. Tenzin Dawa assisted by the former facilitators led the sessions on understanding gender and sex, Gender based violence and Female anatomy leading to discussions on menstrual health, hygiene and taboos. Many participants were confused as to what the differences could be between sex and gender but then gradually understood with activities such as adjective rally and reading scenarios. The next day began with an introduction about gender based violence (GBV) and its types. Participants took part in role-plays and a hint of the Ladakhi community's perspective of gender was also seen through the skit. On the fifth day a discussion about female's anatomy was held. Personal reflections on the consequences of rituals and practices a woman observes were drawn and the limitations of such misconceptions were brought to the table.



**Fig: Participants presenting their group discussions of the personal reflections on the consequences of rituals and practices women observes.**

Mrs. Tenzin Choezin and Migmar Dekyi introduced nonviolent communication skills through fun filled activities such as ***find your pair, we have to move now, aggressive alligators*** and etc were led with very brief lectures with added sessions on team building & developing empathy through ***card pieces*** games were initiated on the sixth day of the training.

Further, the parameters of communication were discussed where everyone learned the importance of assertive communication through enactment of a statement and learning to say “NO” to it. Sonam Chorol, a participant of the training said “Our habits are more inclined towards passivity in our daily lives which is why it’s hard for us to be an assertive communicator “. The sessions continued through the next day by exploring conflict through different lenses and its nonviolent reconciliatory approach.





*Fig: Building effective communication skills through activities such as 'Find your pair'.*

The participants were given popcorn for refreshment and it was discussed that everyone would pop ideas and questions until the concept of conflict was clear. This module started with a skit to practice pure observation & dissecting personal biases and moralistic judgements.

Active listening was practiced through activities such as **stop listening**, **skits**, **just listen** and **origami**. Briefings about **double listening** was conducted through an important activity i.e. **Métissage**, where every participant sat in a circle holding hands, shared their stories where they were judged by the society. The activity was filled with emotions where everyone shared their confidential lived-experiences and dropped tears as they shared it in the group. Few individuals said their stories hold decade old unhealed trauma for them, however the session has allowed them to feel the trauma again but through a safer and healthier means because they felt heard and cared for. The confidentiality and respectful listening community was ensured before the start of the activity.



*Fig: The gratitude session where everyone would hold each other's hands as they shared their experiences.*

Every session began with a recap of the previous day's concepts, fulfilling secret friend's wishes amid heavy sessions, but the day always ended with discussion on group projects and a gratitude session where everyone shared what they are thankful for, one thing they learned, laughing therapy, refresher activities etc. Active participation was ensured in each activity whether it is discussions, debates, presentations, skits or drawing.



Fig: Team Tara at Mahabodhi old age home having an inter generational bonding session



Fig: Team Happiness at SOS TCV Ladakh facilitating an understanding gender and gender based violence session





Fig: Team 5 Flowers initiating an environment club and teaching gardening at Thupsten Choskhorling Nunnery



Fig: Team Peace facilitating a session on adolescent sexual reproductive education and menstrual health at Lingshad hostel, Choglamsar.

On 22nd May, the facilitators led team building exercises like minefield and shield your egg before the final instructions for the practical outbound was given. At 4:00 PM all the groups reported to the training venue to share their experience of the practical outbound.

**Team Tara** was enthusiastic about forming a circle of listeners and tried to create an inter-generational bonding session and went to Mahabodhi old age home. **Team Happiness** focused on building an inclusive society by facilitating sessions on understanding gender and gender based violence to SOS TCV Ladakh. **Team 5 Flowers** formed an environment club, educating gardening to younger nuns at Thupstan Choskorling Nunnery. And **team Peace** facilitated a session at Lingshad Hostel, Choglamsar on Adolescent sexual reproductive education and menstrual health.

The four teams have decided to sustain their group project and develop it into a full-fledged nuns leadership project for the coming year. A whatsapp group will be created by the nuns and ANEC's team will be added as mentors. Secondly, a possibility of a nuns internship program with ANEC has also been discussed. After the report, oral feedback was given where the facilitators asked once again 'Are you a leader?' and everyone cheered together and said yes, I am a leader!

"My idea of leadership has changed" one said another one said, "My confidence has drastically boosted ever since I have joined this training since it is a participatory program and everyone could speak freely."

"The practical outbound was one of the best things we learned in this training" and two of the participants including Sonam Dolkar and Tsering Yangskit said, " I look forward to this workshop so much that I even think about it during my classes".

Before the final farewell dinner, our secret friends were revealed, gifts were exchanged and fulfilled our secret friend's wishes through songs and dance. The session successfully concluded with the distribution of the training certificate and a group picture was taken.



*Fig: Final group picture with all the participants and facilitators after the certificate distribution*





Banner of the Transformative nuns leadership through nonviolence education



Mrs. Tenzin Choezin, Executive Director (ANEC)



Ms. Migmar Dekyi, Project officer (ANEC)

**NUNS COMMUNITY**  
**collective**

TRANSFORMATIVE NUNS LEADERSHIP THROUGH  
NONVIOLENCE EDUCATION



**MS. TENZIN  
DAWA**

**TRAINER**



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ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE EDUCATION CENTER

*Ms. Tenzin Dawa, Trainer (Hired)*

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