

## Determined, Self-less Leadership at Jyoti Mahila Samuha HomeNet, Nepal

***Impact:** Jyoti Mahila Samuha, a producer co-operative and member organization of HomeNet Nepal (HNN), is a testament to how important determined, self-less leadership is in running a group that can lift up its members and open opportunities for better lives.*

Established as an informal group with few members focused on empowerment of informal urban workers, Jyoti Mahila Samuha co-operative was struggling with lack of skilled leadership, informal status, and conflict in meeting the interests of home-based workers (HBWs) and other workers. In order to overcome these challenges, the group registered in 2011, and HNN began supporting and advising the co-operative. This support included sending Jyoti Mahila Samuha's leaders and members on visits to expose them to other organizations. At the same time, HNN sent the leaders to national and international leadership training programs to enhance their capacity and help them strengthen their organization.



photo: HomeNet Nepal



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Better leadership has led to an increase in membership. There are now over 100 members, the majority of whom are home-based workers.

Jyoti Mahila Samuha has developed new schemes to settle the conflict of interest between HBWs and non-HBWs. It has also established savings and credit programmes, which include child savings and an emergency fund. Skill development programmes have been put in place to improve capacities of members. Moreover, the leaders have learned ways to approach different bodies like municipalities, which have small-scale programmes at the community level.

One beneficiary of this strengthened organization is Renu Karki, a 30-year-old woman who lives in Khadipakha with her husband and son. As a home-based worker, she makes carpets of felt – a trade she has engaged in since she was 3 years old. Through the organization, she has had training on stitching and sewing and says becoming a member of the MBO has allowed her to save some money – about Rs 200 every month – and learn important information about health and sanitation.