

# Beyond Survival



**Status of Livelihood Programmes for  
Street Youth in India**

Part of this publication may be copied for use in research, advocacy and education, providing the source is acknowledged. This publication may not be reproduced for other purposes without the prior permission of Railway Children.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the students, teachers and programme coordinators at the livelihood training programmes who agreed to participate in our study. Their openness and willingness to share their experiences with us has clearly been the foundation for this report.

We are extremely grateful to Reema Patel, a graduate from McGill University in Political Science and International Development Studies, Toronto who spearheaded this study. Her eleven month internship in India with Railway Children (Mumbai) and Street Kids International (Toronto) and hence the study was made possible due to the generosity of the Canadian International Development Agency. Valuable inputs from the Railway Children team in Mumbai added greater depth to the report.

What happens when the child on the street is a child no more? What happens when the youth on the street look forward to their lives only with promises and dreams? What needs to happen for these citizens of our country? In the past three years, India's massive economic growth has led to an increase in employment and improved standards of life for many Indian citizens. Being the second fastest growing major economy in the world, the lack of sufficient opportunities for older children and youth at risk on the street is evidence of an increasingly widening chasm between the haves and the have nots. This status report is a step towards understanding and building frameworks for livelihood training programmes for children and youth at risk across India. It aims to neither be authoritative nor comprehensive, but rather, to highlight potential trends, similarities, differences, and areas for improvement.

As Abraham Lincoln said, ' We cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.' The whole effort of conducting this study will be complete only when this report can serve as a springboard from which new initiatives can begin or existing livelihood initiatives can be built upon to ensure that youth at risk have a better shot at an optimistic future. We owe it to them.

**Mrinalini Rao**  
**Country Director**  
**June 2008**



## Table of Contents

1.	Abstract.....	5
2.	Background .....	5
3.	Problems facing children/youth at risk.....	6
4.	Review of Literature.....	7
5.	Purpose and Objective of the study.....	10
6.	Structure of the Study.....	11
7.	Methodology.....	12
8.	NGO Profiles.....	13
I.	Kolkata .....	13
	<i>i. Future Hope.....</i>	13
	<i>ii. Vikramshila.....</i>	14
	<i>iii. Tomorrow's Foundation (TF).....</i>	14
	<i>iv. Development Action Society (DAS).....</i>	15
	<i>v. Janashiksha Prochar Kendra (JPK).....</i>	15
	<i>vi. Don Bosco Ashalayam.....</i>	15
II.	Delhi.....	16
	<i>vii. Salaam Balak Trust.....</i>	16
	<i>viii. Project Concern International (PCI).....</i>	17
	<i>ix. Anubhav.....</i>	17
	<i>x. Butterflies.....</i>	18
III.	Mumbai.....	19
	<i>xi. Saathi's Youth Initiative Programme (YIP).....</i>	19
IV.	Jaipur.....	20
	<i>xii. I-India's Ladli.....</i>	20
	<i>xiii. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS).....</i>	21
V.	Bangalore.....	21
	<i>xiv. Association for Promoting Social Action (APSA).....</i>	21
	<i>xv. Goodwill International Association.....</i>	22
	<i>xvi. Yuvalok.....</i>	22
	<i>xvii. Don Bosco.....</i>	22
VI.	Hyderabad .....	23
	<i>xviii. National Academy of Construction.....</i>	23
9.	Findings.....	24
10.	Analysis, discussion and recommendation.....	29
11.	Conclusion.....	36
12.	References.....	37



## 1. Abstract

With hundreds of thousands of children and youth at risk on the street in India enduring poverty and abuse, governments, non-governmental organizations and international bodies are searching for interventions to ensure the well-being of future generations, and ultimately, the economy and society as a whole. Various arguments exist as to what are the 'best' methods to educate and eventually mainstream children and youth at risk; from residential programmes to home placement, India is home to many different types of formal and non-formal education programmes. Although formal education has popularly been touted as the best way to secure a child at risk on the streets with the necessary tools to be independent and autonomous, a deeper look at the said child's situation demonstrates that, maybe, formal education is not a suitable option due to an incompatibility with his/her behavioural traits picked up from living on the streets. Vocational training is often introduced instead of formal education as a quicker, more suitable means to equip children and youth at risk with marketable skills. Railway Children has conducted a study on the status of livelihood training programmes across India to assess what is being done, what shortcomings exist, and how these findings can inform future development of educational programming for children. This report also discusses the various practical, political and economical issues relating to livelihood training.

## 2. Background

In India, the issue of children and youth at risk on the streets<sup>1</sup> has been developing rapidly for over a decade. Railway Children is an international development agency working with partners, networks and initiatives that support children at risk in and around transport terminals. Currently, we estimate at least 4,00,000 children and youth at risk around transport terminals in all of India. After the 1994 studies by UNICEF and its estimation of 12 million street children in the country, no other nationwide studies to assess this number have been done. Due to the mobility of children and youth on the street, it becomes difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate.

In India, Railway Children's work supports 19 partners across 10 states and 16000 children annually. Our vision is a world of safety and opportunity for children at risk on the streets. Many organizations are working with and on behalf of this group; the services and developmental opportunities offered to these children are often limited to provision of basic services of education, healthcare, counseling and family reintegration.

---

<sup>1</sup> Railway Children understands the term 'children at risk on the streets/street children' to be a mobile group of children, for whom surviving on the streets/ platforms without care and protection indicates and perpetuates their lack of access to equal opportunities.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in article 28, recognizes the right of the child to education. No matter how socio-economically disadvantaged, state parties are meant to offer free, compulsory primary education to all, and to encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, making them available and accessible to every child. However, the accessibility of such educational programmes is often nonexistent, and children/youth grow up without enough education and opportunity to live a life free of poverty and abuse.

Since economic liberalization in 1991, India's GDP has grown constantly with few major setbacks, making it one of the wealthiest economies in the developing world. At the same time, the distribution of wealth in India is fairly uneven, with the top ten percent of income groups earning a third of the country's income and 77% living on less than twenty rupees per day<sup>2</sup>. Children and youth at risk on the street are excluded from sharing in this wealth, since their very ways of being prevent them from accessing the education, support structures and opportunities that would allow a piece of it.

### **3. Problems facing children/youth at risk**

For many children/youth on the street, family and community support crumble under the pressure of poverty. Many of those who migrate to the streets learn to confront the street with self-reliance; they must survive by whatever means and negotiate the everyday risks and decisions of living on the streets. Children and youth at risk on the street in India are often either grown up on the streets, or come to urban centers either in search of opportunity or after leaving home due to family and/or mental health problems. They often deal with issues such as substance abuse, being branded as criminals, having health problems and irregular work in the unorganized sector or as manual labourers. Negative stereotypes are reinforced as their vulnerability leaves them prey to police roundups and being held under false charges. Their homelessness is often confused with delinquency and provides automatic grounds for arrest<sup>3</sup>. They often lack the support structures that other children and youth from low-income groups tend to have: a house to live in, family support, peer support and monetary support.

Public perceptions of youth are often quite negative; laziness and getting involved in criminal activity are examples of such stereotypes. Even if they get by, and even if they stay free of illicit work, they become "street kids" and this identity, once applied, is hard to stamp out. This stigmatizing label, coupled with a lack of stable residence creates a lack of credibility in the eyes of prospective employers in the organized sector keen on hiring people for non-temporary positions. This lack of choices in terms of work creates a cyclical predicament

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSDEL218894>

<sup>3</sup> Thomas de Benitez, Sarah. "Reactive, Protective, and Rights-Based Approaches in Work with Homeless Street Youth." *Children, Youth and Environments* (13)1, Spring 2003.



from which youth are often unable to escape the threat of stigmatization and lack of shelter. Today's youth will become the largest generation to enter adulthood<sup>4</sup>; enhancing the potential of those on the street to escape the cycle of poverty represents a move towards future economic and social development.

#### 4. Review of Literature

In the context of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, formal education is often seen as a magic wand of sorts, best suited towards empowering children. A closer look at the situation shows that children and youth at risk on the streets develop certain characteristics that make entry into formal education difficult.

##### *The script of the streets*

In Sujata Ganega's description of "the script of the streets"<sup>5</sup>, these characteristics are elaborated upon. For children and youth at risk on the streets, this "script" is deeply embedded within their very ways of being. Living moment to moment in the openness of space on the street, children learn to survive by fulfilling needs instantly. Desires for short-term gain and pleasure become the most important determinants of choices and behaviour. Some of the elements of behaviour include donning a new identity to become someone else, using aggression to get what is wanted, depending on drugs to relieve pain, quantifying the value of relationships in terms of what can be given/taken, and having to surrender personal boundaries. After a life on the streets, intense rehabilitation for children and youth is often necessary in order to mainstream them into existing within societal structures such as families, schools and workspaces. Because of these constraining factors, livelihood training, which requires high skills and less academics, can be a more appropriate approach to educating children and youth at risk on the streets.

##### *What is the government doing?*

Given the magnitude of the problem of youth at risk in India, one needs to consider the state's approach. Sarah Thomas de Benitez (2003) identifies three basic approaches that influence government policies dealing with children and youth at risk on the street. They are reactive, protective, and rights-based. The impact of these approaches play out differently into the lives of these children/youth. Only the rights-based approach responds adequately towards the legal responsibilities of such children, while the other two fall short of empowering them and respecting them adequately.

The Government of India's Ministry of Labour has various schemes set up in the field of livelihood training<sup>6</sup>. Their affiliated Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) exist within all states in the country. The minimum qualification is 8<sup>th</sup> standard pass for

---

<sup>4</sup> Sauv , Stephanie. "Changing Paradigms for Working with Street Youth: The Experience of Street Kids International." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1), Spring 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Ganega, Sujata. *Flute*. Mumbai: SUPPORT, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.labour.nic.in/database/nvtis.htm>

which various trades can be learned, including welding, tailoring, book binding, driving, and more. The next level is 10<sup>th</sup> standard pass, for which a variety of trades can be learned, including repair of various mechanical equipment. Following that is the 12<sup>th</sup> standard pass, for which many more trades can be learned, including power electrician work, physiotherapy technician work and more. Finally there is the B.Sc. pass for which many more advanced skills can be learned.

The reality of the situation is that many youth at risk, including those who have grown up on the street without family support, do not have high enough educational qualifications to participate in these programmes. Unable to access these government services, NGOs try to fill the gap in what exists and what is needed by providing livelihood training programmes to youth at risk.

#### *Shortcomings of existing livelihood programmes*

Railway Children recognises various costs to society and individual children/youth at risk on the street where there is a lack of programming directed at such children. Poor educational achievement can come to represent poor job prospects, which represents not only lost productivity (thus reducing potential income for society) but also lost political and social potential for society's growth. As mentioned above, children at risk often lack the community and family support structures which could help them succeed in formal education programmes; many NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) have come to look for more solutions in bridging the gap between such children and poor job prospects. In this respect, livelihood training programmes represent the provision of life skills, trade skills and social skills to children and youth at risk so that they can live independent lives with financial freedom.

Depending on the comprehensiveness of the programme and the vision of the NGO, livelihood training can focus on technical vocational skills as well as include awareness-raising, skills counseling, skills mentoring, life skills, entrepreneurial skills development, on-the-job training, post-training job placement support, negotiating with and lobbying local employers/institutions/government, and providing small grants, loans and equipment. However a lot is lacking in this area:

- Most voluntary organisations are limited by their memorandums which allow them to work only with “children” and not “youth”. Children are considered to be under the age of eighteen years; once a child is older than eighteen, he/she is often no longer eligible to access such programmes.
- Youth at risk (above eighteen years) are often excluded from accessing services and programmes, as they are seen as “difficult to reintegrate” into society, and some programmes are reluctant to invest in them. In this case, NGOs are not addressing the issue that, in India, even middle class youth with families and support structures do not have the ability to be financially independent, employed, and ready to navigate their own lives by the age of eighteen.

- Most older children and youth at risk who have grown up on the streets have already been in contact with NGOs and have felt abandoned by them once they turn eighteen, because most organisations expect that the youth would be 'independent' by then. Street educators, simultaneously, struggle with the reality of these children's lives. Both parties are often disillusioned with each other.

The merit of livelihood training programmes for children and youth at risk is not a universally accepted belief. Jandhyala B.G. Tilak (1998) explores this idea by explaining that arguments for vocational training programmes are based on untested hypotheses that are, as the experience of the economies reveals, untrue. He explores the "vocational school fallacy" and says that vocational training cannot be a remedy for unemployment. Eventually, he concludes that if vocational training is to be successful, then various conditions need to apply, and even then, success is not automatic since the problems of vocational training are bound up with "intricate economic, technical and social variables"<sup>7</sup>.

### *Entrepreneurship*

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon that cuts across disciplines. It is used to denote a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting which is opportunity-oriented. It is much more than starting a new business; rather, it is a process whereby individuals become aware of the self-employment career option, develop ideas, take and manage risks, learn the process and take initiative in developing and owning a business<sup>8</sup>. In the context of children and youth at risk, entrepreneurship programmes can encourage economic empowerment, enhance income-generating ambitions and abilities, enable basic business management skills for operating micro-enterprises, and provide access to micro-credit for the initiation of business ventures. Youth at risk often encounter a need for autonomy and independence, the skills for survival and the determination to survive: these qualities provide great starting points for future entrepreneurs<sup>9</sup>

Street Kids International (SKI) is a Canadian NGO using innovative entrepreneurship tools called the Street Business and Street Banking Toolkits which are designed for youth workers to use directly with youth at risk on the streets. These curricula use visual aids and practical, interactive and participatory methods to eventually get youth to submit business plans and receive a micro credit loan.

SKI's experience in 1996 working with the Zambia Red Cross Society and the YWCA Council of Zambia's joint undertaking called The Youth Skills Enterprise Initiative on the Street Business Toolkit demonstrated that the impacts on

---

<sup>7</sup> Tilak, Jandhyala B.G. "Vocational Education in South Asia: Problems and Prospects". *International Review of Education*. Springer. 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Chigunta, Schnurr, James-Wilson, Torres. "Being 'Real' about Youth Entrepreneurship in Eastern and Southern Africa: Implications for Adults, Institutions and Sector Structures". Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> "Youth Skills Enterprise Initiative: A Zambian Case Study of Micro-Enterprise and Micro-Credit Support for Street-Based Youth". Toronto: Street Kids International, 2002.

participants were tremendous. With an aim to impart entrepreneurship to thirty-six to forty-five youth per year, this project's impact on youth was as follows: Greater financial resources to buy essential goods, reduced involvement in high-risk behaviour, friendship and support from other participants, and a sense of pride, self-identity, and purpose. Additionally, impacts were had on families, whose financial burdens were lessened by the youth's contributions, and also communities, which were being filled with more positive role models<sup>10</sup>.

#### *Children/youth at risk and livelihood training*

The definition of livelihood training was once oriented towards training for the performance of a specific job post. On the basis of Railway Children's review of literature, a more current definition of livelihood training is that which tries to provide broader abilities that may allow workers to act in a wide range of working situations: occupations, occupational clusters and the labour market in general. Whereas such training used to consist of a limited period usually prior to the active learning life, it has now become a continuous process through people's lives, strengthening the links between other forms of education, both formal and informal<sup>11</sup>.

In India, livelihood training programmes exist in a variety of different forms. Types of technical training can include (but are not limited to) carpentry, cosmetology, tailoring handicrafts, jewelry making, screen printing, computer training, baking, driving, sewing, diya/candle making etc. Depending on the local labour market needs, NGOs are choosing to train children at risk in context-specific trades. While some organisations have made their vocational training programmes a success, a majority of organisations are still struggling with the same and are unable to provide the children with a training that is viable and can bring them a steady source of income. While skills' training is, in itself, a tool with which street children can become competent at a particular trade, such instruction often needs to be supplemented with other training and/or services before it can become an economic opportunity. Many NGOs do consider this need and set up further training and structures to facilitate entrepreneurship and employment. Access to credit, follow-up and extension services are provided by some NGOs. With more than 20 years of the emergence of the issue of street children and organisations and government schemes developed to deal with this issue, the area of livelihood programmes for older children and youth at risk remains a much neglected area.

## **5. Purpose and Objective of the study**

### *Objectives*

Given this scenario Railway Children has undertaken a study on the status of livelihood programmes in India for children and youth at risk on the streets in India with the understated objectives:

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>[http://www.oit.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/tunion/casanova/pdf/what\\_is.pdf](http://www.oit.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/tunion/casanova/pdf/what_is.pdf).

- To survey and document the current state of livelihood training programmes available to older children and youth at risk on the street in Mumbai and across India.
- To focus on lessons learnt and contributing features of success stories in attempts to find relevant, up-to-date livelihood training models.
- To understand the lacunae or setbacks and pitfalls of livelihood training programmes which have not been successful.

*Expected Outputs:*

- Understanding of the various interventions regarding livelihood training programmes for older children and youth at risk on the street.
- Documentation of various livelihood training programmes both through print and audio-visual media.
- Understand various success stories of work with children and youth at risk in providing vocational training programmes.

*Expected Impact:*

At the societal level, improved livelihood training for children and youth at risk represents the utilization of available productivity, which in turn increases potential income for society as well as political and social potential for the growth of Indian society. The projected impact of this study is as follows:

- Railway Children will be better informed to incorporate lessons learned in order to initiate livelihood based interventions.
- The creation of a roadmap of linkages between government schemes, corporates and livelihood training programmes.
- Other organizations with livelihood training programmes will be better informed to continue developing their programming and approach.

## **6. Structure of the Study**

The paper begins with an introduction to the issue of children at risk on the streets and livelihood training. A review of literature follows. Definitions are made clear and purposes of the study are outlined. Methodologies are explained. Following that, profiles of all the organizations visited are laid out. Findings of the study are clubbed as follows: Focusing on the status of livelihood training for children at risk across the country, descriptions of varieties of livelihood training programmes, children and livelihood training, livelihood training and job opportunities, and government schemes. Following that, an analysis of findings and discussion of issues are presented. Issues discussed include: production units as child labour, relevance of training, additional components to technical vocational training, livelihood training as a way of reinforcing class-based inequalities, and paradigm shifts in the context of livelihood training. A conclusion follows.

## 7. Methodology

### *Methods*

In order to observe livelihood training in different parts of the country, we visited programmes in six urban areas: Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Bangalore. We chose these cities since they are all state capitals, and most of them are among the largest metropolises in India. On the basis of Railway Children's twelve years working in India, we have found that there are high concentrations of children at risk in these areas, and there have been several programmes in these areas for the past twenty years.

Interviews were conducted through semi-structured questionnaires. We interviewed programme coordinators, and in some cases, teachers and children. We also observed the programmes by visiting classes and facilities and interacting with children and staff at times. Upon completion of the draft, all participating organizations were forwarded a copy, and their inputs then incorporated into the report.

### *Time Schedule*

Research into this status report began in December of 2007 and ended in April 2008. In December, programmes in Kolkata were visited; in January, programmes in Delhi were visited; in March, programmes in Hyderabad, Bangalore and Saathi in Mumbai were visited; and in April, programmes in Jaipur were visited.

### *Limitations of the Study*

- At times, the validity of data garnered from interviews is difficult to validate since it comes from interviews conducted with programme coordinators. This method is limited in that there is nobody else with whom which information could be cross-checked. The inherent subjectivity of a single method makes it difficult for the researcher to assess the complete accuracy of the data.
- Another limitation of the study included the fact that many a time, details about training programmes had not been recorded, so programme coordinators were speaking from memory or incomplete records.
- Language barriers also existed in one or two cases since the interviews were conducted in English and some programme coordinators found it difficult to express themselves in English. In interviews conducted with children, language proved to be a greater issue due to the fact that, depending on the language courses offered in various livelihood training programmes, most of the children could not speak English. With such children, most interviews were conducted in Hindi either with a fluent Hindi speaker or a beginner Hindi speaker. Due to the inconsistency in fluency of language on the parts of both the children and some interviewers,

some of these answers must be considered and interpreted with this barrier in mind.

- Finally, we were unable to determine the cost effectiveness of livelihood training programmes visited since we were unable to get data about budgets, costs, and production unit finances.

## 8. NGO Profiles

The following section will provide brief summaries of the cities and livelihood training programmes visited for the purpose of this report.

### *1. Kolkata*

*Kolkata, formerly known as Calcutta, is the capital of the state of West Bengal. Located in eastern India on the east bank of the Hooghly River, the city has a population of almost 4.5 million, with an extended metropolitan population of over fourteen million, making it the third largest urban agglomeration and the fourth-largest city in India. Though it is the main business, commercial and financial hub of eastern India, it experienced a steady economic decline after Indian independence in 1947 due to unstable political conditions and a rise in trade unionism supported by left-wing parties. The liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s has resulted in the improvement of the city's wealth. The informal sector comprises over 40% of the city's labour force, and there is a large unskilled and semi-skilled labour population<sup>12</sup>. The city's economic revival was led largely by information technology services, with the sector growing at 70% yearly, twice that of the national average<sup>13</sup>.*

#### *i. Future Hope*

Future Hope is a school and home for children at risk in Kolkata which has been running for twenty years. Future Hope's educational programme focuses on formal education and it does not offer livelihood training to students, though four to five children a year are sent to Don Bosco Ashalayam in Howrah for livelihood training, provided they have completed the eighth standard. Future Hope then finds jobs for children who have finished the training programme; the staff have many connections around Kolkata and children are often placed in jobs wherein they have good chances of being promoted, such as in hospitality or in big companies as clerical assistants. Additionally Future Hope offers rehabilitative counseling at Genesis Foundation for children suffering from substance abuse.

Future Hope operates on the principle that the best way to mainstream a child at risk is to provide him/her with formal training and a family setup in order to break the cycles of poverty and abuse. Families provide the children with the

---

<sup>12</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata>

<sup>13</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing\\_continents/4830762.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/4830762.stm)

love and support necessary to excel academically, and ultimately, enter the job force with higher qualifications than technical training. Director Paul Walsh's view on the matter is that children in livelihood training courses "could do better" with their lives, and formal education equips them with greater opportunities to succeed. Some of the students at Future Hope have gone on to do post-graduate studies and have obtained scholarships to prestigious schools and colleges abroad. Children leave the shelter homes when they feel ready to do so. After children leave, Future Hope keeps has a rigorous follow-up system of keeping in touch with the child, as a family would. Most children frequently come back to visit Future Hope.

*ii. Vikramshila*

Vikramshila started in 1989 and introduced a livelihood training programme called the Nabadisha Programme in 1999. With 24 centers and 2200 children in its programme, Vikramshila operates in high-crime areas in Kolkata so as to offer children living in such areas marketable skills with which they may earn a living without having to turn to criminal activity for survival.

Vikramshila's approach to livelihood training includes structured courses in informal sector trades which can give children standardised credentials. Vikramshila identifies a discrepancy in the vocational courses offered today with those skills that are currently in demand in the market. They do not, however, have the funds or time to put more effort into reinvigorating their livelihood training programme.

Vikramshila started a pilot project called the Relevant Vocation programme in the late nineties. It was created in an attempt to get children to understand how businesses succeed. In three or four villages in West Bengal, children in seventh and eighth standard did in-depth studies on various businesses like tea stalls, honey dealers, and medicine shops, comparing those that were successful and unsuccessful. Vikramshila eventually lost funding for the project and the programme only lasted for a year.

*iii. Tomorrow's Foundation (TF)*

Tomorrow's Foundation (TF) started in Kolkata in 1990, and its livelihood training programme was created in 2001. They choose to call their training programme "Development of Adolescence through Skill Development".

At the time of interview, there were 120 students enrolled in the livelihood training programme. The main focus of the programme is on formal education and skills training, and their approach to training children is need-based. TF teaches children at risk on the street, from slums and red light areas, and from other poor/high risk areas.



TF offers various additional services like life skills training, entrepreneurial skills development, on-the-job training, post-training job placement support, negotiating and lobbying with local employers, language training, compulsory computer training and prevocational training. Skills training courses offered were determined based on a 2006 market survey carried out by TF.

The programme has a production unit which makes and sells greeting cards and gifts. Items are sold on an order basis to individuals, international clients, and corporates, as well as in exhibitions.

*iv. Development Action Society (DAS)*

Development Action Society (DAS) started in 1995, and introduced a livelihood training programme six years ago. Training is offered to women and older children in four centers across semi-urban areas of south east Kolkata. DAS also focuses on formal education, non-formal education and healthcare. At the time of interview there were 32 students enrolled in livelihood training.

Trades offered were determined based on a market survey which found that jute bags were in high demand due to a ban on plastic bags in the market. DAS also offers other types of skills training. In addition to this, they offer entrepreneurial skills training workshops run by the state government's jute technology branch once a year to programme participants. They also offer exposure visits, prevocational training, loans and have done job placements in the past. DAS has production units for each of its trades offered.

*v. Janashiksha Prochar Kendra (JPK)*

Janashiksha Prochar Kendra (JPK) has been running a livelihood training programme for young girls in the red light district in Kolkata since 1994. They do not have residential facilities, but offer various courses which were decided upon after consulting with shopkeepers and stall owners in the area. JPK is a member of City Level Plan of Action (CLPOA), a networking body working for the cause of children at risk in partnership with NGOs and with support from governments of India, West Bengal and Kolkata, the West Bengal Police, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, UNICEF and corporate houses. JPK has ten livelihood training centers, and most students are between the ages of fourteen and twenty.

JPK also offers on-the-job training, prevocational training, loans and job placement to its students. They also have a production unit that creates garments on an order-basis and sells them in shops and exhibitions.

*vi. Don Bosco Ashalayam*

Don Bosco Ashalayam's livelihood training programme for children/youth on the street has been running since 1984. The livelihood training course at Don Bosco Ashalayam is a full time course. Whereas Don Bosco has formal educational

curricula, the livelihood training is a separate entity focused towards children who choose to end their schooling in favour of learning a trade.

Though the programme has been running since 1984, it was regularized in 2001 with the advent of fixing skills training according to the needs of the children and the changing market. The programme is targeted towards children at risk living on the streets, but Don Bosco Ashalayam does accept students who may not be living on the streets who are referred by other organizations. Their beautician's course which caters towards girls comprises exclusively of girls from slum areas.

Don Bosco Ashalayam offers both a night shelter for children who come and go from the centre, and a permanent residence for children who have committed to staying at the centre. Only permanent residents access the livelihood training.

In addition to skills training courses, Don Bosco Ashalayam offers: life skills training, entrepreneurial skills development, on-the-job training, post-training job placement support, negotiating with and lobbying local employers, providing small grants/loans/equipment, language training, computer training and prevocational training. They also have a production unit, and items are sold on an order-basis or at exhibitions and shops.

## *II. Delhi*

*Located on the banks of the Yamuna River in northern India, Delhi is the capital of India. With an extended metropolitan population of over 27 million, it is India's largest metropolis. It has grown to be a cosmopolitan city owing to the immigration of people from across the country. Today, it is a major cultural, political and commercial center in India. Delhi's service sector has expanded in part due to the large skilled English-speaking workforce that has attracted various multinational companies. Key industries include informational technology, telecommunications, hotels, banking, media and tourism. Delhi's manufacturing industry has also grown considerably as many consumer goods have established manufacturing units and headquarters in and around Delhi. Delhi's retail industry is one of the fastest growing industries in India, though it is expected to adversely affect the performance of traditional unorganized retail trading systems.*

### *vii. Salaam Balak Trust*

Salaam Balak trust, established in 1988, offers educational programming, mental health programme and health programming for children at risk on the street in Delhi. Though they do not offer livelihood training themselves, they offer job placement and career counseling.

Children living at their centre must complete the tenth standard through formal or open schooling, and when they reach the ages of fifteen or sixteen, they are counseled in career options and assessed as per their interests and aptitudes.

Salaam Balak Trust offers additional training courses such as computer basics, communication skills, English training in the form of speaking groups, and exposure visits to jobs on a case-by-case basis. They also offer life skills training, which includes guidance on careers, relationships, coping, stress, peers, HIV/AIDS, drug use and prevention, respect, self-knowledge. Life skills training is a 6 month course for children between ten and fifteen years, and it mostly need-based.

Career counselling is done with psychologists. The children's abilities and aptitudes are assessed with the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT), Intelligence Quotient Test (IQ) and Skills Assessment Manager (SAM) tests. This psycho-diagnosis details the child's interests and capabilities and presents options for the child. Older children who are inattentive, hyperactive and have anxiety about formal school are often placed in vocational training outside Salaam Balak Trust. They receive a high level of demand from companies that want to hire their children and are able to be selective as to where the children are placed.

#### *viii. Project Concern International (PCI)*

Project Concern International (PCI) was incepted in 2000 and has had a livelihood training programme ever since. The livelihood training programme at PCI is a component of PCI's non-formal education programme. At the time of interview there were 130 children enrolled in training. They outsource whatever trades they cannot offer themselves and also have a computer center. PCI teaches different groups of children. They include children at risk on the street who sleep both on and off the street, as well as children from the New Seemapuri community.

PCI also offers life skills training which includes psychosocial counseling and lessons in self-esteem, confidence building, communication and behaviour training, entrepreneurial skills development, loans, peer education, job placements and English speaking training. They also have a savings group called Gulak. They have a production unit which produces various gifts and cards that get sold at exhibitions, to individuals and to shops.

#### *ix. Anubhav*

Anubhav has been running its livelihood training programme since the organization's inception in 1998. At time of interview, there were 110 children enrolled in training, thirty of whom lived in their shelter home.

The livelihood training is a part-time course, mostly for the fact that the children who attend the training cannot devote all their time to it since they often need

to work to make money. Anubhav has, in addition to its livelihood programme, a formal and non-formal education programme in which they link with government schools and also offer courses from the National Institute of Open Schooling. Anubhav teaches only children at risk living on the streets and railway platforms. Anubhav has a night shelter as well as a drop-in shelter.

Anubhav offers life skills training in the form of children's council, leadership skills cultivated through child-to-child outreach, and a children's savings bank. The bank also develops entrepreneurial skills by teaching the children how to save for the future. In the future, Anubhav would like to establish an entrepreneurship model for the children. They also offer exposure visits to manufacturing units in Chandni Chowk as a form of on-the-job training. Additionally, they network with manufacturers and employers to offer the children post-training job placements. English training is offered in formal education classes which some of the children attend, and computer training is an optional course. Anubhav's production unit sells items to shopkeepers and on an order-basis from manufacturers.

#### *x. Butterflies*

Butterflies has been working with children at risk in Delhi since 1989. Their work includes alternate education, a community kitchen, emergency services, health care, children's collectives and an alternate media project which provides a platform of communication for children.

Butterflies' Children's Development Bank (CDB) developed in 2001 as a means with which children could deposit and withdraw money, enabling them to start saving for the future. The CDB is managed by children, while adults facilitate it. The CDB aims to provide children at risk a means by which they can put aside their money without worrying about it being lost or stolen, letting them save money for things they need or want, and also letting them save and plan for the future.

The CDB not only provides a safe place to save money, but creates ways to channel entrepreneurial skills that are needed for survival, directing them into income generation and employment. The CDB creates funds available to the children which they can access even if they do not possess identification, birth certificates or addresses; it also provides opportunities for children's self development through designing, managing, leading and acting as advocates for the bank.

In India, the CDB is operational in Kolkata, Chennai, Muzaffarpur (Bihar), Srinagar and in twelve areas across Delhi. It has also been implemented in other countries, including Afghanistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

III. Mumbai

*Mumbai, or Bombay, is the capital of the Indian state of Maharashtra. With an estimated population of thirteen million, it is the second most populous city in India. It lies on the west coast of India, and its port handles over half of India's seagoing passenger traffic and a large proportion of its maritime cargo. Mumbai is the commercial and entertainment center of India, generating 5% of India's GDP. It also houses India's Hindi film and television industry. Economic liberalization in 1991 led to a finance boom in the mid-nineties, and the IT, export, service, and BPO sector booms in this decade. The middle class has been most impacted by this boom, and upward mobility among residents has led to a direct increase in consumer spending. Mumbai also has a large unskilled and semi-skilled labour force primarily working as hawkers, taxi drivers, mechanics and other blue collar professions. The port and shipping industry also employs many people, and in Dharavi (an area in central Mumbai) there is an increasingly large recycling industry which processes recyclable waste from other parts of the city.*

*xi. Saathi's Youth Initiative Programme (YIP)*

The Youth Initiative Programme (YIP) at Saathi in Mumbai is directed at youth at risk between the ages of 17 and 24. From their existing work with children at risk they realised that the children graduating from the many street children organisations in Mumbai had no place to go after they turned eighteen. The core of their approach is facilitation and support, rather than provisioning.

This approach aims to expand options available to youth living on the street. The Kria project (involving a paper bag production unit) and outdoor vocational training are two internal programmes that Saathi runs for the youth, while they also refer youth to external training programmes on a case-by-case basis. External training is usually with corporates and NGOs in hospitality, construction or other trades.

Job placements are either found by the corporates who take the youth as trainees or by Saathi itself. For youth who are without skills training and want to make money, Saathi provides job placement which links them with placements in security, housekeeping, catering, hotels, kitchens and other unskilled positions.

Saathi's process for reaching out to and facilitating youth in the YIP programme includes street outreach, consulting with a caseworker, placement in programmes, shelter being offered, learning how to save money, and mentorship.

#### IV. Jaipur

*Jaipur is the capital of the state of Rajasthan in western India. Today the city has 2.7 million people. Built of pink stucco, the city is studded with palaces, temples and forts, making it one of the most important heritage cities in India and a tourist hotspot. Jaipur is a centre for both modern and traditional industry. It is well-known for its gems and jewelry and handicrafts.*

##### *xii. I-India's Ladli*

I-India was established in 1993 to provide care and development for children living on the streets of Jaipur. They reach over 3000 children daily through street schools, residential homes and livelihood training centers. I-India works mainly in running temporary homes for children, livelihood training, running mobile schools for children living on the streets, HIV/AIDS intervention and awareness, and nutrition and health programmes for children in rural Rajasthan.

Ladli is I-India's livelihood training programme in Jaipur and has been running since 2005. Livelihood training at Ladli is a separate project in itself, and is not a small part of a larger educational curriculum.

Most of the children at Ladli come from the I-India shelters which accommodate 70 girls and 70 boys. Others come from neighbouring slum areas. Ladli offers jewelry making and embellishment courses for girls and handicrafts and bag making for boys. Products are sold to visitors, tourists, shopkeepers and for orders from abroad.

Ladli has not undertaken any formal surveys or studies or market needs assessment in order to determine what skills to teach. Coincidentally, Ladli decided to teach jewelry making after a jewelry designer visited them and said she could teach the children and staff. It also happens that Jaipur, a major tourist hub in India, is well known for its jewelry; if items are well crafted, considerable profits can be made. The cost of running Ladli is entirely sustained by the sale of jewelry from the production unit.

Ladli also offers life skills training, which involves learning about bodily growth and development, personal hygiene, menstruation, and HIV/AIDS awareness. On an informal level, they offer entrepreneurial skills development in that some of the boys have opened tailoring shops and Ladli trained them in management skills, loaned money and machines, and set them up with apprenticeships beforehand. Informally they provide small grants, loans and equipment on a case-by-case basis. Ladli offers English and Hindi language training. They also offer pre-vocational training during outreach, whereby outreach workers offer basic crafts training to get children interested in Ladli's livelihood skills programme.

Ladli's marketing techniques include contacting potential buyers, distributing advertising pamphlets in hotels and restaurants in Jaipur, linking with Intrepid Tours and facilitating sixty to seventy visits per year from tourists, and being featured in the Lonely Planet Indian travel guide. This combination of techniques garners them many visitors and makes sure they are well known in the Jaipur area.

*xiii. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)*

Formerly known as Shramik Vidyapeeth, JSS was started in 1967 and its name was changed to JSS in 1984. Started by the Government of India's Ministry of Education, the object was to provide livelihood training to labourers, unemployed youth and their families in urban areas. JSS visits slum areas in Jaipur and offers training to youth and adults in an informal manner. Classes take place in common places in slum communities such as government schools and temples. Courses offered include tailoring, beautician courses, electrical repair, refrigeration and air conditioning repair, book binding, fruit and vegetable preservation, dressmaking and embroidery, mobile handset repair and other courses that may vary according to the need and demand of the students. JSS also offers one "life enrichment" session per week in which there are discussions and interactive demonstrations about healthcare, savings, career development, environmental issues, HIV/AIDS and personality development. After students successfully complete courses, JSS follows up with them and tries to connect them with production centers for employment or to resource support institutions to provide loans for self-employment. There are 210 JSS centers across India.

*V. Bangalore*

*Bangalore, officially known as Bengaluru, is the capital of the state of Karnataka located in the Deccan Plateau in south eastern India. It is India's third most populous city and fifth most populous urban agglomeration. It is home to many public sectors such as heavy industries, software companies, aerospace, telecommunications and defense establishments. Bangalore is known as the Silicon Valley of India due to being the leading contributor to the informational technology industry in the country. Bangalore has some of the most well-recognized research institutions and universities in India, as well as the nation's second highest literacy rate.*

*xiv. Association for Promoting Social Action (APSA)*

APSA's livelihood training programme has been running for fourteen years. APSA teaches both rescued children from its shelter and slum children in Bangalore.

In addition to skills training APSA offers a complete sexual health course in which all students are expected to be a part. Apart from this they have a space called Inchara (which means "sounds of the birds" in Kannada) where children

participate in theatre, dance and music; exercises also revolve around social issues. APSA also provides on-the-job training, job placement support, English training, computer training and loans.

APSA's production unit makes stationery, clothes and bags and electronics and sells them to fixed clients, people visiting APSA and others.

*xv. Goodwill International Association*

Goodwill International Association's livelihood training programme has been running since the organisation's inception in 1971. They teach children from slums and from streets. They also place some teachers at observation homes to teach children in conflict with the law. They divide trades between boys and girls, with boys learning fitting, winding and computers, and girls learning computers and tailoring.

In addition to skills training, they also negotiate with employers on behalf of their students and offer computer training. They place children in jobs through personal contacts. Goodwill does not have a production unit, but takes up work from on an order-basis from various industrial enterprises, making money from labour costs.

*xvi. Yuvalok*

Yuvalok's livelihood training programme has been running for 12 years. Children at Yuvalok are former working children and/or are from slum communities. Children at Yuvalok's schools are taught vocational skills, however, those who are classified as "slow learners" go on to major in at least two trades of their choice in livelihood training. At first the children are enrolled in a prevocational course on basics that helps discipline them and get them used to a routine. Girls learn tailoring, and boys learn carpentry. All the other courses are coeducational.

Yuvalok offers various additional features. Life skills training includes counseling and courses on health and hygiene. They offer on-the-job training with their production unit. They also place students in jobs after training and offer English language training and computer training twice a week. All these additional trainings and services are offered by Yuvalok themselves.

Yuvalok's production unit sells bags and greeting cards which are bought by volunteers, corporates, overseas donors and visitors.

*xvii. Don Bosco*

Don Bosco Bangalore, established in 1980, has been running a livelihood training programme since 1998. They teach children at risk on the street as well as unaccompanied children from poorer families. They also have a residential



facility, like all Don Bosco institutes. In addition to skills training they offer on the job training, language training, computer training and other courses like yoga, karate, sports and music. They also have a production unit which does not market its products but produces items for Don Bosco's needs.

## *VI. Hyderabad*

Hyderabad is the capital city of Andhra Pradesh in South eastern India. It has an estimated population of 10 million, making it an A-1 status city. Known for its rich history, culture and architecture representing its unique character as a meeting point for North and South India, it is a multilingual culture, both geographically and culturally. It is also one of the most developed cities in India, and a modern hub of information technology and biotechnology. The service industry is a major contributor to Hyderabad's economy.

### *xviii. National Academy of Construction*

The National Academy of Construction's (NAC) trades training and certification programme has been running since 1989. NAC was established by the Government of Andhra Pradesh for the holistic development of the construction industry in India in 1989. It is registered as a society and a not-for-profit charitable organization and has residential facilities for youth.

The primary objective of setting up the NAC was to impart training to youth in construction engineering trades so that they are empowered and capable of earning a livelihood. The secondary objective was to create a pool of well-trained construction technicians to meet the demands of a world class industry in terms of skill, workmanship and productivity.

In 2007 NAC linked up with District Rural Development Authority (DRDA), a government body which focuses on poverty alleviation and women's development programmes of area, to include five to six children at risk in a 3 to 4 month training programme. The street children were to be mixed with regular classmates. The street children stayed for 3 to 4 days and ran away. Evidently, the children were not attentive and did not turn up for classes very often. They also had a limited understanding of the course curriculum. The staff found it difficult to work with the children. The programme coordinator says that the reason they ran away may be because they had not been adequately oriented by their sponsor, DRDA, into being in a structured environment; this made time schedules and training difficult to adjust to.

## 9. Findings

### *i. Status of livelihood training across the country*

Livelihood training programmes across India take on various forms. Some organizations focus strongly on livelihood training as a means to educate children at risk and improve their futures, whereas others include such training as an addition. Below are descriptions of the different types of programmes we visited across the country.

### *ii. Description of the types of livelihood trainings*

Approaches to livelihood training took on different forms across the country. Some programmes visited offered very basic programmes with just vocational training while other programmes included additional features and were more holistic in their approaches. Many programmes visited offered vocational training alongside one or two additional services. JPK, for example, offers training to girls in red light areas of Kolkata. In addition to this it places them in jobs after training, usually as facilitators of livelihood training programmes.

A few others, however, had highly developed holistic approaches to livelihood training. Saathi in Mumbai is an example of such an organization. With a deep understanding of the difficulties faced by and the aspirations belonging to youth at risk, they have developed the Youth Initiative Program (YIP). Their approach aims to expand options available to youth living on the street. Through the Kria project, outdoor vocational training, facilitating of vocational training and job placements, Saathi aims to give youth the tools needed to remove themselves from the cycle of living on the streets, having few options, and being viewed in a negative light by others.

The Kria project is a paper bag production unit wherein youth recycle paper into paper bags which are then sold to boutiques and other retail outlets. Since bag making is recognized as not much of a marketable skill, the project exists to demonstrate to youth how to live in a structured environment, thereby resocialising them into living with timetables and future plans.

The outdoor vocational training programme at Saathi began after acknowledging that many of the youth who accessed their services had high levels of strength and resilience; these attributes were garnered from living on the streets. In-house training of basics is carried out by Saathi, and then youth are sent to the National Institute of Mountaineering in Mussoorie, Uttaranchal to learn more and obtain certificates. Activities learned include trekking, river crossing and rock climbing, and then season work as instructors and guides is found in areas around Maharashtra. This programme is especially sought after by youth since it is higher paying (a trainer can make up to 3000 rupees per day at a camp), though it is seasonal. Since it is not a full-time option, Saathi regards it as supplementary training.

Saathi's process for reaching out to and facilitating youth includes four steps:

- The first is outreach on the streets, whereby contact with youth is made, and information about Saathi's systems are explained to them.
- The second step involves consultation with a case worker who facilitates a long-term plan for the youth.
- The third step involves placing the youth in a job or vocational training programme or the Kria project depending on his interests, desires and ambitions. The youth can take part in more than one programme.
- The fourth step includes offering shelter to the youth. Saathi has a graded housing system in which the youth is provided a support system while working or learning. The shelters are in low-income areas around the city. Shelters are not free of charge; the youth must contribute in different ways depending on which grade of shelter he lives in. First, youth are placed in a midway shelter with basic facilities. The duration of stay here can last from 45 days for a working youth, to three months for a youth in vocational training. Youth in training programmes are supported financially whereas employed youth pay subsidized fees. After spending time in the midway shelter, the youth is placed in a group home which has more facilities. Rents vary depending on the quality of the home but are still subsidized, whereas the maintenance and all other fees are the responsibility of the tenants. Depending on the youth's plan, he can stay in the group home for a maximum of two years.

Saathi's initiative is unique in that it places heavy importance on not fostering youth dependency on the programme. In the shelter system, the contribution that the youth must make removes the element of charity while inducing motivation for him to keep upgrading his quality of life while being able to build assets and save money.

### *iii. Integrating formal education and vocational training*

The question of formal education versus vocational training as the best means to educate children at risk and equip them with the right skills to set goals and earn a living is one that plays out in the way livelihood training programmes take shape. Some programmes visited offered just vocational training, some offered vocational training alongside non-formal education, and some put a strong emphasis on formal education as a means to complement vocational training. Don Bosco Ashalayam's approach to vocational training takes into account the child's desires before helping select a programme for him. In this case, if a child does not want to carry on in formal education, he is not forced to.

Tomorrow's Foundation includes formal education as a means to complement vocational training courses. Some of the courses taught, such as desktop publishing and financial accounting require a tenth class pass in order for basic concepts to be understood. Children at Tomorrow's Foundation are required to pass the eighth standard to be able to enroll in vocational training. One success story of a boy there who used to live on the pavement illustrates the importance in integrating formal education and vocational training. Dipankar had been with TF for seven years, during which he successfully completed his secondary examinations two years ago. He learned handmade paper gift making and

silkscreen printing for a year, and eventually was absorbed as an employee into TF's card production unit. Due to his educational and technical qualifications, he was recently hired as a teacher in a livelihood programme in Sikkim.

*iv. Private and government institutes*

Livelihood training programmes for children at risk take place not just in NGOs but also within private and government institutes. In 2007 the National Academy of Construction in Hyderabad linked with the District Rural Development Authority to include six children at risk from the streets in a three to four month training programme. The venture was not successful, however, since the children had not been adequately oriented into living in the NAC residential facility and following time schedules and training and consequently, ran away after a few days. In some cases, NGOs outsource children for training at private training institutes. Saathi refers youth to Radhakrishna Hospitality Services where they learn hotel management and are eventually absorbed as employees within the organization.

*v. Localised approaches*

Depending on geographical region, livelihood training programmes can develop differently. Types of trades offered, production unit output, levels of support offered, language of instruction and other features are often dependent on the profile of the geographical region in which the livelihood training operates. In Jaipur, for example, there is a strong tradition of gem trading and jewelry making, as well as handicraft production. Due to a considerable tourist presence as well, jewelry and handicrafts have a stronghold on the local market. Ladli in Jaipur has capitalized on this reality, producing jewelry and handicrafts and selling them not only to shops but to vacationing foreigners. Additionally, they have taken advantage of the tourist presence by linking with Intrepid tours, a company which brings tour groups to the Ladli centre 60 to 70 times per year. In Kolkata, there is a ban on plastic bags in the markets, due to which jute bags are in high demand. Jute production in West Bengal also accounts for 85% of the country's production<sup>14</sup>. Production of these bags is inexpensive and environmentally friendly, and some of the livelihood training programmes we visited trained children in jute bag production. DAS in Kolkata links with the state government's jute technology branch to arrange a three-day training on entrepreneurial skill development for its participants.

*vi. Children/youth and livelihood training*

Children enrolled in and accessing livelihood training programmes across India come from different backgrounds. Many have lived on and/or off the streets, and some of these children are living in shelters affiliated with the livelihood programme. Others live in slum communities with their families.

---

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.business-standard.com/common/news\\_article.php?autono=322013&leftnm=0&subLeft=0&chkFlg=](http://www.business-standard.com/common/news_article.php?autono=322013&leftnm=0&subLeft=0&chkFlg=)

*vii. Children's perspectives*

One of the aims of this study was to investigate how children felt about their futures and how livelihood training affects their lives. Many of the children's attitudes towards livelihood training reflected the approach put forth by the programme itself. For example, some of the children interviewed at Tomorrow's Foundation professed the importance of completing formal education as well as livelihood training as a means to secure employment. Others in the programme expressed the belief that formal education was more important, though skills training could act as a support to improve employment probability. In Don Bosco Ashalayam, however, where children have the choice as to what they'd like to study, answers regarding livelihood training versus formal education varied. One 17 year old boy who had finished up to the fifth standard stated that skills training was better since it would help him to "settle down" faster. A 16 year old boy who had stopped going to school a year ago, who had finished the eighth standard said he would like to go back to school but thought it would be hard to do so since it had been so long since he had been there. He said that livelihood training was better than school, especially since he already knew English. Some of the children also spoke about what they'd like to be when they grew up. Many expressed desires to carry on in the trade they were learning, but there were a few who had dreams that extended beyond the livelihood training they were receiving. One boy at Don Bosco Ashalayam who was training to be a welder said he would like to become a driver. Another boy who was training to be a baker said he would like to work in hotels, gain experience, mix with people, and buy a car. While livelihood training in a certain trade can sometimes compartmentalize people into staying with that trade without exploring other options, perhaps it is the responsibility of those offering training to encourage creativity and ambition in the students so that they feel apt to explore other challenges and possibilities.

*viii. Challenges faced by children in livelihood training*

Children accessing livelihood training programmes encounter various problems that sometimes inhibit them from completing their courses. Across the country, most programme coordinators said that they had difficulties in motivating children to stay in courses, due to a lack of discipline. This can be clearly seen in the example of the National Academy of Construction in Hyderabad which had tried to incorporate children at risk into its training programme. None of the children had been eased into a life with schedules and rules, and eventually they ran away from the centre, causing the programme to end prematurely. Don Bosco Ashalayam is one programme that claims it does not have problems motivating children to stay on at the centre and continue in their programmes. Perhaps this is because their methodology is based on including what they call an Adjustment Phase prior to engaging the children in livelihood training. During this phase, newcomers are integrated into the structure of the programme while their talents are identified. They participate in workshops on papermaking, candle making, book binding and card painting; this helps them to learn how to focus on a single activity for several hours. They also learn the rules and constraints of livelihood training which gives them the skills to produce output. To help keep them motivated, they set up a personal savings account during this

phase. A portion of the sales of their outputs can be saved in these bank accounts.

Another problem faced by children in some livelihood programmes is drug abuse. At Anubhav in Delhi, for example, an estimated 90% of children were users of solution, whitener, cigarettes, beedis and/or alcohol. Most programmes have a strict no-drugs policy in their centers. When children are not rehabilitated, it becomes difficult for them to want to stay in training since they cannot give up drugs.

In programmes where girls are taught, marriage proved to be a hindrance in keeping the girls in training programmes. At Ladli girls' home, programme coordinators explained that adolescent girls living in the shelters sometimes wanted to "go off with their boyfriends and get married" rather than stay on at Ladli. DAS in Kolkata also experiences the same problems with girls getting married and not making returns on the investments they've put into livelihood training. Oftentimes, husbands prevent their wives from participating in training programmes, or the women have to take care of their families.

#### *ix. Livelihood training and job opportunities*

Livelihood training programmes usually have the aim of preparing children for future employment, and aim to give them the necessary skills to do so. Of the programmes visited, various approaches to linking training with job opportunities were observed. Don Bosco Ashalayam had two job placement officers whose main duties were to network with potential employers and place children in jobs after training is completed. Future Hope in Kolkata and Salaam Balak Trust in Delhi, though they did not have appointed job placement officers, networked with future employers in order to secure jobs for children. Salaam Balak Trust claim that they have a good reputation for moulding well-adjusted young adults, and are often approached by employers looking for prospective employees. The staff at Future Hope is well connected around Kolkata and often finds good starting positions for the children, usually in offices or the hospitality industry.

Some children are trained in entrepreneurial skill development and their programme provides support in terms of loans, imparting managerial skills and more. For example, PCI in Delhi offered loans to help small children start small scale businesses, and also facilitated discussions and training on microfinance. Many organizations who did not provide entrepreneurial skill development did profess an interest in including it in their programme if they had the money and/or time to do so.

#### *x. Perceived Challenges*

Despite differences in geography, scale, experience and approach, Livelihood training programmes across the country tended to encounter similar problems:

- The most common challenge for them was motivating children who lacked commitment in courses. Since both residential and non-residential livelihood

training programmes are structured environments which demand consistency in performance, many children find it difficult to see the value in living within a framework of rules, discipline and lack of freedom as compared to life on the streets. Often they drop out of programmes and/or run away. Sometimes, though, children do not stay in programmes due to parental pressure to earn immediate money working, rather than invest in a programme which they are not sure will promise monetary gain. Ladli mentioned that they often had to convince children to stay in the programme by justifying the opportunity cost of staying on.

- With programmes catering towards girls and young women, programmes found that there would be high levels of drop-outs for the purpose of marriage. DAS found that some young women who had successfully finished training would not pursue employment in the same vocation after marriage, thus creating very little return on investments made towards them.
- Children often had unrealistic expectations of livelihood training and the success rate of certain careers. At Salaam Balak Trust, for example, children wanted to become actors without understanding the difficulty of finding work in the film industry. The programme coordinators dealt with this issue by bringing in struggling actors to speak about their hardships to the children.
- Financial problems and lack of space and infrastructure were issues that faced almost every programme visited. While some programmes faced difficulties in securing and/or sustaining funding, even Ladli, a self-sufficient programme due to its well marketed and financed production unit, faced dependence on big orders as one of their financial issues.

## **10. Analysis, discussion and recommendation**

Our findings in this status report raise many issues which may appraise or refute the claim of livelihood training programmes being good options for children and youth at risk. We consider indicators of a successful livelihood training programme to include post-training future earnings, job placement, and employment success.

### *i. Lessons Learned*

- Livelihood programmes must be tailored to children and youth on a need-basis. As the programme coordinator from Don Bosco Ashalayam stated, "There is not just one formula for all children"; different children have different needs according to their past experiences, as well as their desires and strengths. Most programmes involved children in the decision of what training programmes to pursue. This participatory approach helps to ensure that the needs of children are met, rather than offering a 'one-size-fits-all' programme in which children cannot adjust, learn, or grow.

- Marketing and networking strategies are crucial in ensuring the success of a production unit. Since production units are usually used to cover certain costs of the programme, their success depends on how many orders they receive, and how much profit they make. Ladli's marketing strategy has led their production unit to not only cover the costs of product-making, but the entire livelihood training programme.
- Love, respect and affection are crucial in livelihood training programmes for children/youth at risk. Since many children and youth are away from family support, they often lack the care and warmth of parents and siblings. Future Hope's group homes have 'parents' who look after the children and stay with them as a means to help them achieve stability in their lives.
- Building on a child's existing strengths is important when mainstreaming that child. In Railway Children's experience, helping a child to recognize their core and range of strengths and to build on them helps him/her to gain confidence, develop foresight, and successfully take on challenges. Building on strengths in turn builds self-esteem, which lays the foundation for children to sustain progress and overcome obstacles they face in defending their rights.

#### *ii. Production Units as Child Labour*

The issue of production units being construed as employing child labour to make goods is a contentious one. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 states various conditions under which children working can be seen as exploitative and punishable. In Article 7, the act states various conditions under which children under the age of 14 are permitted to work<sup>15</sup>. Since there are no provisions in the act exempting children in livelihood training programmes from considered as labourers, there is a fine line between what can be construed as labour and what can be considered learning. That said, livelihood training programmes must be extremely careful in how they run their programmes so that training and work done in production units is not considered an offence under the Act. Most organizations do not accept children into their programmes who are under the age of 14, since the Act considers a child to be "a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age"<sup>16</sup>. For this reason, many of the organizations visited did not accept children under the age of 14 for livelihood training. DAS in Kolkata runs prevocational training for children between the ages of 12 and 14 in which the children learn to make handicrafts. To avoid the issue of child labour, they do not sell the products made by the children. This method makes the production process akin to basic lessons in arts and crafts production, rather than a production unit to be used to collect funds for sustaining of the programme. The question is, then, how do livelihood training projects draw the fine line between learning and work, where production units are concerned. Careful consideration is required so that livelihood training programmes can avoid being held accountable under the Act for using production units in imparting hands-on training to programme participants.

---

<sup>15</sup> Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

<sup>16</sup> Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2.ii.



*iii. Relevance of training*

There is sometimes a disconnect in what trades are in demand in the labour market and what training is offered in livelihood programmes. Most organizations visited offered training in trades such as soft-toy making, carpentry, tailoring, candle-making, book-binding, etc. In our interview with Vikramshila the question was raised as to how far ahead a student learning in those trades could really get in life. In terms of job placement, and especially future earning, could students really capitalise on their investments in the programmes?

Many of the programmes we visited said they had conducted surveys of local markets to determine which trades would prove to be most lucrative for students to learn. Despite these claims, we were never shown evidence of any such studies.

The service industry in India has emerged as the largest and fastest-growing sector in the country, contributing as much as 68.6% of the overall growth in gross domestic product between the years 2002-03 and 2006-07<sup>17</sup>. Within the service industry, several key sectors stand out as having large rates of employment growth.

The Indian retail sector is estimated to be the largest single sector after agriculture both in terms of turnover as well as employment. According to the Government of India's business website India is poised to grow as a retail hub, after leading the information technology bandwagon<sup>18</sup>. The rapid transformation of the retail sector in India has seen the traditional formats of small shops, hawkers and grocers being taken over by department stores, discount stores, malls, supermarkets, fast food outlets, specialty stores, warehouse retailers and more. Not only have big industrial houses like the Rahejas and Tatas begun to enter the retail market, but several foreign companies have been franchising in order to establish exclusive outlets for their brands in India. India's retail investment market is only expected to grow; the growth of the vast middle class and its rising purchasing power is already attracting global retail giants into the industry.

The information technology (IT) sector is also among the fastest growing sectors in India. Business process outsourcing (BPO) sector is a key driver of growth for the services industry and in addition to becoming the biggest employment generator among young college graduates, it has helped create 3 million job opportunities through direct and induced employment in telecom, power, construction, facility management, IT transportation, catering and other services<sup>19</sup>.

Additionally, sectors in the service industry such as hospitality and tourism are proving to be large sources of employment in the country. The Indian Ministry of

---

<sup>17</sup> [http://business.gov.in/Industry\\_services/services\\_sector.php](http://business.gov.in/Industry_services/services_sector.php)

<sup>18</sup> [http://business.gov.in/Industry\\_services/services\\_sector.php](http://business.gov.in/Industry_services/services_sector.php)

<sup>19</sup> [http://business.gov.in/Industry\\_services/services\\_sector.php](http://business.gov.in/Industry_services/services_sector.php)

Tourism developed the Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) system which enables them to quantify the benefits of tourism in terms of contribution to GDP and employment. As per the TSA study, the contribution to tourism in GDP has been 5.9% in 2003-04, while employment in the sector has been 41.8 million that same year, accounting for 8.78 percent of total employment in the country<sup>20</sup>. Since tourism has the capacity to create substantial job opportunities, particularly for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, it is an important sector to consider in the context of livelihood training programmes. As India develops, the growth of the service sector proves to be a huge source of employment. Since a successful livelihood training programme aims to provide a participant with the potential to earn more money and secure jobs, it follows that such programmes should adapt accordingly to the service sector boom.

*iv. Offering more than just vocational training*

There is also issue of whether vocational training in itself is enough to prepare a child for the job market (or to even successfully participate in the programme). In the 2001 report by UNESCO, *Education for Street and Working Children in India*, it was found that vocational skill programmes given by most NGOs were “inappropriate” and could not give children substantial skill development in order to provide them with self-earning support at an adult stage<sup>21</sup>. In addition to in-depth, certified vocational training courses, there are other additional services which can help a child succeed in and after livelihood training courses.

Life skills training for children-at-risk in livelihood programmes is essential. As livelihood programmes are meant to ready children at risk for a future as a working adult life skills training becomes necessary. Almost all livelihood training programmes we visited claimed to have “life skills training”; the vague nature of the term allows for a great degree in variance in what is actually taught and what is actually needed. In its 2001 report on *Life Skills in Non-Formal Education*, UNESCO<sup>22</sup> identifies the need for certain aspects life skills training in the Indian context. Children at risk often exhibit an aggressive stance in self-protection, and at the same time want a group identity, making the first necessary lesson *self-awareness*. The second lesson identified by UNESCO is *critical thinking and creative thinking*. A strong tendency in India to accept authority necessitates the encouragement of independent thinking, especially in the workforce. The third lesson is *decision-making and problem-solving*, since, in India, decisions and problems are often left most often to authority figures. The fourth lesson is that of *coping with emotions and stress*, since there is a tendency for people to stand aloof from their emotions; with children at risk, especially, recognizing and coping with them is integral to the mainstreaming process. The fifth lesson is *effective communication and interpersonal relations* skills which can affect relationships, both in and out of the workplace. Two other necessary life skills are *spatial orientation and orientation in time*. Spatial orientation is important for vocational training since it helps develop motor skills. Additionally, orientation in

---

<sup>20</sup> [http://business.gov.in/Industry\\_services/services\\_sector.php](http://business.gov.in/Industry_services/services_sector.php)

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO. *Education for Street and Working Children*. New Delhi: UNESCO, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> UNESCO. *Life Skills in Non-Formal Education: A Review*. New Delhi: UNESCO, 2001.

time helps people to plan for the future, which is a key component to succeeding in livelihood training. Salaam Balak Trust used to have problems with children dropping out of job placements, but found that once they started offering life skills training, personality development and counseling, these dropout rates declined dramatically. The question remains as to how to teach these life skills to children at risk so that they may be able to handle the responsibilities that come with having a job, saving money, and planning for the future.

Alongside life skills, an important factor in providing a holistic livelihood programme is teaching children how to save money. Butterflies' Children's Development Bank in Delhi and other places in South Asia is an example of a structure in place with which children at risk can deposit and withdraw money safely without having to worry about it getting stolen. Oftentimes, children/youth at risk must live a day-to-day existence, spending their day's earnings rather than letting it get stolen. One youth from Saathi who had entered the programme four years ago used the savings scheme to save up 10,000 rupees. After the saving the money, he returned to his home village, bought two cycle rickshaws, and now rents one out while driving the other himself. Being encouraged to save money allows children not only to plan for the future, but to create ways to channel the entrepreneurial skills that are needed to direct them into income generation and employment.

Equally important is the need for job placement and entrepreneurial skill development. Not only are both features valuable in themselves, but they are often necessary to quell a child's dependency on a livelihood programme to support him/her. Without job placement or entrepreneurial skills, a child who finishes training is not equipped for the next step, earning. Since most production units give a portion of earnings back to the children, this small stipend can also create a sense of dependence on the livelihood programme. Entrepreneurial skills training for children/youth at risk is often a good strategy since many of these children and youth possess desirable qualities for being entrepreneurs: a desire for independence, survival skills and the determination to survive. India today is full of opportunities to capitalize on entrepreneurial endeavours; for example, tiffin services are in high demand in large cities with office buildings. NGOs visited acknowledged the merit in imparting entrepreneurial skills to children and youth at risk, they were constrained mostly by a lack of funds or not knowing how to conduct such training. It would be of utmost importance to devise curricula on entrepreneurship for livelihood training programmes in order to steer children and youth towards economic independence.

Other additional components include on-the-job training, provision of small grants/loans/equipment, English language training and computer skills training. Don Bosco Ashalayam is an example of a livelihood training programme which offers all of the aforementioned additional services to its students.

Finally, one of the most important features of a livelihood training programme for children at risk is having a sufficient prevocational orientation period during which children are eased into a living within a scheduled, structured

programme. As seen in the case of the National Academy of Construction, children who had been placed in training without first adapting to a life of routine could not sustain living at the academy and attending trainings since it stood in stark contrast to the ways of living to which they had grown so accustomed on the street.

*v. Reinforcing class-based disparities*

One argument against vocational training programmes as ideal options for children at risk considers such training to be vehicle for reinforcement of class-based inequalities. Much of this argument will be taken from “Vocational Education in South Asia: Problems and Prospects” by Jandhyala B.G. Tilak<sup>23</sup>. The question of the merits of vocational training within the Indian context has been debated since Wood’s Despatch in 1854. The argument for the introduction of the technical stream in education was derived from the belief that it could help stabilise traditional agriculture life and curb the tendency of individuals from rural areas to continue in school past the capacity of the labour markets to absorb them. From Mahatma Gandhi to Julius Nyerere, leaders in developing countries have long supported educational reforms based on diversification of courses. However, the case for vocational education may not be the equity measure it is initially thought to be. In the case of children at risk, vocational education is seen as a more appropriate solution to ending the cycles of poverty and potential criminalization of youth. Tilak, however, highlights the fact that vocational training is not necessarily a remedy for this problem. He points to the case of the Rajaji experiment in rural education in Tamil Nadu in the 1930s, which was abandoned because such programmes came to be viewed as a “ruse designed to keep the under-privileged away from the prestigious academic curriculum”. Over the years, the suspicion that vocational training provides a second-class education to certain socioeconomic groups became quite strong, and the Government of India acknowledged that it “is rated lower than pre-professional and general education”.

This belief is echoed in the approach of Future Hope to educating children at risk in Kolkata. They consider formal education to be the best solution to poverty and supplement it with the necessary support structures for children to excel such as family setups and drug rehabilitation. As mentioned in NGO profiles, director Paul Walsh’s view is that that children in livelihood training courses “could do better” with their lives, and formal education equips them with greater opportunities to succeed. Some of the students at Future Hope have gone on to do post-graduate studies and have obtained scholarships to prestigious schools and colleges abroad.

In our interviews with children in livelihood training programmes, we found that most children spoken to indicated that, when they grew up, they’d like to be involved in whatever trade they were learning at the time. One fifteen year old boy learning screenprinting at Anubhav said that when he grew up, he’d either

---

<sup>23</sup> Tilak, Jandhyala B.G. “Vocational Education in South Asia: Problems and Prospects”. *International Review of Education*. Springer. 1988.

want to be a screenprinter or a cricketer. It was interesting to note that his two purported ambitions in life were so widely varied in terms of achievability, scale and pay. Since most of the trades offered across the country were low-investment, low-paying trades (bookbinding, tailoring, baking, soft toy making, etc) it is clear that without other qualifications, children cannot make much money pursuing such trades. On the other hand, we found that some children in livelihood training programmes did look further ahead than working in the trade they were learning. One nineteen year old girl from DAS said that when she grew up, she wanted to be an entrepreneur so she could sell crystal beaded bags independently in the market. When asked again if there was anything else she'd like to do, she noted that she couldn't decide right now since she had much more to learn.

At times youth themselves consider such training to reinforce class-based inequalities. The following encounter depicts the aforementioned argument perfectly. One twenty-three year old youth at Anubhav who had studied up to the third standard and learned bouquet-making said he would like to go back to school to "get more knowledge". He said he "felt bad about himself when he saw other people who were educated" and that if he were in school he'd have "less problems and be more happy".

*vi. Paradigm shifts in the context of livelihood training*

During many of the interviews conducted for this report, programme coordinators often expressed a desire to include more features, obtain more funding, and ultimately, help more children to succeed in livelihood training and future job placements. Many programmes tend to approach their interventions from a protection-based paradigm<sup>24</sup>. Often charity-driven, they focus on immediate causes of problems rather than on their structural causes. In the case of livelihood programmes, this may include a focus on providing children with services rather than expecting a certain standard of output in return.

Since organizations often lament the low output of their programmes in comparison to their high levels of input, perhaps a paradigm shift is necessary. Livelihood training programmes sometimes lack the business acumen needed for them to make returns in their investments. From planning to implementation, a profit-based approach to training could translate into youth performing well in the training, and eventually, procuring good jobs.

This focus on long-term interests needs to be developed by incorporating an in-depth understanding of the market and the place of youth at risk within it. A profit-based approach would consider many facts, including that which says a youth with a tenth standard pass is more likely to be hired by a potential employer than one with an eighth standard pass, and then introduce a compulsory open schooling component to the programme. It may also consider growing labour markets and in-demand skills, then build on them accordingly.

---

<sup>24</sup> Thomas de Benitez, Sarah. "Reactive, Protective, and Rights-Based Approaches in Work with Homeless Street Youth". *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1), Spring 2003.

Livelihood training programmes, then, need to be based on a sound understanding of the market in order for children and youth to benefit from them in the long-term.

## **11. Conclusion**

Livelihood training programmes across India exist in various forms and on different scales; yet, enough trends and similarities across the country have been detected in order for us to start to consider good practices and models for success in mainstreaming children and youth at risk, enabling them to become financially independent, contributing members of society.

After considering the findings and data from the many interviews conducted for this report, we have been able to better understand the various arguments for and against livelihood and vocational training that have existed for years. A formula for a successful livelihood training model does not yet exist, however, our findings with respect to children's opinions, programme coordinator's opinions, and the three indicators for success can provide leads as to how to further develop such programmes to benefit children and youth at risk.

Additionally, the primary research conducted has helped us understand how these arguments apply to ever-changing, ever-growing India of today. As India's population and wealth grows, its income gap widens. Vocational training, savings programmes, life skills training, formal education, and job placement support can be used to spread this wealth more evenly, providing opportunities for children/youth at risk to break the cycles of poverty and abuse into which they are sometimes unable to escape. Unless new efforts to reach out to older children and youth at risk on the streets are taken on by NGOs, these children and youth cannot be deprogrammed from the "script of the streets" which lies within them and prevents them from accessing education, training, and ultimately, employment, a home, and their rightful place in society.

## 12. References

- i. Chigunta, Schnurr, James-Wilson, Torres. "Being 'Real' about Youth Entrepreneurship in Eastern and Southern Africa: Implications for Adults, Institutions and Sector Structures". Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2005.
- ii. Sauvé, Stephanie. "Changing Paradigms for Working with
- iii. Street Youth: The Experience of Street Kids International." Children,
- iv. Youth and Environments 13(1), Spring 2003.
- v. Tilak, Jandhyala B.G. "Vocational Education in South Asia: Problems and Prospects". International Review of Education. Springer. 1988.
- vi. Thomas de Benitez, Sarah. "Reactive, Protective, and Rights-Based Approaches in Work with Homeless Street Youth". Children, Youth and Environments 13(1), Spring 2003.
- vii. UNESCO. Education for Street and Working Children. New Delhi: UNESCO, 2001.
- viii. UNESCO. Life Skills in Non-Formal Education: A Review. New Delhi: UNESCO, 2001.
- ix. "Youth Skills Enterprise Initiative: A Zambian Case Study of Micro-Enterprise and Micro-Credit Support for Street-Based Youth". Toronto: Street Kids International, 2002
- x. "Nearly 80 pct of India lives on half dollar a day".  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSDEL218894>
- xi. Government of India, National Vocational Training Information Service.  
<http://www.labour.nic.in/database/nvtis.htm>
- xii. [http://www.oit.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/tunion/casanova/pdf/what\\_is.pdf](http://www.oit.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/tunion/casanova/pdf/what_is.pdf).
- xiii. "India's GDP expanded at fastest pace in 18 years"  
<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/indias-economy-grows-best-pace/story.aspx?guid=%7BDD148070-EA3F-4E40-AAEB-A9B6A96868F4%7D>
- xiv. "Kolkata" <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata>
- xv. "Rising Kolkata's winners and losers"  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing\\_continents/4830762.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/4830762.stm)
- xvi. "Jute industry seeks cover against Act dilution" [http://www.business-standard.com/common/news\\_article.php?autono=322013&leftnm=0&subLeft=0&chkFlg=](http://www.business-standard.com/common/news_article.php?autono=322013&leftnm=0&subLeft=0&chkFlg=)
- xvii. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
- xviii. Business Knowledge Resource Online: Industry and Services  
[http://business.gov.in/Industry\\_services/services\\_sector.php](http://business.gov.in/Industry_services/services_sector.php)











## Stopping the abuse of children living on the streets



**India Office:** ½, Shere Punjab C. H. S., Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri East, Mumbai - 93  
Telephone: 91 - 22 - 40056445 / Telefax: 91 - 22 - 28386506  
Email: [enquiries@railwaychildren.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@railwaychildren.org.uk) Website: [www.railwaychildren.org.uk](http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk)

Registered charity number 1058991