KANPUR URBAN PILOT PROJECT

Urbanisation is a global megatrend that is changing the aid and development landscape. The world’s population is already over half 'urban', with more than one billion people living in slums.

World Vision has established a Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming that is leading urban pilot projects in six countries. The pilots are testing innovative, locally-driven urban poverty solutions such as securing urban land rights, influencing municipal policy implementation, and creating livelihood opportunities – with children and youth leading change in their communities.

The Kanpur Urban Pilot Project aims to reduce the incidence of child labour through supporting rehabilitation, non-formal education, provision of vocational training opportunities, capacity-building and advocacy.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Kanpur is the financial and industrial capital of Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in India, and is home to over 33,000 child labourers (Census 2001 – a conservative figure). Various factors have contributed to this situation including: poverty, migration, poor governance and a total absence of law enforcement.

To address this problem the Kanpur Urban Child Labour Project was started in February 2009 and has been working in 6 slums (there are an estimated 185 slums in Kanpur city). These slums are diverse communities populated by Muslims and Hindus (roughly 50:50 split) with specific minority groups within these, e.g. Bengali Muslims who migrated here before the 1950s. Over 95% of the communities are Dalits who often were landless labourers in rural India that migrated to Kanpur for non-agricultural work.

The settlement of these 2 communities occupies 2 main areas:
1. Muslim communities who have settled on an encroached land that actually belongs to only 5 families (Benami land owners). In a unique system, families are allowed to construct their own homes and get electricity, and they have to pay rent to these Benami land holders. Land is not transferable or saleable.
2. Labour colonies that sprung-up in the close vicinity of the cotton industries for which Kanpur was once famous for. In 1970 there was industrial unrest and most of the industries were closed – however the labourers remained there.

Some of the main forms of child labour include: Rag picking (particularly among the Bengali Muslims), card printing, shoe-making, leather working (primarily cottage-based), domestic work, and working in petty shops.

All communities have access to water and electricity. Access to welfare schemes depends on the type of ration card they hold, however the criteria for assistance has been set so low that most of the target communities are unable to access welfare schemes.

There is some seasonal migration among non-Muslims because families migrate to rural areas to pick-up agricultural work during monsoons, affecting the education of their children. However this is not widespread.
**PROJECT GOAL:** To reduce hazardous forms of urban child labor in Ward 2 of Kanpur City

**PROJECT OUTCOMES:**
1. Rehabilitation (and associated reduced vulnerability) for poor urban children in slums
2. Provision of educational opportunities (formal and informal) for children
3. Vocational training for youth and women

**FIRST PROJECT PHASE:** Design initiated in February, 2009 and planned to complete in September, 2013

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**PROJECT APPROACH**

The project is based around four core approaches:

1. **Rehabilitation of Child Labourers:**
   
   This is centred around the provision of transit schools for these child labourers, and then helping them to enter the formal education system. Child rag pickers have specific challenges and the provision of a new facility (Engagement Centre) has helped their non-formal education and general rehabilitation.

2. **Networking and Advocacy:**
   
   The project has set out to advocate and partner with the Department of Education, collaborate with the District Level Task Force on Child Labour (headed by the District Authority), and establish relationships with other NGOs operating in Kanpur.

   Further advocacy strategies employed include capacity building for youth to become agents of change, encouraging religious leaders to influence community opinion, and conduct of a positive deviance study to identify change agents within the community.

3. **Community mobilisation:**
   
   This facet of the project includes the conduct of school enrolment campaigns in collaboration with the Schools and Education Department, mobilising religious leaders to encourage their communities to send their children to school, and the forming of CBOs (self help groups, youth associations, children’s clubs).

4. **Livelihood development:**
   
   Includes the conduct of a market analysis and skills assessment study, linking of self help groups to banks and a micro-finance NGO, capacity building for these self help groups around livelihood development, and vocational training for youth (through partner NGO collaboration) in areas such as basic computer skills, beautician courses and tailoring.

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*Child rag-pickers require a special intervention that enables them to continue earning income for their families*

*Parents of child labourers who are being supported by WV to set up their own livelihoods CBO focused on making clothes*
PROGRESS TO DATE

- In 2010 the project ran 3 Transit schools and rehabilitated 162 children from child labour with this increasing in 2011 to 7 Transit schools (345 children). As the project was a pilot it started a transition stage in 2012 where an additional 6 Transit schools were being run with a further 244 children rehabilitated from child labour.

- The project has 6 study centres operational across the six target areas, in order to monitor children’s progress within the formal education system - and thereby minimise the dropout rates for these children within the formal education system.

- A new innovation to deal with the special needs of the child rag picker community has been established and is now operating within the Bengali Muslim community. This Engagement Centre addresses the particular requirements associated with the rehabilitation of these rag-pickers, with around 50 currently attending the centre and undergoing Non-Formal Education (NFE) and play activities.

- This enables these children to continue their rag picking activities (the poor families in this community depend on this income) and a flexible arrangement for this Engagement Centre means these children can access education to initiate their rehabilitation. Previously the transit school structure meant it was very difficult for the project to convince parents to release their children to these.

- An excellent relationship with Department of Education has been formed. This has resulted in the Project being given access to 15 Government schools with a view to strengthening them.

- This access includes matters such as teacher attendance records (teacher absenteeism is a big problem in Indian Government schools). As a result of this the project has been able to highlight issues around teacher (and School Principal) irregularities here that have resulted in the problem being largely addressed within these 15 schools.

- The Project’s intervention here has been so successful that they have since received an award and certificate from the Governor of Uttar Pradesh for contribution to the State’s education services.

- The Project was invited to become an active member of The District Level Task Force on Child Labour, headed by the District Authority. This will enable the Project to extend its influence and reach beyond just the Project target area and start to have a city-wide impact.

- CBOs have been formed in all the target communities – including 44 Self Help Groups with 337 members, 6 Youth Associations, and 18 Children’s Clubs.

- A variety of vocational training initiatives have been launched for the communities’ local youth in collaboration with another NGO. These have included training in basic computer skills (over 100), a beautician course (95 girls), adult literacy classes in all the communities, and tailoring (165 women).

- 1. In one program 52 (32 male and 20 female) candidates got 26 jobs after receiving vocational training. These paid a minimum salary of Rs.4000/-

- 2. Another program resulted in all 8 participants being placed in reputable Indian firms such as Big Bazaar, Airtel and Idea, with monthly salaries from Rs.4000/- to Rs.6000/–.

- Self Help Groups to develop vocational skills (e.g. dress-making) have been formed with some of these assisted to enable formal banking relationship (it is normally very difficult for community members to open a bank account alone).

- Some Self Help Groups have become incorporated with the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA) to enable credit and further training.

- Through the Project some of the Self Help Groups received capacity building assistance around the financial aspects of their enterprises - in collaboration with a microfinance NGO (Sharamik Bharthi).

- Vocational training initiatives help pave the way for future employment opportunities
CASE STUDY: KANPUR

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- The complexity of the core issues and context made the initial pilot time frame unrealistic. Complex and persisting issues like child labour need a long-term analysis of the problems and strategies. The project was able to take on only short-term objectives, which may not sustain the results in the long-term.

- This becomes even more significant when there are no effective partners to handover to (NGO capacity in Kanpur is not high). Expecting the CBOs to continue the program and sustain results is unrealistic when the CBOs themselves are only in a nascent stage and require more capacity-building to be sustainable.

- The project approach requires “behavioural changes” from the community which are hard to achieve in a short pilot time frame.

- There are fundamental issues with the school system in Uttar Pradesh which were major inhibitors to the project, however were not accounted for in the initial project design. Parents often do not believe in the value of Government schooling and either send children to private schools if they can afford to, or simply keep their children at home. Two significant reasons are:
  1. Schools are operated in private buildings where there are often legal differences between owners and the Government. This means that often the Government does not perform any infrastructure improvements such as providing toilets for girls, drinking water or electricity.
  2. Teachers are not regularly in class because they are under-paid, so the Government appoints temporary volunteers who can’t be held accountable.

- Related to the previous point, working to improve the quality of education should involve a multi-faceted approach including: improving infrastructure, assessing every child’s level and then setting a realistic benchmark, setting performance indicators for teachers, facilitating community participation in education, and progressing advocacy initiatives with government.

- The success of the project in gaining access to the records of 15 schools and highlighting teacher absenteeism was significant. It highlights the value of having a focus on making duty bearers accountable for service provision rather than trying to compensate for their shortcomings through direct service provision.

- Different cultural groups exhibit different challenges and this means that a one-size fits all project approach will not always work. For example, there are particular challenges around working with the Muslim community (50% of target community) which necessitated a different approach:
  1. The Bengali-speaking Muslims are disadvantaged because of Hindi language being used in schools – this makes it much harder to absorb Bengali Muslim children into the education system, thereby greatly compromising rehabilitation initiatives.
  2. Most Muslim parents prefer to send their children to the Madrassas. However the quality of education offered in Madrassas is usually very low and students cannot cope when they are admitted into formal schools.
  3. Madrassas are located in the immediate community whereas formal schools usually are not. This often means that parents prefer to keep their children at home after completing the Madrassa education.

- Sometimes a flexible approach is required where the ideal is not realistically achievable. This was evident in the approach to the rag-picking community where taking a family’s significant source of income away from them was not realistic, hence the ‘Engagement Centre’ approach referred to earlier in this case study.

- Although some participants in the youth training schemes went on to obtain relatively well paid jobs (usually in retailing) some who trained ended up only being able to secure relatively low paid jobs which often were located away from their family home. When the cost of transport and travel time was factored in, the modest salary increase was not seen as worth it by some – and served as a motivator for others.

- The willingness of NGOs to work together was limited and organising a united forum became challenging, e.g. smaller NGOs tended to be suspicious of World Vision’s intentions (and World Vision is the biggest NGO operating in Kanpur). This was particularly evident in the attempts to get the District-level Task Force on Child Labour operating where NGO cooperation was absent and the initiative floundered.

- There are limitations to the results that can be achieved through local level advocacy – state level advocacy initiatives are also required that have a broader policy impact.

- Getting community interest to form CBOs can be a struggle at first because of the fundamental trust issue. There have been numerous instances in the past of NGOs and individuals stealing from these CBOs (e.g. savings clubs) and a lot of time and energy needs to be put in upfront to address this community concern.

- The sustainability of some CBOs is a challenge because members do not always see benefits in a quick enough time frame, and consequently lose interest. The project has found that in some cases it has had to regularly monitor and motivate a CBO in order to keep them ‘alive.’

- The ‘Youth’ age group provides a very effective pool of community change agents. They are more likely to adopt new changes, are particularly motivated to progress from their current impoverished conditions, and are also full of energy to act on these motivations.

- Law enforcement in Uttar Pradesh is very weak and could not really be leveraged by the project (e.g. with respect to the blatant child labour abuses). Coupled with corruption at all levels and a lack of political will the challenges become significant.

- Being a pilot within the context of a World Vision office can be a challenge, e.g. internal systems & processes and staff retention (ADP longevity means always a more attractive proposition).

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