



Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action
(CHETNA)

Rehabilitating Street and Working Children Abusing Substances



Dehradoon Workshop

April 22nd-26th, 2010

With support by iPartner India



Acknowledgements

Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action (CHETNA) would like to thank iPartner India for supporting this workshop and the overall project, “Rehabilitating Street and Working Children Abusing Substances”. The company of iPartner team member Ms Sumitra Mishra was a pleasant and enriching experience; her suggestions added value to the schedule and the way it was carried out.

Furthermore, it is remarkable how the Christian Retreat and Study Center (CRSC) provides an excellent location for residential trainings with children living under difficult circumstances; they have taken great care of our secular organization’s team and target groups time and again.

Most importantly, CHETNA would like to acknowledge that without the children’s willingness to leave the stations they have got used to over years, to try and participate in a program that must at times have seemed strange to them at an all new place, the workshop could not have been conducted. It was amazing to see the sincerity with which these boys did their best to find a way towards a better life during these five days, against all odds put up by the situations they find themselves in.

Simon Engelmann for Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action (CHETNA)

Note:

The pictures in this report do not show close-ups of faces for reasons of privacy and security. Where individuals are identifiable, their presence in an image does by no means imply that s/he is involved in substance abuse or any other related activity. However, care should be taken to circulate this document keeping in mind that some persons might abuse information deductible or apparently deductible from it.

Executive Summary

The Delhi-based child rights NGO, Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action (CHETNA) has taken up a project specifically targeting children living or working at railway stations and addicted or at risk of addiction, "Rehabilitating Street and Working Children Abusing Substances", with support of iPartner India in October 2009. In the course of this project, a five-day residential workshop was held at Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Its purpose was to enhance the child participants' understanding of their own situations, how they developed and what they imply for the future. Also, a research survey was conducted on the backgrounds of substance abuse as the affected children themselves see them.

The methodology employed included group works, each session drawing on the previous ones; ice-breakers and games; role plays, drawing, singing and dancing; sports, and leisurely activities such as watching movies together. The schedule was held flexible, allowing for adjustments to be made in the course of events. Moreover, the workshop served as a learning experience to the entire team, the results of which are shared in this report.

Final goal of the workshop was to prompt a visible change in the participants' lives, be it reunion with their families, shifting to an NGO-run shelter home, or at least reducing their consumption of addictive and harmful substances. Despite the difficult circumstances the children came from and how it affected their abilities to partake in exercises requiring focus and attention, these objectives were reached to a decent extent.

Main outcome of the workshop was that more than 50% of the participants made a visible change in their lives, from cutting down their consumption of whitener to shifting to their family or shelter homes. Moreover, the insights gained on part of the team are considerable: lessons have been learned that will enhance the next workshop of this kind and that can be shared with partner NGOs so they do not have to undergo the same difficult process of trial and error. Finally, the research survey done during the workshop is still being analyzed; it will bring further understanding of the phenomenon of substance abuse and help counteract it more efficiently than before.

Introduction

The Organization & the Project

Founded in 2002 and expanding its program ever since, CHETNA strives to prompt social progress implementing various projects in the NCR and beyond. One of the major work fields has been the situation of children living and working at railway stations and on moving trains. Contact Points exist along a stretch from Nizamuddin (Delhi) to Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh) at stations and in surrounding communities. Until recently, the program had been limited to repatriation, Non-Formal Education, recreation, and the conveyance of Life Skills. In late 2009, however, the project “Rehabilitating Street and Working Children Abusing Substances” was called into life. The idea was to cover an aspect of the risks of station life that had been left out of most NGO programs so far: substance abuse and drug addiction, which affect a vast majority of children living on the platforms. Common drugs such as tobacco, alcohol, guthka, bang, marihuana, smack, etc. are consumed especially by elder youths. The younger ones are mainly into sniffing corection fluid, the fumes of which are a serious poison attacking several organs and the central nervous system, causing a state of high or being stoned.

Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action (CHETNA) is a Delhi-based NGO working towards the empowerment of children. The organization envisions to achieve a child-friendly society and system ensuring the Rights to Survival, Protection, Development and Participation of the Child.

A team of experienced street coordinators and a clinical psychologist took up work at Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, and quickly identified close to 80 potential beneficiaries. 40 to 50 of those children became Direct Beneficiaries of the project. In the course of the winter, 20 more beneficiaries were contacted in Agra and Mathura. A continuous progress of taking case histories, of individual and group counseling was begun.

These efforts are supported by iPartner India, a UK-based non-profit organization lending partnership, advice, and financial means to Indian NGOs.

The Target Group

It soon became obvious that the target group of railway children is a particularly difficult one. The kids, most of them boys, are subjected to violence, exploitation and abuse to an even larger extent than other children living and working under difficult circumstances.



An unsensitized Railway Police, passengers, employers, and peers all pose as potential threats in their everyday lives, and more often than not realize this potential. The children on their part have no fixed places of abode but are extremely mobile, using the trains to cover short and long distances, many being almost constantly on the move. These factors make it difficult to gain the trust of the children and then to work consistently towards lasting effects.

Hence, it took some time until a largish group of boys showed themselves ready to shift into homes. In a time-consuming effort, CHETNA had been looking

for homes willing to accept and capable of aptly accomodating substance-abusing railway children, realizing there was little awareness of the scale of the issue in the NGO scene: there does not exist a single home or clinic specialized in the detoxification and rehabilitation of such children.

Nonetheless, it was recognized that since the unsafe environment of platforms and trains played a major role in the involvement of children in substance abuse, even a change to an imperfect surrounding was very much desirable. So as to make the shift easier for the kids, a week-long residential workshop was planned, after which it was hoped they would move directly to homes, dogding any new confrontation with the temptations and influences of station life.

The Workshop Participants

In the regular meetings with beneficiaries of the project, street educators and counselors shared the objectives and

Objectives of the Workshop:

- *To organize a residential workshop for this very special group of children into substance abuse*
- *To help children to identify and analyze the reasons behind their substance abuse, hurdles in overcoming the situation and possible solutions*
- *To motivate the children to go back to their families or to NGO-run homes / shelters*
- *Additionally, to conduct a research survey regarding the children's views on the reasons for and possible ways of counteracting substance abuse*

character of the nature with the children. Of around 100 potential participants, 35 showed sincere interest in going to Dehradun and initiate a shift into a new life. These kids were contacted with an increased frequency to make sure they were not going to change their minds too easily. However, participation in the workshop was to remain fully voluntary.

All of the participants are male, aged between 12 and 17, and have been living at stations for two years or more. Also, all of them were consuming correction fluid (or 'whitener', as it is also called). They had agreed to leaving this habit behind and taking the opportunity of going back to their families or moving into children's homes.



The Workshop Location

In the mountains just outside the city of Dehradun, there is the "Christian Retreat and Study Center" (CRSC). This place has proved an excellent venue for workshops with children living under difficult circumstances before: it is surrounded by a beautiful landscape, provides clean rooms, three good meals and two tea breaks a day. These factors were hoped to help the participants relax, gain some distance to station life and stress and start into a new life.

Methodology

Over the past months, the CHETNA team had identified certain issues that these children are struggling with. These are thought to be the main reasons behind the phenomenon of substance abuse in children.

- Lack of health and hygiene
- Lack of concentration
- Difficult daily schedule
- Lack of vision
- Underdeveloped Life Skills
- Lack of development opportunities

Activities to convey the messages of the workshop will comprise more concentrated group work sessions and rather leisurely game-like exercises. The former lend some continuity to the program, going from an analysis of the present situation over developments of the past to hopes and plans for the future

The activities described below were devised to tackle these aspects and also benefit the overall psycho-social growth of the children.

Health and hygiene

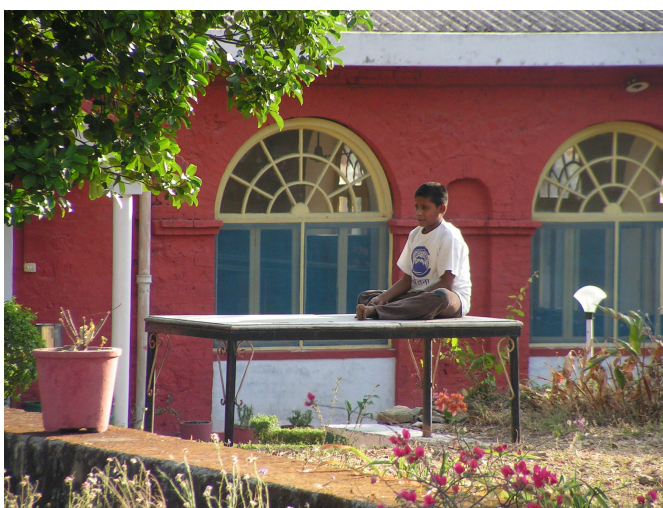
As a first step into the new life we want the children to get a new sense for their bodies.

- A change in outward appearance is expected to enhance the chances of a successful change in behavior and habits. Furthermore, it might help improve the children's self-esteem, taking away the visible stigma of the street kid. This change will be achieved through the distribution of new clothes and hygienic articles as well as the encouragement of personal grooming.
- As a daily morning routine, the children will get time to wash themselves and their clothes under the guidance of adult facilitators under respect of their privacy.

Concentration

The influence of whitener fumes is damaging the children's ability to focus on specific activities or thoughts. Circa ten of the 31 children are hyperactive.

- Morning sessions will be started with calm music and some time to meditate or simply sit and relax. This means may also be employed at other times.
- During the day, there will be ample opportunity to play cricket, frisbee, badminton, etc. These group games shall release distress, make worries vanish for some time and also create positive group dynamics, giving the children a feeling for themselves and each other.
- Energizers will help the participants refocus in the beginning of sessions.
- In the evenings, a professional yoga teacher will instruct the children. This way, they can learn to concentrate on their own bodies.



- Dancing classes will provide room for the children to express themselves and simply have fun together.

Daily Schedule

Every day, there will be a tight schedule from 6 am to 10 pm. It shall comprise units about Life Skills, the children's individual and collective developments over time, the future steps, etc., but also recreational activities and meals at fixed times.

- The routine of this schedule shall give a sense of security in this unknown new environment and time of change.
- Standing in a stark contrast to their vaguely schemed, erratic everyday life at the station, the schedule will symbolically stand for the transition to a new lifestyle.
- As a lot of freedom is left to the boys, they will have to take some responsibility for sticking to the schedule. Also, they will be included in organizational matters through committees in charge of tasks such as wake-up calls, distributing food, cleaning rooms, etc.
- Dividing the day into sections committed to certain activities, including recreation and personal development, shall acquire the kids to the concept of having a right to time for themselves and to time for their rights.

Vision

The boys will be motivated to think about themselves.

- Reflection of the situation they found themselves in five years ago will take place.
- Their current state will be thought about and made clear.
- They will be encouraged to imagine where they see themselves five years from now.
- Reasons for their ending up at the station will be identified along with future hurdles and difficulties. This will help them make right choices.

Life Skills

At present, the boys possess survival skills making their lives bearable but unsafe, e.g. substance abuse. In sub-workshops, they shall be replaced by Life Skills working for them in a lasting way. The topics are:

- Health
- Hygiene
- Money management
- Communication
- Leadership qualities



Development Opportunities

Life at the station deprives the children of important services and support necessary for their personal development, i.e.

- lack of school education
- lack of guidance and parental / guardians' support
- lack of proper shelter

The workshop being a catalysing event for a start into a new life, the children shall be given a glimpse into what these and more positive aspects of life in families or NGO homes looks like.

Other Activities

Certain individual issues are expected to pertain which are not covered by the measures above. Thus, one-on-one counseling sessions are planned for the children. Addressing their personal problems or queries, we will also give a sense of individual identity to them.

Limitations of the Workshop

Two main factors that might diminish the results of our efforts were identified beforehand:

- Personal decisions made by the children would have to be respected. It was clear there would be no point in forcing them, as they would react in everything but positive ways and surely end up at the station again, less motivated to change than before.
- Running only one shelter home in Agra with limited space, CHETNA would have to depend on the cooperation of other home-running NGOs. Should they not offer their services to the children for whatever reason, there might not be anything CHETNA could do about it



Chronology of the Workshop

The following pages give an overview of how the methodology described above was put into practice during the workshop. (A familiar phenomenon in social work, really did not develop strictly according to plan - compare Annexure 1: Original Schedule.)

The nature of the participants, the little experience in dealing with large groups of this type on the part of the team, and other factors led to differences between the initially intended module and the actual proceedings during the workshop

Day One: April 22

The first morning session consists of introductory and administrative activities creating a sense of community and making the participants feel less at a loss about what awaits them.

Activity 1.1: Introductory Round

What happens: Each workshop participant quickly tells the group his name, mentions where he lives and how (i.e. at a station close to his family, as a homeless roamer, etc.).

Purpose: The children now know who they will spend the following days with, as far as they were not acquainted with each other before.

Activity 1.2: Collage

What happens: In a fun ice-breaking game, closed-ended questions are posed to the group by the teamers, later by the children themselves. All those who would respond with 'yes' come together in the middle of the circle.

Purpose: This way, interesting and trivial facts about the group can be found out, e.g. who is seeing the mountains for the first time in his life, who has been sniffing whitener for over five years, or whose favorite color is blue. The boys get to know each other more, explore similarities and differences among themselves, while the team can roughly assess the status of the group as the boys depict it.

Activity 1.3: Making of Rules

What happens: In an interactive session, 18 basic rules of a productive and drug-free social coexistence are agreed on by the group and the facilitators. E.g. the premises are not to be left without permission; noise and fighting are to be avoided, cigarettes, guthka, whitener etc. not to be consumed during the workshop. (In accordance with consulted physicians' advice, chewing tobacco is tolerated to a certain extent to relieve the withdrawal symptoms many children experience, i.e. an upset stomach, headache, extreme moodiness, etc.)

Purpose: The boys are integrated into this process to make them feel they own the workshop and to enhance identification with the group, the guidelines, and the entire project.

Activity 1.4: Forming of Committees

What happens: Committees are formed to take care of wake-up calls and gathering everyone to begin a session (Time Management), supporting the kitchen team during meals (Food), arranging and cleaning the common work room (Health and Hygiene), and to check the other committees' activities (Monitoring). They are to be reviewed and reformed every morning, after 24 hours of duty. Every child will have to participate in each committee once, but can

समय-पालक कमेटी		साफ-सफाई कमेटी	
DATE	NAME	DATE	NAME
22.04.10	अकरम, रवि, राहुल, राखिर (क)	22.04.10	विकार, निजाम, सुनील, पुनीत
23.04.10	नदीम, दानिश, हसन, कुलदीप	23.04.10	बिजेन्द्र, अरम, नरेश, कलाम
24.04.10	निजाम, अफजल, अर्जुन, अमीन	24.04.10	जावेद, सोहन, इमरान, समीर
25.04.10	राखिर (क), मुल्ला, हसन, जकिर	25.04.10	निजाम, रवि, इमरान, बिजेन्द्र
26.04.10		26.04.10	
खानपान कमेटी		अनुशासन व देखरेख कमेटी	
DATE	NAME	DATE	NAME
22.04.10	अर्जुन, अमीन, इमरान, राखिर (क)	22.04.10	समीर, सफ़्फ़ा खान, इमरान, कुल्ला
23.04.10	अन्दी, राजू, सरदान (मिमा), जकिर	23.04.10	पवन, इस्मैल, अन्दी, रोहित
24.04.10	अरम, मन्दी, बिलाल, इलेन	24.04.10	नादिर, गालिब-उ, कुतब, सुबिन
25.04.10	राखिर (क), पुनीत, फरीश, रोहित	25.04.10	पवन, अकरम, अज्जा, नदीम, अरम
26.04.10		26.04.10	

choose on which day to do so.

Purpose: As goes for involving the participants in the making of rules, this activity gives them responsibility and opportunities to influence how the workshop progresses.

Remarks: Whilst the Food Committee is well as the Health and Hygiene Committee are quite popular, children would like to avoid being in a supervisory position like that of a Monitor.

Activity 1.5: Balloon Exercise



What happens: After the first tea break at 11 am, the children draw themselves, optionally in a characteristic situation, onto balloons. Once they are finished, they are given ample time to present their pictures and their background in front of the group, who listen attentively throughout.

Purpose: This activity illuminates the dynamics through which children get into substance abuse and stay with it: almost without exception, the boys report to have started sniffing as soon as they made friends at the station; the peer pressure appears to be enormous. "I started taking

drugs when seeing my friends. They told me how to do it", one boy said. Another told the group he had been forced to start sniffing at the age of ten. "Now", he says, "I feel down when I don't take it." A friend of him describes being "restless and irritable" when sober.

Several kids speak of being beaten when they refused to start taking drugs or contemplated stopping as long as they still felt able to. Many also experienced pressure from their families to stop their new habits, but in their cases, the lure of the station proved stronger. One boy took up a sort of double life: "My family opposes my habit of taking drugs. So I don't sniff when around my home but come to the station to do so."

A number of children also mention the cost of drugs and how they took up work, mainly rag picking and selling bottles as well as sweeping trains, to finance their consumption.

*Drugs of friendship:
"I started taking drugs when
seeing my friends. They told
me how to do it"*

Activity 1.6: "Kitne Bhai, Kitne"

What happens: To start off the second half of the day, a warm-up game is played. All participants walk around the hall in a circle, reciting a slogan: When a teamer standing in their middle holds up any number of fingers of his hand, the children hug each other in groups of this number of members as quickly as possible.

Purpose: To refocus the energy after the first longer break, bringing the kids closer together. The fact that numbers are not called out but only shown silently necessitates close attention.

Remarks: Whilst "Kitne Bhai, Kitne" is enjoyed quite a lot by the group, it becomes clear that the children have much spare energy and the potential to create considerable chaos.

Activity 1.7: First Group Task: Analyzing Present Situation of Children on the Platform

What happens: Divided into four subgroups, the boys get to express their present situation at the station through role plays or drawings. For this, they are given almost the entire afternoon, until the presentations begin.

The first skit presented in the late afternoon depicts a life dominated by labor on the trains, substance abuse, and the constant threat of violence from older boys and the police. The latter is described as resorting to physical force when falsely thinking rag pickers to be thieves, but then taking the boys' earnings away from them in another scene. The skit ends with NGO workers contacting the children to educate them about the ill-effects of drugs.

The second group presents a drawing in the style of a comic strip. It shows police violence against children, who are being thrown in jail for drug possession. Their parents refuse to bail them out, which is finally taken care of by NGO volunteers.



The drawing further includes children buying whitener at a shop and being excluded by other kids of their age as well as accidents and crime being prompted by the influence of drugs.

Upon being asked about the reality content of this picture, the group assure that all of the things described do happen in reality. They say that police beatings and the general environment at the station cause them to take drugs, which are easily available for them in shops and on the platforms.

Group number three performs a sketch on a case of pickpocketing, in which the child perpetrators are caught, beaten, and taken to jail by police officers. After all their money is taken away from them, they are forced to clean the police station. In contrast, another scene shows a drug dealer being discharged upon paying a minor amount of money. These contents are also agreed to by the audience.

Purpose: Reflection, something that does not play much of a role in these children's every lives, is encouraged. The fact that it is done in groups of peers in similar situations reassures the boys. Going beyond this exercise, the following days shall also include looks into past and future.

Remarks: The presentations start late and unfortunately are not finished when the next scheduled activity has to be begun.

Activity 1.8: First Yoga Session

What happens: A hired yoga teacher arrives at 6 p.m., as he will every evening for the duration of the workshop, and gives basic instructions in his art - techniques of breathing, sitting, and overall body position. He even includes some exercises specifically intended to relieve the effects of whitener fumes on throat and lungs, inspired by a senior team member.

Purpose: Many boys have quite distorted capabilities of sensing their own bodies. Here, they are acquainted with the skill of fully concentrating on oneself, which goes along with the intellectual reflection. In the end, all of these exercises aim at the boys' acquiring a new consciousness of their own needs and how to sustainably fulfill them.



Remarks: The group participates is extraordinarily intrigued by this and the following sessions; not a single participant is disturbing the atmosphere of calm and collectedness.

Activity 1.9: Cultural Program / Educational Play

What happens: The originally planned dance class is omitted in favor of improvised dancing, which the kids are absolutely fond of. After an hour or so, a comic play on the topic of hygiene is staged by CHETNA team members. It highlights the social importance of keeping reasonably clean with the actors in roles of station children.

The first day finds a pleasant closure in a final short dancing session, after which the children go to their rooms.



Purpose: After a day of full concentration and a kind of work - on oneself - the children are not used to at all, the song and dance function as important means of relaxation. It is important to keep the program so long so as to avoid boredom on the boys' part: this would result in a reinforced urge for intoxication, in distress and aggression.

The play keeps up the leisurely atmosphere through a good sense of humor. This way, it manages to get across the important message of hygiene,

perfectly utilizing the last hours of the day.

Remarks: The kids really enjoy the dancing, love the comical play, and go to bed afterwards without any nuisance.

Day Two: April 23

Activity 2.1: Personal Hygiene

What happens: The day starts early with the facilitators' insistence that the lessons learned the evening before are put into practice: soap, towels, and new undergarments are distributed among the children and their use encouraged.

Purpose: An improved personal hygiene can take away some of the stigma of the street child, and give a renewed self-confidence. Also, it is a simply precaution against illness and infection, which are easily contracted at the station.

Remarks: Whereas the clothes are gladly accepted and put on, some boys are not overly enthusiastic about taking baths, but overall comply with the requests. Others really enjoy the opportunity to wash themselves thoroughly.



Activity 2.2.: Cricket Match

What happens: Between breakfast and the first actual workshop session, the group spend half an hour on this most popular sport.

Purpose: Tensions are released and a team spirit evoked.

Activity 2.3.: Morning Meditation

What happens: Calm music is played while the group enters the hall. Two songs are played, during which time each participant can find a place to sit, close his eyes and concentrate or simply relax.

Purpose: The noisiness of the breakfast hall and the physical activity of the cricket court are left behind. All attention is focused on what lies ahead - immediately, over the day, and after the end of the workshop.

Remarks: The music has an amazing effect on the children. There is almost absolute quiet on all mornings, and the first activities following meditation are more concentrated than others.

Some children sing along with the meditation music, others just quietly close their eyes and think or clear their minds of all distractions

Activity 2.4: Picture Recap

What happens: Photographs of the past day are projected onto the wall and commented shortly by a team member.

Purpose: Correlations between the activities of different days become more obvious as the previous exercises are recalled shortly before the new ones start. To a certain degree, seeing pictures of oneself can add to a sense of identity.

Remarks: The pictures are received with interest and joy; the boys have fun spotting themselves and their peers on the screen: this is a privilege usually denied to them.

Activity 2.5: Committee Review & Election

See 1.4.

Remarks: The review and reformation take place with decent participation, although concentration is slowly wearing down. A placement in the Food Committee is especially popular, whereas the more authoritative position in the Monitoring Committee tends to be shunned.

Activity 2.6: Presentations of First Group Task / Open Session on Sexual Abuse



What happens: Following the tea break, the fourth group presents what had to be omitted the day before for lack of time. Their drawing focuses on

"Some policemen caught me, brought me to jail, beat me and told me to do something wrong. I ran away"

the issue of sexual abuse, and the audience agrees the extent of this problem considerable. Hence, there is an open session on this: more than 15 boys speak up telling the group about experiences they had themselves or witnessed.

Their accounts are eye-opening with regard to the ever-presence of this danger. Some have evaded rape, some talk about what happens at their station without clearly naming the victims. Perpetrators are often police, who sometimes pay for sexual favors, but also abduct and rape children who they know have no one to turn to.

One boy describes an incident that took place out in the open: "As I was picking rags, a policeman came and caught my hand and

tried to do something wrong. I shouted, so people came; the policeman told them I was a

thief and he had caught me stealing. When the people went off, I pushed the policeman away and ran.”

But at the same time, older peers subject kids to sodomy, symbolic of their respective positions in the strict station hierarchy. “An elder child abused me”, one boy recounts. “I complained to the police, and they caught him. Later, he threatened me.”

In many cases, newly arrived boys seeking company and protection have to perform sexual acts in order to be allowed into gangs. Although not all of these occurrences can strictly be called rape, and some are fully consensual, it becomes clear that they always involve dominance and at least subtle forms of violence. There is also a link to the issue of drugs and substance abuse, as a kind of prostitution is sometimes a way of obtaining stuff that is not sold openly (as opposed to the correction fluid available everywhere).

Purpose: The boys are listened to for what might be the first time regarding this issue. The team on their part obtain a further understanding of the situation at the stations. Links are recognized between the problems of substance abuse and sexual abuse.

Remarks: Although about half of the group remains silent, there is a remarkable openness regarding this topic: the boys seem to consider it shockingly casual. This is in spite of the fact they are educated about the dangers of unprotected intercourse.

Activity 2.7: Second Group Task: Understanding the Situation Five Years Ago

What happens: Drawing from the reflection phase of the day before, four groups are formed to think about their status five years ago.

Purpose: Whilst the previous group work was on what their situation is like, the boys can now achieve a better grasp on how it became that way. In many cases, memories of family life are refreshed, perhaps prompting renewed contemplations of going back.

Remarks: Unfortunately, this is the phase where concentration and focus experience their first breakdown. Aggressive behavior is on the rise, and the atmosphere becomes less pleasant. No group is ready to present before lunch.

Activity 2.8: Dance Class

What happens: Since it is felt that the lunch break has not sufficed to restore concentration, the more theoretical group work is postponed in favor of a dancing class with a semi-professional dancer and team member. He and a fellow teamer lead a one-hour dancing session comprising a choreography and improvisation.

Purpose: The aggression perceived to have built up over the day, partially attributed to withdrawal symptoms, is to be relieved, group spirit recreated and motivation improved through this fun activity.

Remarks: A little surprisingly, the exercise does not work too well. Sleepiness takes the place of aggression, and the choreography is difficult to grasp for the exhausted children. Some do not even participate from the very beginning, and others drop out in the course of the class.



Activity 2.9: Cricket Match

What happens: For the remainder of the afternoon, the group gets to pursue their favorite activity. Parallel to the match, in another part of the premises, team members take videos of single children who have shown themselves willing to recount their experiences of and knowledge about sexual abuse at railway stations. Their faces are not visible in the videos.

Purpose: Evading the ever-increasing aggressivity and fighting, the boys are kept active and peacefully engaged. With the videos, invaluable documentation material is created; also, the children are again assured that their cases matter.

Remarks: All boys enjoy this second half of the afternoon; no further fights occur.



Most unfortunately, the computer on which all video material was saved was stolen shortly after the workshop, so that the remarkable results of these efforts are lost.

Activity 2.91: Second Yoga Session

See 1.8

Remarks: Along with the sports, this activity helps to let the climate improve again.

Activity 2.92: Movie “3 Idiots”

What happens: The boys rejoice in watching both documentary features on street kids in Delhi and the recent film “3 Idiots”.

Purpose: Apart from the recreational value, the documentary features have an educational and a reflecting purpose: it is shown that parts of the adult world apart from NGOs care about the issues of street children and try to analyze their problems; themselves in the kids portrayed. The movie has a positive message about the possibility of leading a happy life without having followed a conventional educational career.

Does recreation take time away from the program? -Yes, in a way. On the other hand, it must be considered part of a balanced program as well

Remarks: Like the Activities 2.9 and 2.91, the film contributes to a pleasant atmosphere among the boys. On the downside, the program for this day, which comprised two group works on present and future, the screening of clippings of the “Aaj Tak news” and a relaxing dream journey has not been conducted, and the - prescheduled - movie takes quite a bit of time.

Day Three: April 24

Activity 3.1: Personal Hygiene

See 2.1

Activity 3.2: Distribution of T-Shirts & Group Picture

What happens: T-shirts with the CHETNA logo are distributed among the children and a group photo is taken. While everyone is standing together, a pledge is taken: a senior team member tells the children that from this moment on, now that they are wearing a shirt sporting the organization's name, fighting, abusive language, drug use and all such behaviors are to be avoided. The children repeat his words in a chorus.

Purpose: To enhance the feeling of belongingness to the group. Pragmatically, the children get one more new and clean item of clothing.

Remarks: Reactions to this activity are not quite as positive as expected; also, it does not enhance concentration for as long as was hoped.

Day Three has some serious difficulties in store. Group dynamics and withdrawal symptoms cause a disagreeable atmosphere dominated by fights, verbal and physical violence and discontent. In want of a physician to consult, the team is facing challenging questions: it is clear some substance abuse or at least consumption of substitute drugs like Guthka will invariably occur, but how much must be tolerated considering the more serious cases of addiction, where is the line to be drawn? The boys turn out to be tough bargainers on this.

Activities 3.3-3.5: Morning Meditation, Picture Recap, Committee Review & Election

See Activities 2.3-2.5

Remarks: Towards the end of these exercises, it gets noisier and again more aggressive.

Activity 3.6: Dream Journey

What happens: The children close their eyes and soothing images and activities are described for them to let appear in front of their inner eye.

Purpose: Some peace and calm are brought into the workshop. The important ability to use one's imagination without any other purpose than relaxation is conveyed.

Remarks: Even though the noise level increases again shortly afterwards, the fighting has become noticeably less.

Activity 3.7: Third Group Task: Understanding the Dream Situation in the Future

What happens: After the tea break, a new task is given to the children outside: they are supposed to find together in groups to devise role plays describing where they see themselves five years from now. What makes this exercise special and intriguing to the kids is that it is conducted in imitation of a film production. Some members of the groups take on assigned roles, such as director, singer, dancer, or comedian; the others support or choose a different role. Finally, the results will be captured on film and displayed in the plenum in the evening.

Purpose: After reflection has been practiced on several occasions over the past days, this now is the most important question the boys will have to ponder: what are they going to do with their lives as long as they are still young and have many ways open to them?



Remarks: The new character of the practically old task makes it attractive for the children, and they work in a concentrated manner for the entire afternoon. The plays are diverse, and the boys have fun staging them.

Activity 3.8: Third Yoga Session

See 1.8

Remarks: Even though the yoga teacher is unable to come this evening, a session is conducted under the guidance of yoga-experienced team members. The professional is missed, but the children participate quite well.

Activity 3.9: Cultural Program

What happens: After the dinner, the long-awaited movies are shown. Breaks of music videos maintain the focus at a reasonable level. When the films are over, there is a free dancing session instead of another class.

Purpose: The day's group task finds closure here. Recreational dancing allows the kids to regain strength and motivation for the activity to follow.

Remarks: The kids rejoice in watching each other and themselves on the screen. A high level of aggression



displays itself in the form of mock fighting and a few more serious quarrels, but overall, the session works out as desired.

Activity 3.91: Speech & Pledge

What happens: This night holds the climax of the workshop in store: the pledge to really move to shelter homes or their families after returning from Dehradun. There is an exhaustive speech by a senior team member on the meaning of this decision. He clarifies that the workshop cannot last forever, that at some point, they will have to make a choice to go back to the station and their old habits or to make a change towards something healthier, more self-determined in many ways, and more sustainable.

To most team members, the small number still willing to leave the end of the station towards the end of the workshop is neither a surprise, nor a disappointment: work in this field is all about long-term effects

One last time, the children are given the choice to leave the room and withdraw from their commitment, or to stay and make it final. By and by, the boys get up and go. In the end, a group of six is left. With these, a longer and in-depth discussion on what they want and how that can be achieved is held. Finally, the day is over, and the children go to sleep.

Purpose: All participants have previously agreed to shift, but their unstable way of life must be taken into account. As they know the - in certain ways - unlimited liberties of the station, there would be no point in forcing them into a shelter home. Therefore, this exercise makes sure they consciously and deliberately take the decision to move or to stick to their old life. The latter is no failure: it simply means further NGO interventions and personal development are necessary before a definite change can take place.

Day Four: April 25

Activity 4.1: Personal Hygiene

See 2.1

Activity 4.2: Cricket Matches

What happens: Before and after breakfast, there is recreational sports.

Purpose: The matches see to it that the day has a nice start after the emotional strain of the night before.

After the problems of the previous day, the children realize the strain they have put themselves and the team under. Four choose to return to the station as they feel the workshop is too much for them in their present situations. From this point on, matters improve a bit, also due to the flexible adjustment of the schedule towards more creative, less strictly concentrated activities

Activities 4.3-4.5: Morning Meditation, Picture Recap, Committee Review & Election

See Activities 2.3-2.5

Remarks: The music meditation and picture recap go well; the committee review is more focused and shorter than previous ones.

Activity 4.6: Presentation on the Physical Consequences of Sniffing Solution

What happens: A clinical psychologist and CHETNA team member uses posters and digital pictures to explain the harmful effects of substance abuse on the body organ by organ. She is added to at some points by another senior team member.

Purpose: Although the children have heard of these facts before in Life Skill Workshops, it is important to revive their knowledge frequently so that finally, they will draw their conclusions.

Remarks: The talk has the full attention of the group, whose concentration was beginning to slacken prior to it. The children affirm what is said, relating to their own experiences and what they have seen happen to others.

Headaches, coughs, stomach problems - the children know it all

Activity 4.7: Counseling Sessions

What happens: The boys are divided into groups, who are assigned one adult team member offering in-depth conversations. These take place at different locations, some outside the premises in the mountains. The team members take the children's case histories (or update



them where they already exist). Moreover, the boys are assisted in filling in questionnaires on what they think are the reasons for substance abuse, on the roles of internal and external factors in this, and on the effectiveness of measures taken against it. Afterwards, they have the opportunity to obtain personal counseling. This is given the whole day until the late afternoon.

Purpose: In the one-on-one conversations, the respective team member tries to address issues that cannot be resolved in the group collective. Also, further encouragement is given to leave the station for a home or the family, and to begin an educational career.

Case histories and survey serve purposes of documentation and enhanced understanding.

Activity 4.8: Fourth Yoga Session

See 1.8

Activity 4.9: Fourth Group Task: Unfolding the Learning

What happens: After the yoga class, the children reconverge in the hall. Music is played, helping them to focus on a new task that is about to be given to them: in four groups under the supervision of team members, they shall practise parts of a cultural program for the following day, the last one in Dehradun. This is planned as a sort of competition in cricket,



role play, song and dance, and shall convey what the children took out of the workshop. The time until evening is spent in these groups.

Purpose: As the way the last evening is celebrated can be a major factor in how the workshop is remembered, it is important to integrate the participants in the preparation so they can identify with the result. The responsibility of rule-making and committee activities is combined with the teamwork skills of other group sessions and team sports.

Remarks: Later, problems occur:

children leave the premises without permission, get intoxicated on bhang and come back in quite an aggressive mood. Without listening to what the adult team members say, they create considerable nuisance; three boys beat up one peer because he tries to make them calm down.

Activity 4.91: 'Aaj Tak News'

What happens: Clippings of 'Aaj Tak News' relating to the issues of street and working children are screened. Afterwards, the kids go to bed.

Purpose: Apart from the fact that these clips contain interesting information bearing an obvious connection to the workshop participants' lives, their major function is to calm the boys down after the major nuisance that occurred before. Being asked how this could be done, they themselves had suggested watching movies, and the team accepted this.

Day Five: April 26

Activity 5.1: Cricket Tournament

What happens: The last day begins with the first part of the cultural program: a cricket tournament between the four groups formed the night before. This goes on until around eleven a.m.

Purpose: Teamwork and exercise are aspects of this activity, but considering it being the last day and the children's exhaustion, it is mainly about their fun and joy.

Activity 5.2: Preparing the Evening Program

What happens: For most of the day, the groups work on the night's cultural program.

Purpose: For the group performances, teamwork is again needed; furthermore, individual representatives have to be selected and show themselves ready for single shows.

Remarks: Morale is heightened again during the day.

Activity 5.3: Movie Screening

What happens: A film is shown in between preparation and performance of the evening program.

Purpose: The children feel worn out to start the cultural program right away; they justly demand a break and are granted one.

Activity 5.4: Cultural Program

What happens: Role plays, song and dance in singles and groups are presented by the four teams formed the previous evening.

Purpose: The end of the workshop is celebrated so Dehradun is left in a spirit of union and a good mood, hopefully giving another incentive towards life in homes or families.

Remarks: All difficulties of the past days notwithstanding, the kids do well performing their program and enjoy doing so.



Activity 5.5: Feedback Session

What happens: All participants have the opportunity to share their views on how the workshop went. The team members share their views as well. Each participant obtains a copy of the group picture taken on Day Three.



Purpose: According to the principles of a transparent, participatory organization, the children are granted space to voice their final opinion on the program. Insights gained from this will be used when designing the next workshop schedule.

Remarks: The children express regret over the sometimes difficult situations caused by aggressiveness; as an entity, the group once more declares their will to leave substance abuse behind.

Outcomes & Insights

The results of this workshop can be roughly divided into two categories: the more NGO-internal one of understanding on the part of CHETNA, and the external one of the impact made on the children's lives and mindsets.

Insights

On the one hand, there is the level of evaluating the workshop itself. In this context, several factors can be found which contributed to the difficulties in successfully putting the schedule into practice. The lessons learned are as follows:

1) Group size should be small

The sheer number of kids made it difficult to focus all participants' attention simultaneously. It allowed for factions to form within the group; more fights ensued than would have occurred otherwise. Also, the ratio of team members to children should have been higher so that even more individual care could have been given to each child.

2) The participants should be of the same age group

At the station, there is a strict hierarchy based on age. Therefore, the older boys at the workshop were used to having a strong influence on the younger ones; some even turned out to be the employers of other participants. This led to difficulties whenever an older boy radiated frustration as it spread among the others.

Also, it is of course easier to do justice to the wishes and needs of one age group than to those of several ones at the same time.

3) More emphasis should be laid on audio-visual aids

As the kids demonstrated by the calm and focused attention during movie screenings, audio-visual shows are received very well by this target group. They are exciting and relaxing at the same time. During some discussions and sessions of the workshop, though, this aspect was lacking.

4) There should be more games

Even though attention had been paid to the importance of ice-breakers, warm-ups, and recreation for group dynamics during the planning period, the children made obvious they would have needed more of these. Their longing for cricket was just about endless, and it could be seen the game released tensions to a considerable degree. With some more planning in this direction, it would be possible to utilize the positive effects of such activities for improving working sessions as well, and the participants would enjoy a workshop even more.



In addition to this, some insights into station life were gained that had not been known in this form before. Whilst the CHETNA team already acquired considerable experience in this field in the course of the projects "Dreams on Wheels" and "Rehabilitating Street and Working Children Abusing Substance", the workshop reinforced some impressions and had some

new ones in store. This knowledge enhancement is certainly one of the major outcomes, as only a full understanding of the situation can prompt the right steps towards a betterment. One aspect that became more obvious is the complex relationship of peers living at the station. There is harsh competition and rivalry, as could be seen in numerous, mostly minor brawls. However, this form of physical contact is also a way of communication between children that are everything for each other, friends and foes, family and colleagues. Older boys sometimes function as a blend of exploitative employer and badly-needed protector for the younger ones. During the workshop, they felt responsible for calm and a good working attitude in the group and took care of their juniors when they needed it. But also cases of negative influence and manipulation occurred, and during the session on sexual abuse, the boys spoke of habitual harassment from their seniors at the station. For this reason, it seems more efficient to work with the different age groups separately for some time so as to ensure everybody's feeling of security. If they could be united, e.g. in a forum like the Federation of Street and Working Children, Badhte Kadam, which is facilitated by CHETNA, this would be ideal: an immense potential for reducing the risks of station life as well as its lure to newcomers may be explored here. Efforts going in this direction are taking place; however, much more remains to be done.

With regard to the reasons that bring children to the station, previous impressions seemed to be reinforced: major factors named in individual introductions and presentations of team works were domestic violence and poverty in contrast to a sense of adventure, liberties and highs at the platforms. Further findings in this field will be presented as soon as the survey mentioned above (the questionnaires filled in during the counseling sessions on day four) is fully analyzed.

Outcomes

But of course, the workshop was not only a study but more than anything an intervention in the lives of 35 children. What long-term effects it has had on their mindsets and future decisions cannot be estimated yet. But whilst at times during the workshop, it was not easy to make out any development at all, some changes could be seen even in the first weeks after the return.

- Immediately upon arrival in Delhi, **one boy** was reunited with his mother and went to live with his family in Faridabad. **Another one** went back home the same day.
- **Three children** agreed to move to a shelter home in Delhi. Two of them left to go back to the streets after three weeks - plans are being made to let them try again at a different home. One decided to stay permanently.
- **Five boys** from Nizamuddin went to live with their families.
- **Six boys** went to CHETNA's shelter home in Agra for a few days, and **one other boy** shifted there for good.
- **Seven boys** are now regularly coming to CHETNA's center in Nizamuddin and have cut down their consumption. **Another one** stays at the station, but has left the habit of substance abuse altogether; he now takes interest in education and wants to be admitted to school soon.

=> More than 50% of the workshop participants have made a visible change in their lives.

Conclusion

All three objectives were achieved with some limitations.

- A residential workshop for this special target group was planned and conducted. This in itself consists a novelty considering how little they are concentrated on by NGOs in the NCR. However, the pre-devised schedule proved difficult to stick to at times and could not be fully realized: some activities took longer than intended; others were replaced by improvised ones more appropriate to the needs of the moment.
- A process of deepening the understanding of the phenomenon of substance abuse the parts of both the team and the participants was prompted. The children turned out to be well-aware of many risks and hazards as well as reasons behind their problems, which may in part be attributed to the NGO's work of the past months. Some have drawn conclusions as to how to try and evade station life and addiction; others have not found their ways out yet but surely profited from the discussions and presentations held during the workshop. Several activities planned for this purpose, though, could not be carried through for reasons mentioned above.

CHETNA will gain further understanding of the issue through the analysis of a research survey conducted during the workshop.

- The objective of motivating the children to move to shelters or back home is the one most difficult to evaluate such short time after the workshop was conducted. As the participants stayed at the station for years prior to CHETNA's intervention, it might take many such attempts to before a permanent shift to life in a home or their families is made. The number of children who have left the station at least for some time after the workshop is not staggeringly high, but satisfying considering the difficult circumstances. In the future, even better preparation must be provided so the children are ready to make a permanent move.



All in all, the workshop at Dehradun was a decent first step in a difficult process. It pushed the participants ahead on their way to a better life and improved CHETNA's understanding of how best to work with this target group, thusly enhancing the quality of future activities of this kind.

Annexure 1: Original Schedule

The Module

The following schedule was devised for the workshop:

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
22/4/2010	8:30-9:30am	Breakfast
	9:30-11:00	Formal Welcome Agenda of workshop Introduction of all the children and staff Collage exercise (as ice breaker) Rule making and development of committees
	11:00-11:30	Tea Break
	11:30 - 1:30	Balloon exercise: children draw themselves in a typical situation and explain.
	1:30-2:30	Lunch
	2:30-3:00	Game: Balloon in air (a warm-up exercise)
	3:00-4:00	A group session - in this, children express their present situation with the help of the role plays and drawings. The larger group will be divided into 4 sub groups. Two groups will express through pictures Two groups will express through role plays
	4:00-4:30	Tea Break
	4:30-6:00	Presentation of the present situation by groups
	6:00-7:00	Yoga
	7:00-7:30	Free time
	7:30-8:30	Dinner
	8:30-9.00 9.00-10:00	Introduction of the dance class Cultural activities
	10:00-10:30pm	Play on importance of personal hygiene by CHETNA staff
23/4/2010	6:30-8:30 am	Session to maintain personal hygiene (which includes brushing, bathing, changing of clothes) of the children under the guidance of the facilitators
	8:30 - 9:15	Breakfast
	9:30 – 11:00	Recap of the previous day with the help of the pictures Review of committees Introduction of new committees
	11:00-11:30	Tea Break
	11:00-12:15	A group session – the children visualize their condition 5 years ago with the help of the role plays and drawings. The larger group will be divided into 4 sub groups.

		Two groups will express through pictures Two groups will express through role plays
	12:15-1:30	Presentation of pictures and plays
	1:30-2:30	Lunch Break
	2:30-3:00	Game: "name game"
	3:00-4:00	A group session- children visualize what will be their future (5yrs from now) if they are in the same condition in an interactive session.
	4:00-4:15	Tea break
	4:15-4:45	Aaj Tak News (clippings of successful cases aired on TV)
	4:45-6:00	A dream journey for relaxation
	6:30-10:00pm	Movie: "3 Idiots"
24/4/2010	6:30 - 8:30am	Session to maintain personal hygiene (which includes brushing, bathing, changing of clothes, washing the clothes) of the children under the guidance of the facilitators
	8:30 - 9:15	Breakfast
	9:30 – 10:30	Recap of the previous day with the help of the pictures Review of committees Introduction of new committees
	10:30-11:00	Tea Break
	11:00-1:00	A group session - Children are told to envision where they find themselves in their dreams five years from now: a song is played (itni shakti) to create an appropriate environment. Then every child will be told to express their dreams and what are the hurdles that they are facing in fulfilling their dreams.
	1:30-2:30	Lunch
	2:30 – 4:30	In individual counseling sessions the children are given personal attention.
	4:30-5:30	The common guide lines which were addressed individually previously are addressed in group.
	5:30-6:00	Game - "turn the carpet"
	6:00- 7:00	Yoga
	7:00-7:30	Free time
	7:30-8:30	Dinner
	8:30-9:00	Dance class
	9:00-10:00pm	Cultural activity (song and dance) Creating an emotional atmosphere to make them all set for a commitment to come out of this life In a decorated room, the children will take a pledge to leave substance abuse behind
25/4/2010	6:30 - 8:30am	Session to maintain personal hygiene (which includes brushing, bathing, changing of clothes) of the children under the guidance of the facilitators
	8:30 - 9:15	Breakfast

	9:30 – 10:30	Recap of the previous day with the help of the pictures Review of committees Introduction of new committees
	10:30- 11:00	Tea Break
	11:00- 12:00	Discussion: How are you feeling now after committing towards a new life / change in environment / guide lines?
	12:00- 1:30	Trust walk (exercise to enhance cooperation among children)
	1:30-2:30	Lunch
	2:30-3:00	Game
	3:00 – 4:15	Session - assuring the children that with strong will power they can come out of their situation, with the help of the positive case studies of the children who have done so before
	4:15-4:30	Tea Break
	4:30- 6:00	Moving onward with the assurance session with the story of Badhte Kadam, the Federation of Street and Working Children facilitated by CHETNA
	6:00-7:00	Yoga class
	7:30-8:30	Dinner
	8:30-9:00	Dance class
	9:00 - 10:00pm	Cultural program
26/4/2010	6:30 - 8:30am	Session to maintain personal hygiene (which includes brushing, bathing, changing of clothes) of the children under the guidance of the facilitators
	8:30 - 9:15	Breakfast
	9:30 – 10:30	Recap of the previous day with the help of the pictures Review of committees Introduction of new committees
	10:30- 11:00	Tea Break
	11:00- 11:15	Energizer
	11:15- 2:00	Various life skills are given as the topic for role plays, so children can self-teach and convey what they learned to each other
	2:00-3:00	Lunch
	3:00- 5:00pm	Presentation of the role plays
	5:00- 9:00pm	Cultural program

Annexure 2: The Team

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