A Report on
“Life Skills and Self-defense Workshop”

For ‘Beneficiaries of ‘NISHTHA’, Baruipur, South 24 Parganas
In collaboration with ‘INSPIRATION’ and ‘Asha for Education’

Let’s Learn : How to ‘Be Healthy’, ‘Stay Safe’, ‘Enjoy life’, ‘Achieve goal’ and ‘Make a Positive Contribution for self and society’


The Context

NISHTHA is located in Baruipur in the district of South 24 Parganas of West Bengal. It mainly operates in the coastal district in West Bengal, but has recently expanded its efforts into Maldah which is an ecologically and economically vulnerable district where thousands of people have lost their homes due to the erosion of river banks. In the remote village Baikunthapur of South 24 Parganas girl children and women were often deserted and became victims of exploitation, torture and violence. The condition of the children, particularly the girl children was equally distressing. Very few of them could get chance to go to school. In the year 1974 five women of this village were thrown out of their in-laws’ house and two other women committed suicide driven by the torture in their in-laws house. This prompted Mrs. Pritilata Das and some other sensitive women to form a group called NISHTHA. Their aim is to empower women and children.

The Night Shelter at Baruipur red light area in Puratan Bazar is providing shelters and all other basic needs to the most unfortunate children of the society. It was initially unimaginable that the children, especially girl children, could have any future like the children of the normal society.

Generally 100% girl children of red light areas didn’t have the opportunity to go out of their locality, mainly because, the outside society do not accept them in the so called civilized just because of their birth identity, and usually it is their own society which forces them to join in mother’s profession for survival. The boys are also brought up in an unhealthy environment with all kind of inappropriate exposure and by the time they attain teenage/adolescence they also become the part of the supporting system to run the show.

The rationale

The area where the programme was held is semi urban and habited by backward communities from mainly Hindu and Muslim religious background. The children in most of the families are first generation learners. Men are mostly engaged as daily wage earners in agricultural farms and small factories. Average family size is four to six heads and women are dominated by the patriarchal family set up along with strong religious inhibitions. Gender imbalance is very much prevalent where women have no voice in decision making. In the context of the present situation and lack of safety and security of young women and girls in their place of living and in public places, this programme was designed to prevent and reduce violence as a means to resolve conflict, be that internal or external conflict, and to support young people to empower themselves in order to manage their lives in society positively with the belief and hope of personal development.
However, to provide support to the distressed women and girls in the specified area NISHTHA with the support of ASHA for Education intended to streamline them and to resolve their problem. In this context Hijli INSPIRATION was engaged as the technical support through a workshop cum training approach. This programme sought to achieve its aims by educating vulnerable young people about the obvious and hidden dangers of violence and support them to identify the challenges and hurdles that block them from empowering themselves and how to overcome them. It seeks to provide constructive and sustainable alternative way-out to manage the real issues they face on a daily basis.

Goal of the project –

The main goal of the project is to prevent and stop violence as a means to resolve conflict, be that internal or external conflict, and to support young people to empower themselves in order to manage their lives in society positively with the belief and hope of personal development. However, the project focus is to develop clarity of self and social identity as well as holistic sense of security and confidence (of body, mind and soul).

Objectives-

Main objective of the project is

- It seeks to achieve its aims by educating vulnerable young people about the obvious and hidden dangers of violence and support them to identify the challenges and hurdles that block them from empowering themselves and how to overcome them.
- It seeks to provide constructive and sustainable alternative way-out to manage the real issues they face on a daily basis.

Methodology-

The project had specific way of proceedings. 7 thematic sessions were planned relating to Gender sensitivity, Social Awareness & Consequences, Safety Prevention and Personal Development, Confidence Developing Insight, Dignity of labour as well as Value for money. Moreover, the expected outcomes of the GroupWise workshops are written below.

The sessions involved carefully structured interactive workshops, thematically linked ice breakers, facilitated debates and discussions, questions and answers, power point presentations, self-exploratory exercises; skills practice exercises, quizzes, etc. However, with beneficiaries participatory training methods with experiential learning and with others interactions on as on required basis method have been observed.
Methods used with Beneficiaries

Through participatory training method with self-exploratory exercises, objectives were partially achieved. From the drawing and story built by the participants it was observed that they had teenage curiosity. While explored it was found that they had age inappropriate exposure in their environment. From the drawing of the participants it can be said that, most of them suffer from anxiety and insecurity. Externalized aggression was present among some of the participants.

**Expected learning outcome from workshop:**

- How fear directs destructive thinking and behavior
- Ways to keep safe
- Responsibility towards self and others
- Identifying issues for personal growth
- Distinction between healthy fear and unhealthy fear, emotional and psychological fear
- The effects that anger/resentments has on the decisions and choices that young people make
- How resentment fuels anger
- Educate the young people about the science of money

**The Target Group**

The target group comprised the Adolescent girls in the age group of 15-17 years who have appeared for Madhyamik Examination in Feb 2014 and the children group of 8 – 14 years late childhood / pre teenage girls in formal and informal education.

**Preliminary overview or reconnaissance**

An initial interaction or reconnaissance was done to assess the target group in terms of socio-psychological factors. This led to the actual design of sessions and defining the delivery plan.
Major findings about the target groups are the following:

- Deprivation from the child rights, namely, survival, participation, development, protection
- Neurobiological factors/changes, genetic vulnerability
- Lack of appropriate role model in the family and around
- Inappropriate child rearing practices
- High family stress (divorce, remarriage, substance abuse, family dysfunctions, etc.)
- Socio economic disadvantages (inability to fulfill basic survival needs, etc.)
- Environmental disturbances (crime, violence, discrimination, etc.)
- Age inappropriate visual and experiential exposure
- Birth conditions of the children (unknown in all most all cases)
- Mother’s physical and mental health condition at the time of pregnancy prenatal/ perinatal/ and post-natal condition
- Nutrition level of both mother and child plays a significant role in child’s physical as well as cognitive development
- Trauma, abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), addiction, etc.
- Emotional deprivation (nurturing deficit, neglect, etc.)

These contributory factors are irreversible and sometimes cause frequent, severe and intense behavioural/emotional disturbances to the child and, in turn, to caregivers and/or institution.

The understanding led to the identification of areas which needed intervention. They are as follows:

- To be aware about self-image (basic level of awareness about own strength and limitations)
- To work with self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of inferiority
- To learn constructive ways of handling guilt and regret and coping with apprehensions
- To acquire decision making and problem solving skills and conflict management skills
- To develop sense of responsibility towards self and others
- To become appropriately gender sensitive
- To realize the value of time
- To broaden their view and to see things from other perspectives
- To facilitate them to learn the resource management skills (internal and external resources)
- To learn effective communication skills and to be more assertive in expression
- Identifying factors determining success/achievement
- Identifying constraints, real and perceived, external and internal
- Goal setting
- How to make action plan for future
- Anger management, developing empathy towards others
- Being aware of own somatic cues of anger and constructive steps accordingly
- Self-exploration
- Self confidence
- Gender sensitivity
- Girls role in society

Total no. of proposed workshop sessions / group: 10 [ Along with the above mentioned seven sessions, three more sessions, one for introduction and group specific need assessment, one for closure and (at least) one for follow up after 3 months of finishing of the course]
Keeping in mind the proposed workshop, an overall observation report of TRAINING VISIT AT NISHTHA from a mental health perspective is given below. Few modifications were made at the time of execution according to need of the situation.

As indicated in the methodology, the mode of interaction and education was the workshop-training mode with some specific objectives

Objective of the Workshop

- to identify/understand the psychological and emotional issues of the beneficiaries
- To provide Life Skills Training to identified group of beneficiaries of the organization according to need
- to provide support and guidance to the caregivers/social workers so that they can better manage themselves as well as the beneficiaries
- to address the myths and misconceptions about mental health issues and to generate more awareness regarding the same
- to facilitate a more mental health friendly environment in the organization as well as in the community

Workshop with 1st Batch

Senior age group – around 15-18 years

This is the group of adolescents which is the most difficult age of stress and storm. Most of them are have appeared as well as going to appear in very important exams in future, some of them have successfully got over it. Thus it’s an age where constant monitoring not only regarding academics but also about certain relationship issues is needed. On the other hand, it’s an extremely mixed group where some members are attached to academics and some are completely detached from it. Thus those who don’t have any involvement with academics need to be rehabilitated in a broader way, in the field where they can explore their areas of interest as well as can develop a career on their own.

Some participants have come from different backgrounds. Some of them have different traumatic experiences which need to be handled separately rather than in group for their better personality grooming in future. Efforts were made by the facilitators to address those issues in the limited scope of group sessions. At times one to one interactions were done to deal their issues individually, considering the gravity of the sharing experiences, to make them aware about their own areas of strength and wellbeing.

Participants

88 adolescent girls in the age group of 15-17 years who have appeared for Madhyamik Examination in Feb 2014.

The participants were divided into 3 groups –

Group 1(32), Group 2 (25), Group 3 (31)
Approach of the workshop

Major focus of the project was on development of self-defense skills including self-exploration & awareness, self-confidence, self-reliance, stress coping skills, appropriate communication skills, controlling strong negative emotions, problem solving & decision making skill and time management. The Most striking finding was the fear/hesitation. Almost all the participants, except a handful few, have enormous amount of unexplained fear which inhibits them to take any initiative to act or talk. Always they wait for the next person to start!

A quiz session regarding current affairs was done with them and it was very satisfactory seeing them taking much interest in it. Individual interactions were also done with them to help them identify their areas of strength and need and challenges of life they need to overcome in future. While facilitated to complete the sentence ‘I can..........’ , they shared like I can fetch water, I can play Kabadi, I can enjoy food, I can love people, I can help others in need, I can love nature and environment, I can teach people whatever I learn, etc. Thus slowly the group members gathered confidence which were reflected in their responses and in turn gradually encouraged them to be ready for group work.

Session details of 1st Batch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List the original outcomes from your programme</th>
<th>List the original indicator(s) for each outcome from your project proposal)</th>
<th>What is the current measurement of each indicator (e.g., #, %)?</th>
<th>How many people benefited from these activities?</th>
<th>What activities have you completed in this period?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1: NEED ASSESSMENT SESSION</td>
<td>No. of participants who enjoyed the activities.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88 adolescent girls</td>
<td>Ice breaking exercises, Training games, story building, real life case discussion, small group activities, drawing and creative activities, role playing, dance and rhythm, deep breathing activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of participants who took active role in small group discussion.</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No. of participants who showed interest in drawing and creative activities.</td>
<td>75%</td>
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Key Observations:
- The participants were initially inhibited but gradually they open up and expressed their views.
- They had enjoyed group activities.

It was observed that the girls from 1st, 2nd and 3rd group were having lots of potentialities, but they were least aware of their own strengths. Most of them were lacking confidence, inhibited or too much pre occupied with their own limitations. They have very limited idea about life in broader
sense. They were always defensive of perceived threat from their world around but had hardly any ego strength to counter with real crisis. There were very limited few who, with assistance, could visualize about their future goal or even have any clarity about the concept of personal growth or career. It seemed like they were mostly interested in immediate pleasure/gratification with very low frustration tolerance level. They used to spend lot of time thinking about past or future, but didn’t know how to utilize the time in hand optimally. They were having few unrealistic expectations from self and other leading to frustration and irritation. They have very limited exposure about the world around. They are mostly influenced by the social norms seen and learnt by experience or imitation and significantly conditioned with gender stereotype prevalent in the society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 2:</th>
<th>No. of participants who felt good</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>73 adolescent girls</th>
<th>Ice breaking exercises, Training games (Number game/ Simon says ) Drawing and story building in group, deep breathing activities,</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender sensitivity, Social Awareness &amp; Consequences</td>
<td>No. of participants who had fun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of participants who felt refreshed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Observations:</td>
<td>The objective of the group activities were explored with the participants and it could be said that they could understand it clearly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>They felt relaxed and refreshed after participating in the deep breathing exercises.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3:</th>
<th>No. of participants who initially felt, inhibited but gradually became expressive</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>69 adolescent girls</th>
<th>Spot feeling Energizer/ Group game small group activities (STAR Exercise), Individual drawing (DAP- draw human figures of both sex) Story listening and enacting by children (planning and performance by children themselves) Discussion in group to reflect their learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing myself and my world</td>
<td>No. of participants who told that they had a good experience and a new avenue of thought had opened up to them</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of participants who have enjoyed the creative activities and at the time of ending the session they wanted to continue the session.</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Observations:</td>
<td>The “STAR” exercise was very effective.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The participants were able to understand the basic activities of making goals and identifying their areas of improvement along with the problem solving strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 4:</th>
<th>No. of participants who had enjoyed physical activities.</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>48 adolescent girls</th>
<th>Ice breaking exercises, Training games,</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>No. of participants who initially faced difficulty to coordinate their hand leg rhythmic movement, but gradually they tried to overcome it.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Dance/ rhythm and movement therapy, Drawing and discussion deep breathing activities,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No. of participants who Initially felt doubtful (whether they be able to do it or not), but later found that they can do things which initially seemed difficult to perform.</td>
<td>90%</td>
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</table>

**Key Observations:**

Through dance movement their physical along with emotional rigidity was addressed and handled. A gradual change was observed among the participants and it was a positive change. Most of the movements were related to courage, overcoming the emotional constraints and empowerment. They had enjoyed physical activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 5: Identifying inhibitions/ Addressing fears/anger</th>
<th>No. of participants who felt that better understanding was developed regarding anger management. No. of participants told that their thought process had changed after attending this session.</th>
<th>95%</th>
<th>58 adolescent girls</th>
<th>energizer Interactive session real life case discussion, small group activities, role playing, deep breathing activities</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
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**Key Observation:**

Active participation and genuine responses given by the participants citing real life incidents.

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<tr>
<th>Session 6: Resource management skills</th>
<th>No. of participants who enjoyed the activities. No. of participants who showed their eagerness to learn the skill of self-defense.</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>54 adolescent girls</th>
<th>Recap Brain storming Energizers, small group creative activities with given materials and time limit individual drawing role playing, deep breathing activities,</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
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**Key Observation:**

Active participation was observed.

Those groups could perform better in which the members had good cohesion, cooperation and understanding.

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<tr>
<th>Session 7:</th>
<th>No. of participants who understood that fighting wastes time</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>58 adolescent girls</th>
<th>Energizers group activities-Mask making Individual activities- self</th>
</tr>
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</table>
Key Observation:
- Better clarity and understanding capacity was developed.
- Confidence level was enhanced in majority of the participants which was significantly visible by their actions and verbal feedback as well as through their non-verbal expression too.

| Session 8: Self-defense skills | No. of participants who were very curious to know about different self defense mechanisms and the asked different questions regarding this issue with the resource persons. | 90% | 55 adolescent girls | Karate techniques demonstration by trainers Large group participation Open session (question answer) |

Key Observation:
The participants were very curious and they showed interest to learn the techniques for self-protection. Initially some of the participants were inhibited to participate in the karate training. But gradually they took active role. The workshop gradually increased the energy level of the participants.

| Session 9: Gender sensitivity | No. of participants who realized the clarity and importance of gender roles in society | 85% | 51 adolescent girls | video presentation quiz |

Key Observation:
- From the feedback of the participants it could be said that they felt empowered after observing the videos on women empowerment.
- Some myths and misconceptions of the participants were rectified after attending the quiz.

The participants were very curious and they showed interest to learn the techniques for self-protection. Initially some of the participants were inhibited to participate in the karate training. But gradually they took active role. The workshop gradually increased the energy level of the participants.

| Session 10: Closure session | No. of participants who understood the need for prior planning which is required to execute any work effectively. No. of participants who felt that open communication and discussion among group members is very important. | 100% | 82 adolescent girls | energizer small group activities and presentation open session Training game Closure exercise - handholding |
Majority of girls have appeared in class XII board examination and waiting for their result. They can now think of their future constructively and dislike to waste time. Few of them have joined in some short tern courses in this period, like computer, karate, and other vocational training to keep them engaged in some productive activities. It was worth noticing that everyone in the group shared their future plan after class XII board result to pursue which was absolutely absent when they first came for the training programme just finishing their class X board results. It was something new to them that there is a need to have future plan in life.

Apart from having clarity about career decisions, they have overcome their inhibition significantly, with less fear, more confidence by adapting assertive communication skills. Their journey from a victim self to a survivor is very obvious by their body language and own feedback as well as feedback from the social worker around them. They are in the process of coming out from the learnt helplessness and contributing towards their society and people around in a positive manner.

### Session 11: Follow up session for peer leaders

| No. of participants who felt the need for more sessions like this | 100% | 12 adolescent girls who were chosen as peer leaders | Energizer
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of participants who liked to learn more about things they did not know</td>
<td></td>
<td>No of participants who were unaware that so many things are there around them, but they had very little idea about that.</td>
<td>Common learning identified and written on chart papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of participants who wished they could join in thus kind of sessions on regular basis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open session in large group</td>
</tr>
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### Key Observation:
Majority of the participants were confident and participated with enthusiasm.

### Key Observation:
It was significantly noticed that majority of participants mentioned ‘We’, not ‘I’ while giving their feedback which is no doubt an indicator of group bonding and sense of empathy too.

### Monitoring:
Regular contacts with NISTHA staff were maintained for information on the girls. The girls will be appearing for higher Secondary examination in February 2016. They are progressing well. Follow up meeting will be held in the month of March 2016 for a day or two to cover the beneficiaries.

### Learning:
Marriage as a concept is very high in the mind of these children. Experience of domestic violence in the family and gender role of men in society makes them vulnerable to step into early marriage at an inappropriate age.

Our experience of working in groups made us realize the constraints of heterogeneity of the group. In a heterogeneous group, the participants do not have equal receptive capacity and that limits the outcome of the programme. Due to differences in homogeneity of the group members, many issues could not be addressed. Interest and knowledge need could not be fulfilled for the better learners. Care should be taken to overcome this.

Self-defense requires reflex, physical fitness/mental alertness and confidence. Confidence building and prior thinking/planning is very much essential for physical and mental health.

### Last follow up feedback Group specific (05/04/2016) – Senior group

Majority of girls have appeared in class XII board examination and waiting for their result. They can now think of their future constructively and dislike to waste time. Few of them have joined in some short tern courses in this period, like computer, karate, and other vocational training to keep them engaged in some productive activities. It was worth noticing that everyone in the group shared their future plan after class XII board result to pursue which was absolutely absent when they first came for the training programme just finishing their class X board results. It was something new to them that there is a need to have future plan in life.

Apart from having clarity about career decisions, they have overcome their inhibition significantly, with less fear, more confidence by adapting assertive communication skills. Their journey from a victim self to a survivor is very obvious by their body language and own feedback as well as feedback from the social worker around them. They are in the process of coming out from the learnt helplessness and contributing towards their society and people around in a positive manner. They
are addressing the common evils in their day to day life, like eve teasing, under age marriage, etc. by making people aware about the consequences of them and showing an alternative constructive way out.

It is worth mentioning that many more girls from their locality are willing to participate in this kind of training programme, which gives a clear indication that the impact of the programme is visible and clearly understood by other people too.

**Case study-**

Asima Sardar is only 16 years old and was initially scared to participate in the programme but after attending several sessions she felt very good about herself. Her experience is shared by Sudipa Purkait, Rama Mondal, Susmita Sepai, Abuna Majhi and Tanuja Khatun and others. This effort helped them to start developing clarity about self and social identity as well as holistic sense of security and confidence (of body, mind and soul).

Teen ager Kakoli Debnath, single child of the family, pursuing education at Baruipur high school, enjoys dance a lot. She has a dream to continue with her academics as well as dance in future. Initially she was inhibited a little, but with support and encouragement she actively participated in the session proceedings.

Puja Adhikary, another teenager girl, is in Baripur High school, enjoys dance and drawing. She has a dream to become teacher in future. Unlike most of the children of her age, she seems very calm and composed and has lots of potentialities inside which needs guidance for its appropriate channelization.

**Workshop with 2nd Batch:**

**Junior age group – 7-15 years**

It’s an extremely mixed group where some members are attached to academics and some are completely detached from it. Thus those who don’t have any involvement with academics need to be rehabilitated in a broader way, in the field where they can explore their areas of interest as well as can develop a career on their own.

Likewise the senior groups the junior group also have almost similar and mixed backgrounds. Some of them have different traumatic experiences which need to be handled separately rather than in group for their better personality grooming in future. Efforts were made by the facilitators to address those issues in the limited scope of group sessions. At times one to one interactions were done to deal their issues individually, considering the gravity of the sharing experiences, to make them aware about their own areas of strength and wellbeing.
Approach of the workshop:

Major focus of the project was on development of self-defense skills including self-exploration & awareness, self-confidence, self-reliance, stress coping skills, appropriate communication skills, controlling strong negative emotions, problem solving & decision making skill and time management.

Slowly, with interactive games and activities they overcame their inhibitions (physically and psychologically) and participated more spontaneously. Several times session plans were to be modified according to need of the situation. Work was done on developing awareness about maintaining personal daily hygiene by using audio visual kit several times. Besides, they were interacted separately for unbinding their stored negative memories and experiences. Effort was taken to inculcate a sense of responsibility among some of them. Need Assessment sessions with the participants helped to identify the need of the selected group of children as far as life skill training is concerned. Subsequently The need for introducing life skills techniques were desperately felt and accordingly worked upon.

Session details of 2\textsuperscript{nd} Batch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List the original outcomes from your programme</th>
<th>List the original indicator(s) for each outcome from your project proposal.</th>
<th>What is the current measurement of each indicator (e.g., #, %)?</th>
<th>How many people benefited from these activities?</th>
<th>What activities have you completed in this period?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1:</td>
<td>No. of participants who enjoyed the activities. No. of participants who took active role in small group discussion. No. of participants who showed interest in drawing and creative activities.</td>
<td>100% 95% 100%</td>
<td>8 Pre teenage boys and girls</td>
<td>Ice breaking exercises, Training games, small group activities, Brain storming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Observations:
- Marked heterogeneity among group members
- Attention deficit
- Hyperactivity
- Poor Sense of discipline in majority
- Poor listening skills
- Lacking capacity to express—verbal and non-verbal
- Having Intellectual and social retardation (?)

| Session 2:                                      | No. of participants who felt good No. of participants who had fun No. of participants who felt refreshed | 100% 100% 100% | 8 Pre teenage boys and girls | Ice breaking exercises, Training games (Number game/ Simon says ) Drawing and story building in group, deep breathing activities, |
**Key Observations:**
From the drawing and story built by the participants it can be said that they had teenage curiosity. While explored it was found that they had age inappropriate exposure in their environment.

Significant observations:
- Attention deficit in 3 boys
- Hyperactivity
- Poor sense of discipline
- Lacking expression- both verbal and non-verbal
- Social retardation is observed, family history may help to understand their behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3:</th>
<th>No. the participants who have enjoyed the creative activities and at the time of ending the session wanted to continue the session.</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>5 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
<th>Spot feening Energizer /group game Individual drawing (DAP- draw human figures of both sex) Story listening and enacting by children (planning and performance by children themselves) Discussion in group to reflect their learning deep breathing activities,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Key Observations:**
- Followed instructions
- Actively participated and involved in activities
- From the drawing of the participants it can be said that, most of suffers from anxiety and insecurity. Externalized aggression was present among some of the participants.
- Listening skills of some participants should be improved.
- Most of them tried to imitate others. Few of them tried to do their work in own way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 4:</th>
<th>No. of participants who enjoyed No. of participants who had fun No of participants who learnt dancing</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>8 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
<th>Energizer Body movement with rhythm Movement with props individually and in group Drawing (by own choice and theme-based) deep breathing exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Key Observations:**
Through dance movement their physical along with emotional rigidity was addressed and handled. A gradual change was observed among the participants and it was a positive change. Most of the movements were related to courage, overcoming the emotional constraints and empowerment. They had enjoyed physical activities.

| Session 5: | No. of participants actively participated and | 95% | 8 Pre teenage boys and girls | House, tree, person test |
enjoyed the actives

**Key Observations:**
- It can be said that most of the participants were emotionally vulnerable.
- Need for love and affection were present among most of them.
- Some of their drawings and associated stories revealed that they did not feel safe with their present environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 6:</th>
<th>No. of participants who understood the importance of co working</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>5 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
<th>energizer group creative activities with given materials and time limit individual drawing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Key Observation:**
It can be said that those groups could perform better in which the members had good cohesion, cooperation and understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 7:</th>
<th>No. of participants who understood that fighting wastes time</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>9 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
<th>Energizers Creative group activities- Mask making and acting Game of random movement and still posture as instruction deep breathing activities, writing personal journal (HW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Key Observation:**
- Active participation was observed among most of the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 8:</th>
<th>No. of participants who felt that there is so much to learn</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>11 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
<th>video presentation quiz Karate techniques Large group discussion Open session (question answer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- No. of participants who were very curious and showed interest to learn the techniques for self-protection
- No. of participants who could experience gradual increase in their energy level

**Key Observation:**
Most of the participants were very curious to know about different self defense mechanisms and the asked different questions regarding this issue with the resource persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 9:</th>
<th>No. of participants who understood the importance self-discipline</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>10 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
<th>Energizer drawing and creative activities, Training games –</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Simon says,
Passing the buck
deep breathing
activities

Key Observation:
- The participants enjoyed the group activities.
- Most of the participants were very much involved in the group work and asked different questions related to the topics.
- Three of the participants were very restless and created difficulty to maintain group discipline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 10:</th>
<th>No. of participants who had fun</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>8 Pre teenage boys and girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of participants who learnt new things</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Energizer pair group activities, puzzle within given time story building using play dough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Observation:
- Three of the participants were very much focused and they showed their individuality through creative activities.

It was significantly noticed that majority of participants mentioned ‘We’, not ‘I’ while giving their feedback which is no doubt an indicator of group bonding and sense of empathy too. Interventions were done to unbind their negative emotions using the medium of art and creativity. A sense of group unity and discipline was tried to restore within them by making them involved in group activities. Relaxation techniques were used to help them reduce their sense of restlessness and anxiety. Work was done on improving their memorization techniques.

Monitoring:
Regular contacts with NISTHA staff were maintained for information on the participants. They are progressing more or less well. Follow up meeting will be held in the month of March 2016 for a day or two to cover the beneficiaries once the higher secondary examinations were over.

Learning:
Over the time, it was observed that they have evolved from a group of children with minimal level of unity and discipline into a group who are very much willing to work together and following instructions. But they need constant appreciations from their authorities on minimal improvements they are showing. It’s also a mixed group in terms of their mental status. Thus some of them need to go through mental status examinations so that they could be rehabilitating as per their mental capabilities. This is the age of neither puberty nor childhood, thus it’s a very confusing age to develop a proper idea about their own self. That age group is very much influenced by the limited information they access about external world as well as relationship with opposite gender. So their behavior is very much directed by that information. So they need to be caught doing right things rather wrong ones. They need to be trusted for little intelligent decisions they take even after taking some drastic steps. They need to be handled more sensitively.

Our experience of working in groups made us realize the constraints of heterogeneity of the group. In a heterogeneous group, the participants do not have equal receptive capacity and that limits the outcome of the programme. Due to heterogeneity of the group members, many issues could not be addressed. Interest and knowledge need could not be fulfilled for the better learners. Care should be taken to overcome this.
Individual observation of Junior group during session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name/Observation Areas (within session period)</th>
<th>Communication patterns</th>
<th>Behavioral manifestation</th>
<th>Emotional status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Firoz Shekh</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brijhaspati Debnath</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Akash Das</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Puja Adhikari</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Barsha Das</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kakoli Debnath</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pritam Kundu</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sakir Pailan</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Riju Das</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mampi Biswas</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Komol Modok</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tumpa Halder</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Durga Das</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pompa Chakraborty</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rittika Dutta</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- S - Satisfactory
- N - Needs Attention
- N - Emotional vulnerability sometimes causes behavioral disturbances

Last follow up feedback Group specific (05/04/2016) – Junior group

In the present training group it is only 4 out of 15 children mentioned below are still continuing with Night Shelter. Two, from the rest, got married and staying together in their own locality. Rests of the students were sent to hostel and relative's house in last few months to ensure their secured future.

- Firoz Shekh
- Pritam Kundu
- Sakir Pailan
- Rittika Dutta

Case study

Riju Das, a pre-teen boy, is in Shibani Vidyapith, is a high energy child, and needs proper psychological assessment and intervention accordingly. He needs proper grooming too to develop a sense of discipline for his better future.

Workshop session timeline

- 1 need assessment session (2 visits) [09/03/2014 & 18/03/2014]
- 1 closure session (1 visit) [02/01/2015]
- 2 consecutive follow up sessions (2 visits) [04/05/2015 & 10/05/2015]
  - Complementary sessions
- 1 guidance session with identified peer leaders (1 visit) [01/06/2015]
- 1 follow up session with peer leaders (5th April 2016)
- 1 final closure session for all beneficiaries (5th April 2016)
Workshop Conducted by

- Kasturi Mukherjee (Mental Health Professional),
- Anindita Mukherjee (Mental Health Professional),
- Tandra Bhattacharya (Social Worker), Arpita Sen (Dance Therapist/Special Educator),
- Rana Sarkar (Sensui)

Recipients/persons interacted with during the Workshop

- Identified Beneficiaries
- Care giver/ social worker/field staff-
  - To provide necessary guidance regarding better knowledge and skill about child handling as well as techniques to identify their own burn-out symptoms and to handle it appropriately and to assess the need of the children as well as to provide necessary intervention according to need
- Authority person of the organization (personally or over telephone)
- Representatives from organizer agency (personally or over telephone)

PEER GROUP LEADER

As the training programme approached towards closure, the need for selecting peer leader was felt from all ends and subsequently 12 girls were identified from three groups as peer leaders. Some kind of leadership qualities were noticed in them and volunteered to take the responsibilities too. They are guiding the group members. They have formed issue based support groups to deal with day to day evil through awareness programmes by involving community people too in their effort. They have already formed groups to address the issues like eve teasing and under age child marriage and received enough cooperation, appreciation and encouragement for their genuine and innovative initiatives from community people. Their endeavour, no doubt, deserves appreciation and they need some more guidance at this point to become effective facilitator and community mobiliser in future. They also aware against domestic violence under influence of alcohol / substance abuse.

Name of the peer leaders (12) (Why it is important and which is the suitable place it incorporate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1:</th>
<th>Group 2:</th>
<th>Group 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Afsana Khatun</td>
<td>2. Tanushree Das</td>
<td>2. Tanuja Khatun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Monisha Khatun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observation and Interventions derived from the Workshop-

This has been structured as general observation and interventions and age-specific observation and interventions carried out.

General Observations

- Strong negative/ passive self-images
- Lacking clarity/having distorted ideas/beliefs about gender roles/gender stereotypes
- Poor confidence level
- Lacking motivation/goal in life
- Open to learn/ curious to new things
- Gap between age and cognitive level among the beneficiaries are highly significant and visible which seemed to be a major bottleneck for maintaining a harmony among themselves
- Participants are also experiencing varied exposure
- Heterogeneity in terms of pre-entry experiences and exposure of the participants varies to a large extent (socio cultural/socio-economic conditions/demographic factors/experiences with family members / in family dysfunctions, etc.)
- Lack of awareness regarding mental health needs among majority in all levels
- Residents are mainly concerned about own needs (mostly centering around self), but a sense of ‘we‘ feeling is missing in most individuals
- More sense of responsibility about self and others are desirable
- Punitive and emotionally manipulative intervention techniques are providing inconsistent and contradictory messages to the beneficiaries
- Exposed to too many and too varied environmental factors are becoming a negative stimulant/ inhibitor to adjust/to cope with the sense of discipline to be followed in day to day activities
- Social workers/field staff need orientation too
- More clarity of knowledge about the psychological status and emotional vulnerability of children are required for sensitive understanding of their needs

Group dynamics:

Initially the participants preferred to interact in group with known people, like, from same neighborhood, same school, etc. There are significant limitations among participants as far as understanding and insight are concerned. Following observations were made:

- Marked heterogeneity among participants in each group,
- Majority was in passive communication style,
- Very few of them had leadership qualities and sensitivity (Peer leaders name written below identified from them- may require a brief peer training)
- Caregivers needs to learn consistent handling (age appropriate/need based handling of children/ adolescents/ clarity about the concept of positive discipline)
- Module to be developed for the caregivers/social workers- separate training is required for them.
Slowly, with interactive games and activities they overcame their inhibitions (physically and psychologically) and participated more spontaneously. Several times session plans were to be modified according to need of the situation.

Need Assessment sessions with the participants helped to identify the need of the selected adolescent girls/group of children as far as life skill training is concerned. Subsequently, the need for introducing life skills techniques were desperately felt and accordingly worked upon.

**Activities/interventions done**

- Case history taken for official records/documentation
- Emotional assessment done at times through interaction and observation
- Providing outlet for negative emotions of varying degree experienced at different point of time (negative/painful experiences arisen from history of abuse, different age inappropriate exposure within family and outside, socio economic background, deprivation of basic needs, such as, in terms of food, cloth, shelter, medicine and other related services)
- Interventions provided in terms of cognitive restructuring and behavior modification techniques depending upon cognitive level, emotional disturbances, traumatic experiences, insight, openness, adaptability skills, flexibility to accept new things
- To help them to identify own internal strength, external resources and to identify and to be aware of own areas of improvement
- Developing a sense of self identity and enhancing self-esteem, constructive communication socially desirable behaviours
- Encouraging creative skills for developing confidence level and in turn to raise their performance level
- Open session with beneficiaries and caregivers/social workers on physical and mental health issues for awareness generation and better wellbeing
- Facilitated to have a clarity about dream and reality/child needs and adult needs/ own needs and others needs/ unrealistic expectations from self and others
- Addressed the issue of too much attachment need among beneficiaries

**Emphasis were also given on**

- Developing sense of discipline
- Reducing restlessness
- Facilitating concentration
- Effective communication skills
- Enhancing attention/focus
- Developing group feeling

**Preventive and remedial strategies undertaken involved a need-based combination of measures, namely**

- Developing affectionate and effective career behavior – maintenance of discipline with firmness and consistency
- Promoting sense of self-control in the beneficiaries
- Providing frequent reinforcement both for initiation and successful completion of tasks/desired behaviour
- Paying appropriate attention to the child’s daily average activities and environment
Feedback of the Social Worker

After completion of the LIFE SKILLS AND SELF DEFENSE training programme, it seems like most of the girls, especially the leaders, have gone through a huge change within themselves. They are more confident now. They initiate and organise meeting and training by their own initiatives, doing issue based campaigns in their locality, using different innovative techniques, role play, drama, etc. in their efforts. They are handling open sessions with confidence and answering queries with their limited knowledge. Thus the community people are becoming more aware and interested, and subsequently encouraging them to conduct more such sessions.

Few Proposals from Mental health and over wellbeing perspectives

- Heterogeneity (in terms of age, intellectual capacity, emotional instability, social exposure, etc.) of the participants are to be considered in day to day activities as well as in any significant decision-making situation
- Daily routine needs to be consistent and predictable (not to be too rigid, to be flexible while required)
- Expectations to be consistent and clearly understood (not to say ‘you cannot/ don’t do anything’, rather to express clearly what is expected to do from the person)
- Provisions of careful task planning to reduce distractions (not to blame for wasting time by being engaged in unproductive/destructive activities, but to explain the meaning and advantages of productive activities, to facilitate to understand the consequence of undesirable behavior and to provide scope for alternative, constructive /creative engagements)
- Age based small group outings are required, time to time, to be in touch with outside world (going to school and coming back to home may not serve that purpose)
- A play room needs to be organized for the children to nurture their emotional needs, elder girls may also participate at times according to their need
- It is desirable to have formal mental status examination and psychological assessment of the residents from any reputed institution (Psychiatry department of government hospitals/ Psychology department of University of Calcutta) and to frame necessary intervention plan accordingly especially to address the issues of extreme/ intense negative behavioural/emotional conditions
- A special educator may help the special need children in a better manner
Recommendations

Social work based institutions allot different caring activities to careers at different levels of authority (ranging from ground level workers directly interacting with the beneficiaries to the management representatives who are involved in policy and decision making process as well as the people in administrative activities of the organization. In order to discharge their responsibilities effectively people at all level need to have a basic knowledge of the following:

- General Principles of child development and healthy upbringing
- Special needs of deprived/abused children/teenagers/adolescents boys and girls
- Behavioural characteristics of abused/traumatized children/adolescents for both boys and girls
- Symptoms of childhood/adolescent boys and girls depression
- Non-judgmental and unbiased behaviour
- A capacity for unconditional acceptance and affection
- Building trusting relationships and maintaining confidentiality
- Help a child to attain better tomorrow at an optimum level, parental guidance is also desirable, if possible, besides facilitating child’s own developmental process.

While the programme was undertaken targeting girls, similar programme needs to be developed for boys to change their mindset.

Keeping in mind the ethical issues of confidentiality, any individual information is not given here. Any further clarification in this context will be provided (preferably through face to face discussion) to the person/s concerned, if it is asked for the overall benefit of the children.

Prepared by

Kasturi Mukherjee
Consultant Mental Health Professional
Assisted by other team members
Snapshot of the Programme