



Child Reporters Tracking Study

(BalBandhu Project, Lalitpur)

Child Reporters: Owning their Future

Conducted By
Sarathi Development Foundation

Lucknow

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Content

Sr.	Topics	Page No.
	Acknowledgement	2
	Executive Summary	4
1	Chapter 1 : Introduction	16
1.0	<i>Background</i>	10
1.1	<i>Theory of Change: Child Reporters way</i>	12
1.2	<i>Strategy of Interventions</i>	13
1.3	<i>Profiling of Child Reporters</i>	16
2	Chapter 2 : Situational Analysis	
2.1	<i>Introduction</i>	31
2.1	<i>Social Composition</i>	31
2.2	<i>Age group</i>	32
2.3	<i>Marital Status</i>	32
2.4	<i>Gender Composition</i>	32
2.5	<i>Current Status of education</i>	33
2.6	<i>Opportunities for participation</i>	34
2.7	<i>Abilities Learnt</i>	35
2.8	<i>Parents and Teachers perceptions</i>	37
2.9	<i>Comparison Group</i>	38
2.10	<i>Achievements of Child reporters</i>	41
2.11	<i>Future Plan and Aspiration</i>	44
3	Chapter 3 : Way Forward	
3.0	<i>Introduction</i>	47
3.1	<i>Periodical Backup Support</i>	47
3.2	<i>Interface with Media</i>	47
3.4	<i>Networking with Child Reporters</i>	47
3.5	<i>Sustainability and Replication</i>	48

Acknowledgement

Child Reporters initiative under Balbandhu project has contributed in building the foundation for child participation and initiatives to address the issues affecting life of children in IDA district Lalitpur. It is being implemented with a blend of strategies including training, exposure, interface, publication of the child centered and stories based on their issues and dialoguing with service providers. Started with one block Talbehat in 2006, this intervention has been expanded to all six blocks of the Lalitpur district. This expansion was based on the successes and lessons emerged from the pilot in Talbehat. It has been a great opportunity for Sarathi to conduct tracking study focused on current status of children who started their journey as reporters in 2006. It provided us deep insight and enriched our understanding on children empowerment processes and strategies. We express our sincere thanks to UNICEF for providing this opportunity to us.

We express our gratefulness to the child reporters, their parents and school teachers for their interest, time and sharing their experience. They enthusiastically participated in the assessment process and shared their experiences regarding processes they passed through to develop them as child reporters. While thanking them, we wish them a great future and quality life which they are aspiring for.

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Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

Child Reporters Initiative is part of Integrated District approach (IDA) framework for integrated and child friendly development processes in 17 districts of 14 states of India. It focuses on community managed programming, inter-sectoral linkages, district specific integrated plans to respond to community priorities and needs related to survival, growth and development of children. It unifies different sectoral programme interventions related to Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, education, child development, health and nutrition, communication for development, advocacy and partnership for integrated impact on women and children in particular and community as a whole in general. Lalitpur has been selected as IDA district keeping the low performance on social development indicators particularly related to children, adolescent girls and women in view. IDA intervention is well linked with the global, national, state and local development priorities. Started in 2005, IDA intervention has made significant contribution in community building and convergent processes to achieve intended results in following areas:

- Provision of quality basic services to target populations with a special emphasis on excluded population including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through strengthening the management, budget and delivery system of child-related government programmes.
- Mainstreaming children's rights into development planning, resource allocation, programme implementation and civic engagement.
- Increasing the capacity of the government and civil societies to prepare for and respond to emergencies at all levels.

2.0 Child Reporters Initiative

Child Reporters Initiative, in true sense, is not a programme or activity but ideology to facilitate children empowerment in their own ways. Study reveals that CRI under Balabandhu project is a unique intervention in terms of enhancing opportunities for their participation and facilitating them to tap and demonstrate their potential as social change agent. With this view, a pilot intervention was started with 30 children in Tabaha block of Lalitpur in 2006. It was intended to facilitate children communicate in their own way coupled with their creativity, imaginations and a tinge of innocence. The blend was further enriched by their self confidence which they gained through capacity building and exposure events in the course of intervention. Over a period of six years, it has proven that child friendly methodologies can facilitate their active engagement in development process and create the space for raising the concerns affecting their life and achievement the results. Existing situation is testimony to this fact

3.0 Child Tracking Study

The study was focused on assessment of the journey of child reporters so far, their gains as child reporters and their current status. It provided an opportunity to revisit the processes and results together with child reporters, their parents, school teachers and community members. It facilitated evidence based insight into existing situation, attributing processes and lessons. The study adopted a mix of qualitative and quantitative tools, described in this note, to facilitate the child reporters and other stakeholders in the whole assessment process to generate required data.

Semi Structured Questionnaire; the questionnaire was developed to conduct interviews with the child reporters. Questionnaire included information related to current situation of the child reporters, quality and effectiveness of the processes as perceived by the child reporters and other stakeholders, skills and abilities.

Focused Group discussion: FGDs were conducted with the child reporters to gain insight into their perceptions, experiences, achievements and constraints experienced while playing their role. It will also provide opportunity to understand commonalities and variations in opinion of the child reporters. FGDs were conducted with non child reporters children for comparative analysis.

Key Informant Interviews: Interviews were conducted with the key informant persons such as parents and school teachers to understand their perception, observations and opinion about child reporters. Profiling of the Child Reporters; Profile of each child reporter was developed to track the changes among them during the period from initial to current stage of the child reporters. Profile of the child reporters based on current situation was developed and compared with the previous profile.

4.0 Core Findings

Core findings emerged from the child tracking study are briefly described below;

- Study revealed that majority of the child reporters 63% is from general category followed by 33% from OBC and 3 % from ST. The affinity and relationship built over the time among the child reporters indicate that they have their own community which has no space for caste but for mutual cooperation, togetherness and collective learning.

- It is encouraging to see that 80% of the child reporters are enrolled showing that the intervention has left a positive impact not only on the children but also their parents and the surrounding environment. Child Reporters, parents and teachers indicated that opportunities provided to the child reporters are the need of every child irrespective of caste or religion as such opportunities and inputs are not available in schools.
- All child reporters were ageing 8 to 14 years at the time of beginning of their journey in 2006. These reporters have reached to the adolescent and adult stage now. Study shows that 11 child reporters are currently in age group of 14 to 17 years and remaining 19 are ageing 18 to 21 years. It is encouraging to note that no child reporter in age group of 14 to 17 years is married.
- It was encouraging to learn that Talbehath, which had no girl opting for higher education in villages, now has a considerable NUMBER of girls enrolled for under graduation courses. Besides this, they have a say in decision concerned with their life like marriage, though still cases of child marriage are prevalent but an emerging trend is delaying the marriage till the completion of education
- Study shows that education and marital status are significantly correlated. Data shows that 24 (80 %) child reporters including 17 girls are not married. It indicates that CRI intervention has created significant impact. Parents and Girl child reporters proudly say that it is first time in their villages that girls have reached to the graduation level. Now other parents are also motivated by the girl child reporters and sending their daughters out of village for higher education.
- CRI initiatives enhanced the opportunities for participation of child reporters. These opportunities are including the training, exposure, school, community meeting Bal Sabha/ Meena Manch in their schools, interface with media and government service providers
- 96% CRs find the training activities quite an effective way of child participation. The training activities were designed in a manner to develop and further strengthen the cognitive and communication skills of children.
- 52% of CRs found exposure activities at various levels to be an average kind of ensuring child participation.
- 59% CRs are of the view that media interface sessions provides ample opportunity of child participation where actually children enjoy freedom of expression before the world and can express their perspective on any topic.
- 67% child reporters find interface with government service providers an effective opportunity for child participation as children themselves put forth their views on issues concerned with their development. It actually adds value to the advocacy efforts when the beneficiaries themselves. 89% of the child reporters have developed effective one to one communication skill.

- While 48% CR have developed average group communication skill whereas 44% have developed effective skills on the same parameter. 22% CRs have developed effective analytical skills while 56% have rated their analytical skills as average. On the parameter of confidence 22% CRs have rated themselves effective while 52% as average. 93% CRs have developed effective story writing skills. On a similar line 85% have effective drawing skills.
- Study reveals that 29% Child Reporters raised the issues related to education like teachers non involvement in teaching activities, quality of Mid Day Meal, girls education and other such related issues; followed by 25% CRs raising the issue of lack of facilities like proper roads, electricity, safe drinking water required for a basic quality life. It is followed by the issues of Child rights and child marriage, health and hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness.
- Issues successfully addressed by CR follows the same line as the issues raised by them. If we look at the statistics 29% CRs addressed the issue of education, followed by 24% lack of facilities; further followed by 16% health and hygiene, 13% sanitation, 10% Child rights and child marriages and 8% cleanliness.

5.0 Way Forward

Periodical Back up Support

Child Reporters perceived this intervention as an opportunity enhanced their participation in different activities and forums at village, community, school, block, district and national level. It contributed in facilitating critical thinking on issues, new recognition, confidence building, communication and aspirations for their future. These opportunities have changed their life and paved the way for better future and quality of life. They feel that they are forgotten now. It would be encouraging if contacts are reestablished. It is suggested that CRI coordinators and field coordinators may visit them during supportive supervision processes in their villages.

Interface with Media

Child reporters still have the faire for writing stories based on issues and needs observed and felt by them. They feel that there is no one around to encourage them and publish their stories. It has restricted their writing. Some of the child reporters opined that they should be connected with local media/ press for printing and wide spread of their development stories. It would be useful for new child reporters also. It is suggested that and interface meeting with local media persons can be organized to build the required linkages. Community Radio Station is a great opportunity

for exposure of this new generation of child reporters. They can be connected with the station through interface meeting and exposure visit.

Networking with Child Reporters

Child reporters were excited to know about child reporters of their batch. They expressed their desire during the study. Periodical meetings with these child reporters will facilitate reestablishing contacts & relationship among them, experience sharing, revisiting their journey together and planning their role together. It will also contribute in initiating the process networking of these reporters.

Sustainability and Replicability

Child Reporters Initiative has been selected as successful practice/product for sustainability and Replicability involvement of government and various other development agencies in the state of Uttar Pradesh. A comprehensive road map detailing out processes, results and sustainability index has already been formulated by the Sarathi and submitted to UNICEF. This road map may shared with the government, civil society organizations and other development agencies to explore and enhance the opportunities for replication of this proven practice on a wider scale.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Background

UNICEF recognizes children as key actors and believes that engaging with children is a key factor in building a protective environment for them. It is an important step in promoting child participation within the wider set of children's rights in line with the UN Convention on Child Rights. According to this UN convention, all children are equal and have human rights such as the right to food, shelter, health care, education and freedom from violence, neglect and exploitation. The convention also states that children have the right to participate in decision making and due weight should be given to their opinions, according to their age and maturity. It has facilitated UNICEF to incorporate advocacy and partnership initiatives for child rights as an integral part of IDA interventions in Lalitpur district. The children are part of an initiative started to fulfill the objective enshrined in the Article 12 and Article 13 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) which state that all children have the right to express themselves freely.

UNICEF has focused on Integrated District approach (IDA) in 17 districts of 14 states of India. It aims at improving district capacities and systems, empowering communities, promoting behavioural change, and ensuring that lessons learnt through the approach are replicated in other districts of the states. This integrated district approach focuses on community managed programming, inter-sectoral linkages, district specific integrated plans to respond to community priorities and needs related to survival, growth and development of children. It unifies different sectoral programme interventions related to Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, education, child development, health and nutrition, communication for development, advocacy and partnership for integrated impact on women and children in particular and community as a whole in general.

IDA District Lalitpur

Lalitpur is one of the 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh among 14 states selected by UNICEF for implementation of Integrated District Development Approach. It has population of 1,218,002 with decadal growth of 19.72% as per Census 2011 is situated in the southwest part of the state of Uttar Pradesh, and is part of Bundelkhand region. The district is divided into six development blocks including Bar, Birdha, Jakhaura, Mehrauni, Madawara and Talbehat. While Talbehat is the most developed block, Birdha and Madawara are lagging behind on development indicators. According to five key indicators normally employed in human rights framework, Lalitpur is ranked amongst the three most backward districts in Uttar Pradesh (Plan of Action, Cluster Border District Strategy Project, 1999). Social development indicators such as infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, sex ratio, salt iodization, mean age of marriage, exclusive breast feeding, immunisation, pregnant women practicing safe

delivery, literacy, female literacy, girls education, access to sanitation facilities and awareness on HIV/AIDS facilitated UNICEF to select Lalitpur. IDA has facilitated noteworthy changes on social development indicators through a range of process both at grassroots and service providers level.

Indicators	Census 2001	Census 2011	Remarks
Total Population	9,77,734	12,18,002	19.72 percent growth in population
Male	5,19,413	6,39,392	23.10 percent increase
Female	4,58,321	5,78,610	26.25 percent increase
Population Growth	30.01%	24.57%	5.44 percent increase
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	882	905	23 per 1000 has increased
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	931	931	Ratio is constant
Average Literacy	49.46	64.95	15.49 percent increase
Male Literacy	63.81	76.41	12.60 percent increase
Female Literacy	32.97	52.26	19.29 percent increase
Total Child Population	2,00,349	2,06,018	2.83 percent increase
Male Population	1,03,762	1,07,644	3.75 percent increase
Female Population	96,587	98,374	1.85 percent increase
Maternal and Child Health Indicators	DLHS II (2003-04)	DLHS III (2007-08)	
Infant Mortality Rate	87 (IIPS, 2001)	83.5	Decrease by 3.5 children/1000
Birth Rate	36.1	38.1	Decrease by 2.0 children/1000
MMR	740	556	Decrease by 140 maternal deaths/Lac
Institutional Delivery	23.9	32.8	Increase by 8.90 percent
Complete Immunisation	27.3	56.3	Increase by 29.00 percent
Children Fully Immunised (12 -23 months)	30.3	25.8	Increase by 4.50 percent
Children Breastfed within one hour of birth	5.3	32.4	Increase by 27.10 percent

Children (12 to 23 months) Measles vaccination	30.9	56.3	Increase by 25.40 percent
At least 3 ANC check ups	3.30	19.9	Increase by 16.60 percent
Aware on Diarrhoea	65.00	74.5	Increase by 9.50 percent
Women who have heard of HIV/AIDS	21.1	36.5	Increase by 15.40 percent

1.1 Theory of Change: Child Reporters Way

The efforts and output of the CRs of Lalitpur have drawn praise from media veterans. Senior Hindi journalist Ram Saran Joshi complimented them for being “real reporters, authentic, genuine and grassroots”. “Journalists in the cities have climbed the branches and forgot-ten the roots. Your reportage brings the nation back to its roots, to the reality of so-called shining India,” he said.

The fact that children can be part of the process for change is well recognized by child reporters, school teachers and parents in the project area covered under CRI intervention of the Balbandhu in Lalitpur district. CRI intervention is perceived as an opportunity for child participation and process of building their future in meaningful way. Child reporters learnt to analyze, communicate and highlight the issues to influence the persons and institutions to work on. They have proven that children have logical and analytical thinking and their own way of expression. They can come up with out of box concepts of expressing things if they are provided opportunities. This theory of change started with 30 children in Talbehat block of Lalitpur in 2006. It was not about nurturing reporters in the remotest location of the state rather it was intended to facilitate children communicate in their own way coupled with their creativity, imaginations and a tinge of innocence. The blend was further enriched by their self confidence which they gained through capacity building and exposure events in the course of intervention. Following matrix provides an overview of the process to nurture child reporters.

Impact	The project has attributed in enhancing the knowledge, communication abilities, analytical skills and confidence among child reporters. It is evident in continued education, reduced incidences of early marriages and aspirations for future among them.
Outcome	It has facilitated child reporters to influence behaviours and decisions of adults in family, community, schools and service providers towards them

	significantly. It has enhanced opportunities for their participation and expression of issues affecting them
Outputs	CRI intervention adopted empowerment route to facilitate children to realise their potential. Child Reporters have raised various social and service delivery issues concerning children and community. Balvani, a newsletter published by them reflects on their potential as social change agent.
Activities	Child reporters were capacitated through a judicious mix of child friendly training delivery, interface with government and media, exposure and facilitation.
Inputs	CRI intervention provided financial inputs for the activities mentioned above. In addition to this, UNICEF facilitated access of the child reporters to state and national level events for exposure.

1.2 Strategy of Intervention

Right from the inception phase, an emphasis was laid on building child friendly environment for their participation, facilitating critical observation and thinking process on issues existing in their surroundings, melting their inhibitions and building confidence for self expression , communication and creativity. This process of engagement generated considerable enthusiasm and confidence among them and resulted in a degree of recognition from their peers and adults, especially female members and school teachers.

This theory of change is rooted in children engagement processes evolved over a period of time through “learning by doing” approach under Balbandhu project. It started with the challenges in various forms such as apprehensions of parents to send the children out for residential training and workshops, selection of the child reporters, existing behaviors at adult levels towards children, lack of previous experience in tools and process to build capacities of children as child reporters. These challenges facilitated us to evolve methodology to work with children in such a way that their potential gets adequate expression, engage school teachers and parents to build conducive environment for the child reporters and enhance our organizational capacities to cope with the challenges. Following interventions were chalked out to develop and further strengthen the analytical and communication skills of children:

1.2.1 Selection and Introduction of the Child Reporters

At the outset ten primary schools were selected in consultation with the District education Officers in Talbehat block of Lalitpur district and the teachers in the first interface meeting were oriented on the concept of the intervention, need of enhancing analytical and documentation skills of children and how these children can exercise their freedom of expression to route the intricate issues in a much simpler way. Three children were selected by the teachers from each primary school of the block making the total of 30 children to be developed as child reporters. Creative activities such as drawing and writing were also organized to facilitate the selection of the child reporters at the school level. It was followed by the meeting with the parents to finalize selection and take their consent. After finalization of the selection, children were introduced to the Balbandhus, AGGs and community members. Brief description of the child reporters was prepared and displayed in the Village Information Centres established at community level under the project.



1.2.2 Capacity Building of Child Reporters

Initially training coordinator, project coordinator, block coordinator, senior consultants of the Sarathi teamed up to organize and conduct quarterly training programme for the child reporters. Question answer sessions with media persons, UNICEF officials and government functionaries was the regular part of training agenda to enhance confidence level, knowledge base and communication skills of the child reporters. Training adopted participatory and interactive mode of learning to facilitate the cognitive and analytical skills of children. In addition to this, training laid an emphasis on processes of developing interview schedule, conduct interviews, issue identification, drawing and story writing.



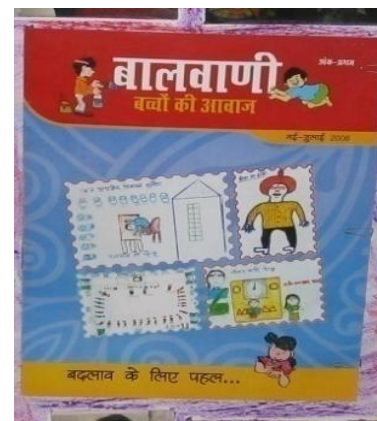
1.2.3 Exposure Visit

Exposure to new ideas, innovations, approaches and methodologies plays a key and significant role in building the capacities and skills of those being exposed. Study reveals that exposure visits organized under the project have generated long lasting impact on child reporters. They indicated that interactive meetings with government officials, UNICEF representatives and child reporters from other states and media officials at district, state and national level have contributed in exploring new areas of knowledge, motivation for continuity in education and

shaping future career. The child reporters were provided opportunity to participate in Press meetings, block and district task force and other forums like community meetings, Balbandhu trainings, community level meetings of education and health and sanitation committee, meeting of women and adolescent girls' groups. These meetings on various forums not only built up their confidence rather enriched their knowledge and information on different issues, social and cultural dynamics of development and they developed deeper insight on how actually they should showcase it before the concerned authorities.

1.2.4 Newsletter Development

Children are known for their impartial and objective depiction of reality and this is the reason why their documentation is free from biases and strong in credibility. The process of news letter development started with identification of an issue and the children came up with issues like adulterated mid day meal, teachers showing no interest in classroom activities, gender discrimination and early marriage prevalent in society. Keeping these issues in mind they sketched a picture depicting the gravity of it in their own way and complemented with one or two paragraph of a short story. The three processes of issue identification, drawing and story writing completed a basic framework required for the newsletter. This much lauded strategy was backed by everyone and teachers, parents and other community members recognized it as a way to route their issues as this was the most honest and innocent way of sensitizing people and bring a change.



The newsletter Balvani - Voice of Children published by children has earned huge accolades. Child reporters have now gone beyond the initial stage of being mere learners in this process of change documentation; they are now co-learners and peer educators in this whole process of social sensitization, reflection and mobilization on local issues affecting them, their families and communities. Child reporters have depicted and presented observations about their surroundings and community in a creative manner.

1.2.5 Field Support to Child Reporters

Field support means mentoring, regular guidance, and facilitation support for child reporters to perform their role in real grassroots situation. This support is being provided by the Child Rights Coordinator placed in each block. Child reporters are provided with plain paper and writing material such as sketch pens and colour pencils to draw pictures and write stories based on their ideas and observations. They also write about what they see in their villages with respect to health, water and sanitation, poverty, education and other village development issues.



However, it is the child's choice to identify the issues he/she wants to write about. Facilitators provide support in a way that the children's perspective is reflected in their documentation. Once the stories are developed, child reporters are facilitated to edit, select, add value and compile the stories for the newsletter. After compilation the stories are given to the designer/publishers who design the layout and publish it.

1.3 Profile of the Child Reporters

The intervention has travelled six years and in an effort to know what they are doing now, how they are taking up their lives and what they think of the intervention this tracking exercise was conceptualized. It facilitated practical insight into their current status, abilities gained by the Child Reporters and empowerment processes reflected in their current status given below and perceptions of their parents and teachers who have closely witnessed their journey. Given below is the before and after position of the 30 child reporters developed under UNICEF supported Balbandhu project in Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh.

S. no.	October 2006	Description	August 2012
1.	 <p>Shikha Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years • Female • class 7th • Vill Purakula, Talbehat 	<p>Shikha is an example of child empowerment. Confidence and motivation gained as a CR has facilitated her to excel in education and convincing her parents for higher education. She has strong desire to join civil services and her parents are ready to provide all support to see her as IAS. They are planning to send her to Delhi to prepare for the civil services.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years • class 12th • Not married • Address is same currently living in Bazaar Mohalla, Talbehat for her studies

2.	 <p>Reeta Pal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years • Female • Class 7th • Vill Tekari, Talbehat 	<p>She is third among her seven sisters. She has grown seeing the desire of her parents to have a son in the family and often harsh on her and other sisters. Participation as child reporter came as an opportunity to cope with the stress she was passing through. She is married now but has succeeded in convincing her in laws for continuity of education. Currently, she is pursuing her under graduate course in Lalitpur. She has definite plans to become a teacher after completing her post graduation.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years • Student of B.A. • Married • Address is same but currently living in Anjani Nagar, Lalitpur for her studies
3.	 <p>Kranti Sharma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years • Female • Class 7th 	<p>Kranti is not happy with her current position in the family. She could not continue her education after 8th standard. She had to suppress her desire to continue the education as her parents wanted her to support in domestic works. She is still hopeful that she will get the chance again to go back to school.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 years • Dropped school • unmarried • Address is same

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vill Chandrapur, Talbehat 		
4.	 <p>Sangita Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years • Female • Class 7th • Vill Sunaura, Talbehat 	<p>She has developed a helping and cooperating attitude towards others. Parents are determined to support for higher education and get her placed in a good job. She travels 10 km everyday for her studies and wants to complete education up to post graduation.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years • class 12th • Not married • Address is same

5.



Santoshi Sahu

- 12 years
- Female
- Class 6th
- Vill Dhamkana, Talbehat

She has grown sincere and has started thinking in a logical way. Parents support her for higher education and will get her married at right age after she is placed in a good job. She is happy with her continued education and motivational support of her parents. Her continued education has motivated other parents also to support their daughters for higher education. She wants to be economically independent before marriage. Her parents are supporting in achieving this desire.



- 18 years
- Student of B.A.
- Not married
- Address is same

6.



Pravesh Joshi

- 11 years
- Male
- Class 5th
- Vill Khandi, Talbehat

Family responsibilities and marriage have no negative effects on the ambitions of Pravesh to join the police. He is continuing his education and likes to talk on his future plan to join police force. Parents are very delighted about the fact that the issues raised by Pravesh were not only noticed but resolved successfully. In a way he played a major role in bringing the impact.



- 18 years
- Student of class 11th
- Married
- Address is same

7.



Phul Singh

- 13 years
- Male
- Class 7th
- Vill Kadesara Kala, Talbehat

Phul Singh is studying in graduation. He travels 20 kms by public conveyance to his college located in Babina block of Jhansi district. He wants to become a teacher after completing his education. He is quiet socially active and has raised many community level issues. Along with Balbandhu of the village he participates in meetings of Women and Adolescent Girls groups.



- 19 years
- Student of B.A.
- Not married
- Address is same

8.



Santosh

- 13 years
- Male
- Class 7th
- Vill Khandi, Talbehat





Santosh could not continue his education after 8th due to pressing family financial needs. He dropped out after class 8th to help his family financially but now wants to get back to school. He is known for writing poems and singing while writing on local development issues. A born leader, he gives free tuitions to the out-of-school village kids and also keeps in touch with the village headman to influence many a decision. As a child reporter, he demonstrated his potential to influence the service providers with his creative thinking.



- 21 years
- Dropped out after class 8th
- Married
- Address is same

9.	 <p>Rashmi Sahu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 years • Female • Class 2nd • Vill Khandi, Talbehat 	<p>Like other CRs she tried to learn maximum at her level like writing and drawing skills, thinking analytically and communication skill. With all the skills and potential she raised the issues of education and cleanliness in schools and village through Balvani.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years • class 9th • Not married • Address is same

10.	 <p>Nuri Khan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years • Female • Class 6th • Chaubyana sabzi mandi, Talbehat 	<p>Nuri dropped school after 9th and is currently working in a beauty parlor. She could not continue her education due to some conflicts in the family. She now wants to study further. Her mother is strongly supporting her desire to rejoin the school.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years • Dropped school after class 9th • Not married • Address is same
11.	 <p>Indramani Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years • Female • Class 7th • Vill Pawa, Talbehat 	<p>Presently a student of graduation, it is a matter of privilege as prior to this intervention there was no graduate girls in her village but now she stands in the first lot of girls with graduate qualification. This is the finest example of dedication and commitment to studies.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years • B. Com • Not married • Address is same
12.	<p>Anamika Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years • Female • Class 6th • Vill Pawa, Talbehat 	<p>Distance of school from home and lack of proper conveyance was an issue for her too. She might have dropped out but the CRs sensitized her enough to continue education against all odds. Today she herself motivates other girls of her village for higher education.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 years • class 12th • Not married

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address is same
13.	 <p>Poonam Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 years Female Class 7th Vill Pawa, Talbehat 	<p>She has imbibed a lot from the CR intervention and convinced her parents for studying further. She plans to study more and will marry after she settles down financially.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 years Student of B.A. Not married Address is same
14.	 <p>Ajay Kumar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 years Male Class 5th Vill Chandrapur, 	<p>He has succeeded in convincing his parents for marriage only after the completion of the education and getting employment. It reflects on his confidence and desire to grow as a responsible citizen. He wants that other children of the village should be exposed like him to the development opportunities.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 years Student of class 12th Not married Address is same

	Talbehat		
15.	 <p>Babita Yadav</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years • Female • Class 6th • Vill Pataran, Talbehat 	<p>She realized the importance of education and convinced her parents for further studies. Now even her parents are of the view that she should complete her higher education. As a child reporter she has inspired other girls of the village for education.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years • Student of B.A. • Not married • Address is same
16.	 <p>Sonam Kushwaha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years • Female • Class 7th • Vill khandi, Talbehat 	<p>Training as child reporter facilitated her to get the opportunity to function as balbandhu and later as BCC trainer. She is married now but with the cooperation of in laws she continued her education. She wants to work as teacher after completing her education.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 years • Student of B.A. • Married • Address is same

17.	 <p>Kiran Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years • Female • Class 7th • Vill Evni, Talbehat 	<p>A finest communicator the intervention nurtured is Kiran. Besides continuing her studies she is a trainer in Balbandhu project which is a reflection of her zeal towards development issues.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years • Student of B.A. • Not married • Address is same
18.	 <p>Prabha Jha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years • Female • Class 5th • Vill Miyaav, Talbehat 	<p>Her own inclination towards education coupled with the learnings in CR intervention helped her to influence her parent's view and she is now planning for higher education.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years • Student of class 11th • Not married • Address is same
19.	 <p>Lakshmi Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years • Female • Class 7th • VIII Evni, Talbehat 	<p>Earlier parents used to guide her on health, hygiene and sanitation but now she knows more than anyone in the family. The best thing is that she shares her knowledge with family and peers motivating them for a healthy behavior. She is planning to start with private studies and distance learning options.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 years • Dropped school after class 8th • Married • Address is same

20.	 <p>Surya Prakash Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years • Male • Class 7th • Vill Hasarkala, Talbehata 	<p>He has learnt how to influence systems and improve official works in the school. As a child reporter he was not happy with the food served under Mid Day Meal. He raised his concerns but teachers ignored. He did not give and drafted a letter to send senior officials and showed to the Gram Pradhan and informed him that he is going to send this to district administration. This effort brought the result in terms of breaking the nexus between Pradhan and school teachers and children started to get the food as per weekly menu of the government. He feels children can change the surroundings and address the issues affecting them if they are trained like child reporters.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years • B.A. at Jhansi • Not married • Address is same
21.	 <p>Anoop Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years • Male • Class 7th • Vill Sunaura, Talbehata 	<p>Anoop feels that CR interventions have made him bold and a good communicator. He wants to continue his education and get the employment in government sector. His sketch, illustrating a primary school master sleeping in a classroom depicts the environment and quality of education in our rural schools. This simple and honest sketch sensitized the district administration and school teachers.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years • B.A. at Jhansi • Not married • Address is same

22.	 <p>Madan Sahu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years • Male • Class 7th • Vill Terai Fatak, Talbehat 	<p>He is quite serious about his studies; parents have extended their full support and will get him married only when he completes his education and is willing for it. While studying, he supports her parents in earning for the family.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years • class 12th • Not married • Address is same
23.	 <p>Satyendra Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years • Male • Class 7th • Vill Sunaura, Talbehat 	<p>He feels happy with his recognition as a CR. However, he could not continue his education after the death of his grandfather and started to support agricultural activities of his family. His behavior at home and outside is far much better when compared to other children of his age.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years • Not studying • Address is same

24.	 <p>Monika Bhodle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 years • Female • Class 3rd • Vill Purakala, Talbehat 	<p>Like other CRs, she has grown more knowledgeable in the span of five years due to the exposure provided in the Child Reporter intervention. The self confidence, analytical and communication skills have improved considerably. At this age, she is not thinking about what she would be doing after completing the education. She just wants to focus on her studies only.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years • class 10th • Not married • Address is same
25.	 <p>Madhu Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years • Female • Class 3rd • Vill Jamalpur, Talbehat 	<p>She believes that knowledge and learning are worth useful if you can implement it in your life be the change you want to see. Madhu Raja, at her tender age of 11 years wrote a bold story about the teacher demanding bribe for admission in the school. It was strong enough to make teachers feel that children are not silent observer. They can raise their voice to change the systems. With this view she is determined for a higher education, better career and empowered self. She loves the role of a teacher and wants to become a teacher after completion of her education.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 years • class 10th • Not married • Address is same

26.	 <p>Sonam Vishwakarma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 years • Female • 5th standard • Vill Jamalpur, Talbehat 	<p>Sonam is always curious about new knowledge and information. She realized the importance of education and convinced her parents for further studies. Now even her parents are of the view that she should complete her higher education. She feels that stories written by CRs can have a bigger impact if published in daily newspapers. She motivated children of Sahraiya community to raise their voice for cleaning of the well in their hamlets. The well was cleaned and their parents realized the potential in children to bring the change.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 years • Class 12th • Not married • Address is same
27.	 <p>Jayanti</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years • Female • Class 6th • Vill Terai Fatak, Talbehat 	<p>She is now married and living in Bar block, the research team couldn't meet her to collect more information</p>	

28.	 <p>Deep Shikha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 years • Female • Class 3rd • Vill Jamalpur, Talbehat 	<p>She and her child reporter friends in the village are first girls to continue their education after primary. It has influenced other parents of the village to send their daughters to school regularly. She says that self determination is all you need to bring a change in your own life. Her inclination towards education even motivated her parents to support her decision of continuing education. She says that children of Sahariya community are lagging behind in terms of education. She feels that they should also get opportunities and motivation for education.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 years • class 10th • Not married • Address is same
29.	 <p>Ram Avtar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years • Male • Class 5th • Vill Chandrapur, Talbehat 	<p>The issue of sanitation and hygiene raised by Ram Avtar gained attention in the community; people were sensitized and took it to the higher authorities. He used to share learning of training with parents like washing hand before meals and keeping environment clean. Besides, his communication skills have improved and can confidently interact with even District Magistrate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying in Muraina block • Not married • The research team couldn't meet him to collect more information

30.



Shiwani Dwivedi

- 9 years
- Female
- Class 4th
- Vill Vijayapura, Talbehat

Studying in Jhansi, hence the research team couldn't meet her to collect more information.

Chapter 2

Situational Analysis

2.0 Introduction

As an integral part of the IDA approach, CRI intervention focusing on the developing cognitive and imaginative skill of children was piloted in 2006 in Talbehat block of Lalitpur. A core premise of this intervention is that children have the right to express them freely and to have their views taken into account in all matters affecting them. Process of children engagement has generated considerable enthusiasm and confidence among them and resulted in a degree of recognition from their peers and adults and school teachers. Their Newsreports, essays, poems and drawings of children were collated into a newsbooklet Balvani ('Voice of children') every quarter. All 30 child reporters joyfully revisits the days of togetherness, learning, appreciation and above all the impact they created in their school, family and community. They are the role model of their younger sisters and brothers and children in the community.



Child reporters: "a very important intervention"

Outcomes of the interventions initiated by Sarathi under UNICEF supported Balbandhu project in Lalitpur district are testimony to the fact that opportunities of participation, environment for expression and supportive facilitation lay strong foundation for empowerment and development of the children. It facilitates the children to

Sarathi Development Foundation

discover them and build their future on their own. This is the theory of change among the children, Balbandhu programme has translated into reality in Lalitpur district. This theory of change establishes the fact that each growing mind harbors a dream, has a vision and a unique way of perceiving even the smallest event in the surrounding. The entire section of core findings is indicators related to social composition, marital status, education, abilities & skills, achievements and plan for future.

2.1 Social Composition

It is important to mention here that caste and religion of the children was no criteria for selection of the child reporters. Children were considered just as children without linking them with social, economic and geographical variations existing in the project area. Teachers of 10 schools suggested by BSA were briefed about the idea behind development of child reporters. They selected the children for further processes on their own and provided list to us. Study revealed that majority of the child reporters 63% is from general category followed by 33% from OBC and 3 % from ST. The affinity and relationship built over the time among the child reporters indicate that they have their own community which has no space for caste but for mutual cooperation, togetherness and collective learning. Child Reporters, parents and teachers indicated that opportunities provided to the child reporters are the need of every child irrespective of caste or religion as such opportunities and inputs are not available in schools.

Sr	1.Cast	No. of Child Reporters	%
1	SC	1	3
2	OBC	10	33
3	General	19	63
	Total	30	100

2.2 Age Group

All child reporters were ageing 8 to 14 years at the time of beginning of their journey in 2006. These reporters have reached to the adolescent and adult stage now. Study shows that 11 child reporters are currently in age group of 14 to 17 years and remaining 19 are ageing 18 to 21 years. It is encouraging to note that no child reporter in age group of 14 to 17 years is married.

Sr	Age	Total CRs	%
1	14 to 17	11	37
2	18 to 21	19	63
	Total	30	100

2.3 Marital Status

Marital Status	No. of Child Reporters	Total %
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Married	6	20
Unmarried	24	80
Total	30	100

Study shows that education and marital status are significantly correlated. Data shows that 24 (80 %) child reporters including 17 girls are not married. This number is similar to the child reporters currently studying and have definite plans for their education and career. It

indicates that CRI intervention has created significant impact in terms on enhancing opportunities for continuity of education particularly among girls, influencing behavior of elders towards education of girls and changing existing social norms. Six (20%) child reporters including 2 males and 4 females in age group of 18 to 21 years are married. 2 out of 4 married girls and 1 out of 2 male child reporters are continuing their education.

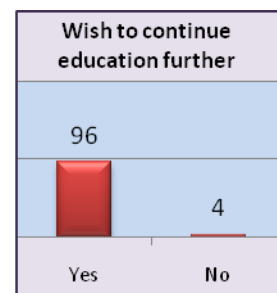
2.4 Gender Composition

Gender wise classification of the child reporters shows that majority (70%) of the child reporters are girls and 30% are the boys. As girls are more vulnerable and central to all the development activities hence covering more girls as compared to boys was a wise idea of the school teachers at the time of selection of the child reporters.

Sr	Gender	No. of Child Reporters	%
1	Male	9	30
2	Female	21	70
	Total	30	100

2.5 Current Status of Education

As mentioned earlier also, CRI intervention has significantly contributed in enhancing the opportunities for child education equally both for girls and boys. It is encouraging to see that 80% of the child reporters are enrolled showing that the intervention has left a positive impact not only on the children but also their parents and the surrounding environment, the fact that a large chunk of the children covered are girls further add value to the finding. The results of the tracking exercise are a testimony to the improved girls' status in terms of their continuation of education, right age of marriage and having a say in the decision concerned with them.

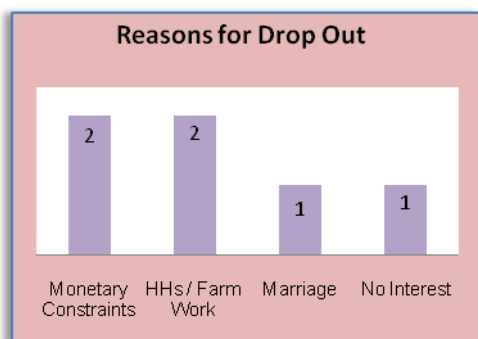
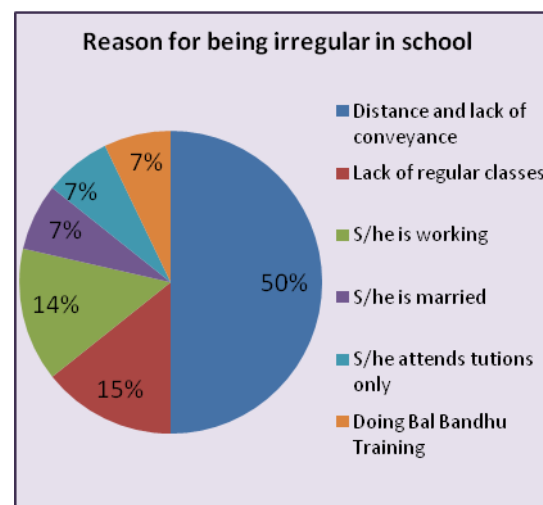


Equally important aspect is how many of the enrolled children are regularly attending their classes, the findings are not so encouraging as 55% of the child reporters are still not so interested in daily attending their classes. The reasons are reported by the child reporters and their parents are distance of school from home, lack of transport facilities engagement in domestic works, inadequate number of teachers in the schools/colleges and low quality of education. Another question in the series was do they wish to continue education after the present level of qualification and remarkably 96% replied on positive terms that they want to continue and complete the graduation at least.

Study reveals that all the child reporters continuing their education are above 8th standard now. Out of 24 currently studying child reporters, 17 are female and remaining 7 are males. 14 out of 24 school/ college going child reporters are studying in class from 9th to 12th whereas 10 are doing graduation. Gender wise distribution shows that 10 out of 14 child reporters in classes from 9th to 12th are girls and remaining 4 are boys. Similar trend is for under graduation also where 7 out of 10 child reporters are girls doing under graduation course. Parents and Girl child reporters proudly say that it is first time in their villages that girls have reached to the graduation level. Now other parents are also motivated by the girl child reporters and sending their daughters out of village for higher education.

Sr	Education	Total	%
1	Up to 8 th	0	0
2	9th to 12th	14	47
3	Under Graduation	10	33
4	Drop Out	6	20
	Total	30	100

A separate indicator studied the reasons for it and the findings suggest that for 50% CRs distance of school from home and lack of proper conveyance facility was the major reason for them being irregular in school, it was justified as for most of the CRs the school was located at a distance ranging from 20 to 55 kms; 15% responded that lack of regular classes hampered their momentum in studies and 7% each replied for other possible reasons like being married, engaged in some other economic activity, attending tuitions only and attending Bal Bandhu training.



The study made an effort to ponder the reason as of why some of the CRs are not currently enrolled in school. 33% reported Monetary constraints and household work & farm work as reasons for their drop out. It is followed by 17% drop out child reporters reporting marriage for drop out and 17% informed that they did not want to continue the education due to lack of their own interest.

2.6 Opportunities available to the child for participation

In this section we tried to cover the varied range of opportunities that were available under CRI programme to the child reporters. The opportunities available under the programme were utilized to all extent to ensure all round development of the children in a short span of time. CRI initiatives enhanced the opportunities for participation of child reporters. These opportunities are including the training, exposure, school, community meeting Bal Sabha/ Meena Manch in their schools, interface with media and government service providers. The major findings are as follows:

Sr	Indicators	Effective (%)	Average (%)	Not effective (%)	Don't know (%)
1	Training	96	4	0	0
2	Exposure	48	52	0	0

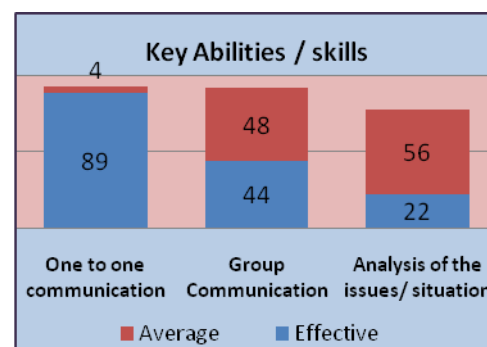
3	Family discussions	26	59	1	3
4	School	30	63	0	7
5	Community Meeting	59	22	4	15
6	Interface with Media	59	22	4	15
7	Interface with Government service providers	67	18	0	15

- 96% CRs find the training activities quite an effective way of child participation. The training activities were designed in a manner to develop and further strengthen the cognitive and communication skills of children.
- 52% of CRs found exposure activities at various levels to be an average kind of ensuring child participation.
- 26% of CRs responded that family decisions effectively represent child participation.
- 63% of CRs reported schools to provide average opportunities of child participation.
- 59% CRs responded that community meetings are effective platform of child participation where children can easily express their feelings.
- 59% CRs are of the view that media interface sessions provides ample opportunity of child participation where actually children enjoy freedom of expression before the world and can express their perspective on any topic.
- On the similar pattern 67% child reporters find interface with government

2.7 Key abilities learnt

The very important component for success of any intervention is when the target group self realizes and relishes its benefits. In a discussion on their learning from the intervention and what skills they have actually gained the facilitators finally picked up six topics as learning from the project which included continuation of education and moving out of Lalitpur for higher studies, remarkable improvement in communication skills and a positive

environment in the community pertaining to girls education and age of marriage. It was encouraging to learn that Talbehat, which had no girl opting for higher education in villages now has a considerable chunk of graduate girls; besides, they have a say in decision concerned with their life like marriage, though still cases of child marriage are prevalent but an emerging trend is delaying the marriage till the completion of education. The environment in family and community as a whole is now facilitative for girl's education, even in-laws of girls are thinking in this respect and allowing their daughter in law to study further.



The best thing that most of the child reporters have realized is that they have played a crucial role in raising the issues through their writing and drawing skills which lent them a sense of self esteem and self satisfaction. But the common voice of all the children was that the same opportunity should be made available for all children to grow and develop in the same manner as they have through this intervention.

Sr	Indicators	Effective	Average	Not effective	Don't know
1	One to one communication	89	4	0	7
2	Group Communication	44	48	0	7
3	Analysis of the issues/ situation	22	56	4	19
4	Confidence to express their feeling/issues/ideas	22	52	0	26
5	Story writing	93	4	0	4
6	Drawing the pictures	85	11	0	4
7	Decision making	22	34	0	44

- 89% of the child reporters have developed effective one to one communication skill.
- While 48% CR have developed average group communication skill whereas 44% have developed effective skills on the same parameter.
- Give CRs an issue as stimulus; they will present it analytically as 22% CRs have developed effective analytical skills while 56% have rated their analytical skills as average.
- On the parameter of confidence 22% CRs have rated themselves effective while 52% as average.
- 93% CRs have developed effective story writing skills.
- On a similar line 85% have effective drawing skills.

Child Rights are civil and political rights that recognize fundamental guarantees to all human beings the right to life, the non-discrimination principle, the right to dignity through the protection of physical and mental integrity. It is much more than Right to Education and Right to Food. Comprehensive knowledge on Child Rights was one of the thrust area of the intervention but the mode of knowledge sharing was interactive rather than monotonous classroom teaching, for this reason even after withdrawal of the programme CRs are still confident about their knowledge on this aspect and 96% said that they gained clarity and knowledge on rights of child.

2.8 Parents & Teachers: Building Supportive Environment

Based on our FGD and Key Informant Interviews with the teachers, parents and interaction during transact walk with other community members we gathered inputs on how these CRs are different from other children. We even did group exercise with non Child Reporters to know their perspective and what all they wish to learn from Child Reporters. The table provided below is based on these exercises:



- Use of iodized salt has increased after it was published in *Balvani*.
- Children have very well highlighted the issues of Mid Day Meal, safe drinking water, and sanitary toilets.
- They are regular in school as compared to other children.
- Schools provided opportunities for knowledge sharing of Child Reporters with other children.
- They were honored in the school which motivated other children to be like them.
- The Child Reporters were quite different in their attitude and behavior as compared to other children.

Teachers have played a very important role right from the inception stage of the intervention. Their involvement started with the orientation on the concept of Child Reporters (CRs) to develop analytical thinking and presentation skills of children. They were entrusted to select three children from their school as child reporters for the capacity building and other activities planned for the child reporters. Besides, they have read the issues of *Balvani*, hence, it is must to know their perception of



Balvani as a communication medium for children studying in the remote rural areas. As they have been involved from the very starting hence it is easy to get an idea of how and to what extent children have grown through this intervention, what changes they perceive in the child reporters in terms of their knowledge, behavior and

performance in class and how they are different from other children of their school. Besides, selecting children for the intervention it was also expected from teachers to provide appropriate environment for sharing of their knowledge and motivating them for their active involvement in community development processes. The teachers have appreciated the exposure provided under the CRI which provided children to explore more about the world beyond their village and block.

2.9 Finding from the comparison group

Study team conducted focused group discussions and interactive sessions with the children who were not directly covered CRI intervention. Since there was no controlled group selected at the beginning of CRI intervention, we selected such children randomly from the villages covered under treatment. Child reporters have emerged as learning and knowledge source for children (untreated) both in schools and villages. It was encouraging to note the non child reporters are impressed with the recognition, confidence and abilities of child reporters. Differences emerged from the assessment are described in the table below:

Knowledge Parameters	Child Reporters	Comparison Group
Knowledge	They have gained knowledge on issues like education, health & hygiene, government schemes concerned with child development. They are also aware of service providers of the government as they have got the opportunity to meet and learn from them.	Their knowledge is limited to whatever taught within the four walls of classroom. Due to lack of exposure they certainly are not familiar with the concerned authorities of various developmental schemes.
Enhanced self confidence	Children are able to speak confidently as they interacted with district and block officials several times. The hesitation of how to face people of high reputation is now not in them. The backing of the family, teachers, community and the organization lent them enough confidence to fearlessly write on delay and	Due to limited opportunities of expression their public speaking ability is either less developed or altogether absent. They hesitate in talking to people other than their parents, neighbors and school teachers.

	denial of services and bring it to the cognizance of the concerned authorities. The rating exercise conducted during the FGD with child reporters indicates that they can freely communicate with people.	
Skill of expression	<p>The expression skill of Child Reporters has improved considerably as the intervention touches cognitive, analytical and logical skills of children and how they can actually portray their imaginations on the canvas through pen and colours. The reports published in <i>Balvani</i> were appreciated in all corners of the block and even the district officials took action on the issues raised by children.</p> <p>The logical and analytical skill mixed with the innocent expression through pictures and stories was a unique element of <i>Balvani</i> where serious issues were expressed through the eyes of children.</p> <p>Though the intervention was not intended to develop reporters in hinterland but it is must to acknowledge the documentation skill of these children which is well appreciated by parents, teachers and even the officers of line departments.</p> <p>The rating exercise conducted during the discussion with child reporters reveals that their expression skills through writing and drawing have improved significantly.</p>	<p>Skills develop when provided an appropriate growing environment. Children other than child reporters have limited exposure to activities where they can think, write and get room for expression. It is equally applicable to even children going to school and drop outs. The school going children have set pattern of studies which is quiet monotonous and with no curricular activities.</p>
	These children have successfully sorted out	Their decisions mainly depend on parents

Influenced people's way of thinking	<p>issues of concern without the involvement of elders. This is slightly unique and away from general perception of the community.</p> <p>They not only raised the issues of corporal punishment, quality of Mid Day Meal, defunct toilets but also more vibrant issues like girl's education, child marriage and child labor which actually sensitized community towards these issues and things are changing at slow and sustainable pace.</p>	<p>and have no say in even their family, the smallest unit of society.</p>
An inspiration for other children	<p>Child Reporters have not only influenced the general perception of the community rather being the 'real agents of social change' they have motivated other children towards importance of education and eventually to get them enrolled in schools.</p>	<p>They too harbor the dreams of changing their lives and of others and are very much inspired by the child reporters.</p>
Social circle & recognition	<p>The Child Reporters have gain recognition due to their active involvement in social issues. It was learnt in the FGD with teachers that people including teachers often route their concerns through these reporters for the reason that the voice of these children never go unnoticed at any forum.</p> <p>Their exposure at different forums and participation in training has further enhanced their status in community and has lent them a special identity in their schools and colleges.</p>	<p>Their life is limited to school and home which gives them a small social circle. As they are not engaged in any activities concerned with the development of community, hence they lack that level of social recognition which child reporters get.</p>

Co-operation & team spirit	The intervention was designed in such a way that children were allowed to think, discuss, suggest and participate freely. Their smallest initiative was backed by other child reporters. This eventually developed a sense of cooperation and team spirit among these children.	The feeling of cooperation and team spirit is quite low in these children. It is due to the fact that they are never provided any stimulus to think analytically, adopt a participative mode of discussion and solving the intricacies together unlike child reporters.
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2.10 Achievements as perceived by the Child Reporters

Child Empowerment with a rights based approach builds up the capacity of children with participation a reality rather than its remaining rhetoric. In a patriarchal society as is in India equality in rights is only achievable if children become social actor rather than mere beneficiaries in any child related programmes. When allowed and encouraged by adults who trust and believe in them, children are capable of some truly amazing outcomes. Children who learn to make decisions, solve their own problems and accept responsibility for their actions become stronger individuals.

In the Child Reporter Initiative it was learnt that children, with due confidence and courage, raised and addressed most of the grassroots issues through *Balvani*, involving government frontline service providers, intimating community groups and *Balbandhus* and raising the issues in BLTF & DLTF meetings. Three indicators- Issues raised by CRs, efforts made to address the issues and Issues addressed by CRs were used to study the impact of the processes which ultimately empowered children in the process of development under the intervention. It is important to mention that one CR might have responded in favour of two or more responses; hence data analyzed and presented are not explicit and a combination of all the number of responses gathered.

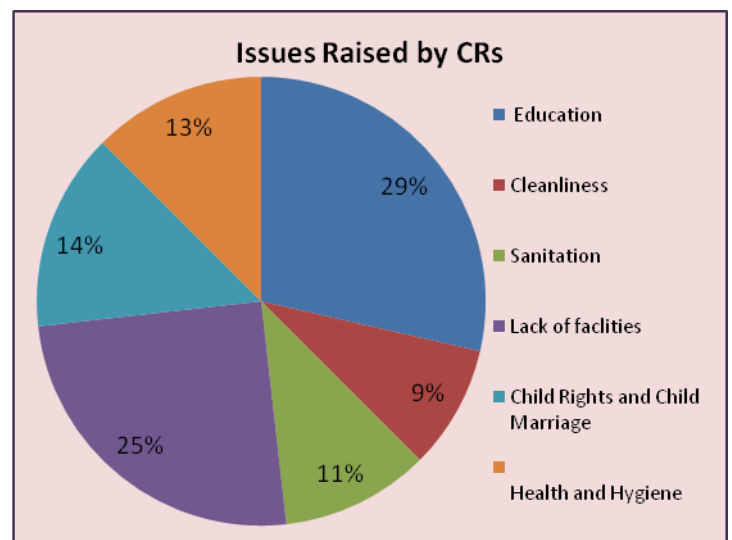
In the study six major issues raised by the child reporters were included; the data collected reveals that 29% Child Reporters raised the issues related to education like teachers non involvement in teaching activities, quality of Mid Day Meal, girls education and other such related issues; followed by 25% CRs raising the issue of lack of facilities like proper roads, electricity, safe drinking water required for a basic quality life. It is followed by the issues of Child rights and child marriage, health and hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness.

Mediums	No. of issues	%
Published in Balvani	27	59
Informed to Balbandhus / Community Groups, Service Providers	18	39
Documented in Red Alert Slips	0	0
Raised in BLTF/ DLTF meetings minutes	1	2
Total	46	100

Project activities like *Balvani* columns, intimating the issue to the frontline service providers, *Balbandhu* and community groups, documenting the issue in Red Alert Slip and raising the issue in BLTF/DLTF meetings were sort of the various forums where issues can be raised and routed to the concerned authorities. *Balvani* was circulated to different departments like health, education, ICDS and PRI members hence had wide circulation range ensuring the children's voice to reach all corners. It was extensively used by Child Reporters to serve the purpose;

our study reveals that 59% child reporters used it as a medium of raising the issue. Children in the process of developing as a change agent became familiar with *Balbandhus*, community groups and service providers; intimating them of an issue was

one of the ways of addressing it. 39% Child Reporters have used it as a tool of drawing attention of the community and authorities towards development and social issues.

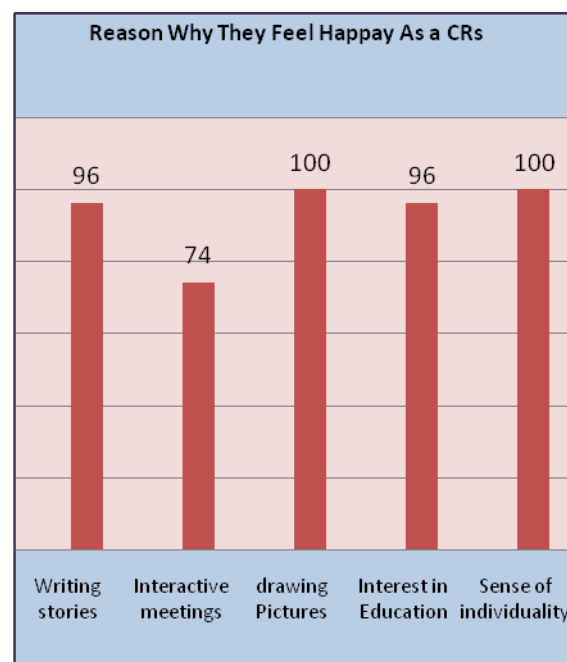


Issues successfully addressed by CR follows the same line as the issues raised by them. If we look at the statistics 29% CRs addressed the issue of education, followed by 24% lack of facilities; further followed by 16% health and hygiene, 13% sanitation, 10% Child rights and child marriages and 8% cleanliness. The data obtained on this indicator are more or less similar to that of the Issues raised by the child reporters.

2.11 Child Reporters: Thinking Ahead

All the children covered under this study were happy to be involved as Child Reporter as the activities were actually nurturing their hidden skills and potentials. But the study made an effort to find out what reasons actually these young mind cite in favor of their response.

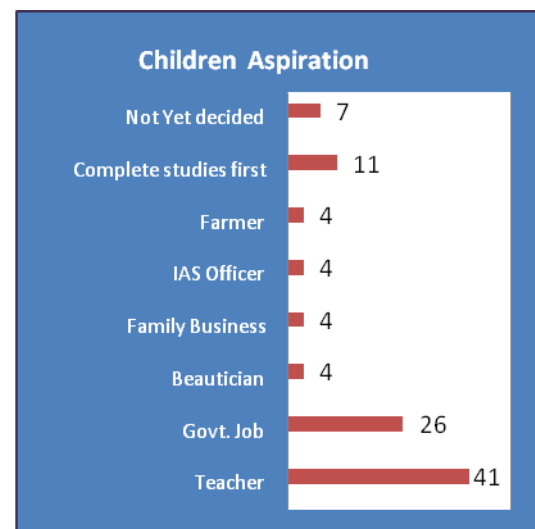
In an attempt to find why actually children feel happy of being a child reporter we gathered responses on five pre decided options and the data reflects that 74% CRs said that exposure visits and interaction with officials have given them a new world to explore, their interaction with high level officials has lent them enough confidence in the course of the intervention. 100% CRs responded in favor of the presentation and expression skills that they have gained under this project. Thinking of an incidence and putting it on a piece of paper in letters and pictures requires analytical thinking, cognitive and creative skills. Children always crave for a space where they can express their imaginations. *Balvani* emanated as such an option providing enough room for children to express themselves; they enjoyed freedom in thinking, writing and drawing unlike the prescriptive and suggestive mode of learning they receive in class and home. It was further followed by 96% CR saying that they feel happy as now they can speak and write confidently be it any issue. Gaining appreciation in family, school and community and realizing the very sense of individuality cropped up as other factors for why they liked to be a Child Reporter.



Plans for the future rests more on what a child thinks in his present, how does he act in a given situation and how well does he copes up if face an intricate situation. Given a suitable environment children have potential to show miraculous outcomes. It was learnt in this intervention that these children harbor dreams quiet similar to children living in cities which goes beyond their limited social periphery. In this section five indicators were taken into consideration – is the child happy of being a child reporter, what reasons did the CRs cite for their response, what they aspire to be in future, would they like to develop other children in community as CR, if yes then how. So these questions were basically designed to probe into what children are actually thinking about their future based on their present and intervention activities.

2.12 Aspiration of Child Reporters

Children aspiration is more or less decided by the kind of environment they live in, people they interact with and their exposure to the world beyond their school and families. They draw inspiration from their closest environment; seek guidance from people they are surrounded with. In case of Child Reporters 41% replied that they aspire to become teacher, 26% CR wish to work in government jobs, 11% CRs want to finish off their studies first, 4% want to contribute their expertise in the family business, 4% each replied for civil services and farm based activities and rest 7% have not yet decided which track to move on. As said



earlier children draw inspiration from their close environment hence most of them have responded to become teacher but a very small chunk said that they want to be in the civil services indicating that exposure and interaction with district magistrate and other officers have encouraged them to think on those lines.

The learning was so encouraging for children that they wish other children in their close vicinity to develop as Child reporters and strengthen their skills to be a social change agent for the community.

2.13 Developing new Child Reporters

The CRs were asked as what strategy they would adopt to develop other children as Child Reporter. The data gathered indicates that 35% of CRs said that teaching story and news writing and picture making is the best way of developing the children into child reporters, 23% said that discussing problems of villages would help children develop an insight about the real grassroots problem and will lent them content to write and sketch, 20% said that motivating children to be a change agent will inspire them, 16% said that spreading the knowledge gained through the intervention will inspire others too, 3% each said that using *Balvani* as a medium of motivation and sharing personal experiences as CR would prove effective in developing other children as CR.

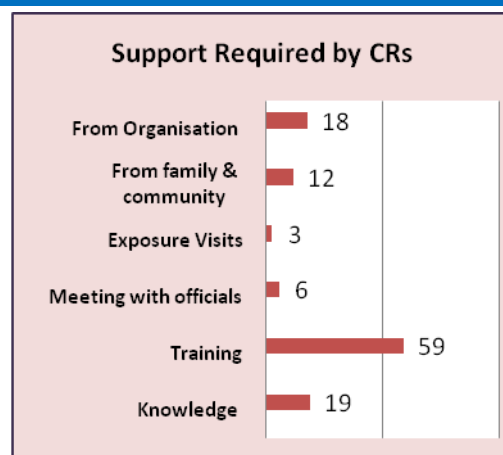
Approach	%
By motivating other children	20
By sharing personal experiences as CRs	3

By teaching them story & news writing and picture making	35
By discussing about the problems of village with them	23
By spreading the gained knowledge and awareness to others	16
By motivating others with the help of Balvani	3
By motivating others with the help of Balvani	3
Total	100

2.1

4 Support Required by Child Reporters

With the strategy decided comes the resources required to fulfill the objective; when asked what kind of support is required to develop other children as CRs maximum 59% unanimously said that the capacity building activities under CRI programme will be the major input or support to develop other children as CR. This clearly shows that the interactive mode of learning process adopted in the training has proved its success. 18% CRs said that constant support from the implementing agency will be required, 12% were of the opinion that support and encouragement of family and community is the pre requisite in the process, 6% said that interaction with officials will be an input in their development process, while 3% each said that exposure visits and knowledge provided to the children are the major inputs required for the process of developing the children into CRs.



Chapter 3

Way Forward

3.0 Introduction

Child Tracking Study was an attempt to gain deep insight into processes and results achieved in IDA district of Lalitpur. Recommendations given below are rooted in findings of the assessment of child reporters in Talbehat block .. All the recommendations are being made here with a positive spirit and intention to provide inputs in sustainability of the processes and impact. It also provides a base for future programming for the similar interventions based on child rights framework .

3.1 Periodical Back up Support

Child Reporters perceived this intervention as an opportunity enhanced their participation in different activities and forums at village, community, school, block, district and national level. It contributed in facilitating critical thinking on issues, new recognition, confidence building, communication and aspirations for their future. These opportunities have changed their life and paved the way for better future and quality of life. They feel that they are forgotten now. It would be encouraging if contacts are reestablished. It is suggested that CRI coordinators and field coordinators may visit them during supportive supervision processes in their villages.

3.2 Interface with Media

Child reporters still have the fair for writing stories based on issues and needs observed and felt by them. They feel that there is no one around to encourage them and publish their stories. It has restricted their writing. Some of the child reporters opined that they should be connected with local media/ press for printing and wide spread of their development stories. It would be useful for new child reporters also. It is suggested that and interface meeting with local media persons can be organized to build the required linkages. Community Radio Station is a great opportunity for exposure of this new generation of child reporters. They can be connected with the station through interface meeting and exposure visit.

3.3 Networking with Child Reporters

Child reporters were excited to know about child reporters of their batch. They expressed their desire during the study. Periodical meetings with these child reporters will facilitate reestablishing contacts & relationship among them, experience sharing, revisiting their journey together and planning their role together. It will also contribute in initiating the process networking of these reporters.

3.4 Sustainability and Replication

Child Reporters Initiative has been selected as successful practice/product for sustainability and Replicability involvement of government and various other development agencies in the state of Uttar Pradesh. A comprehensive road map detailing out processes, results and sustainability index has already been formulated by the Sarathi and submitted to UNICEF. This road map may shared with the government, civil society organizations and other development agencies to explore and enhance the opportunities for replication of this proven practice on a wider scale.