Midline survey results: Integrating adolescent livelihood activities within a reproductive health program for urban slum dwellers in India

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Mid-line Survey Results:
Integrating Adolescent Livelihood Activities within a
Reproductive Health Program for Urban Slum Dwellers in India
Research (OR) study to investigate the impact of adding a livelihoods component to the Action for Slum Dwellers’ Reproductive Health, Allahabad (ASRHA) Project in Uttar Pradesh run by CARE, India. The ASRHA Project selected peer educators from the slums and then trained them in the provision of reproductive health information, communication skills and group formation techniques. A set of five flipbooks, containing stories based on a fictional adolescent girl named Paro, has been used to share reproductive health information with adolescent girls. After their training was complete peer educators led group sessions on reproductive health. Sessions began in the experimental sites in June, 2001 and continued through the Spring of 2002. After the peer educators completed the reproductive health education series and after they had been trained by project participants in vocational training courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>No. of batches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mehndi</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative painting</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhari weaving</td>
<td>Training Centre</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>Training Centre</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mending and embroidery</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candle making</td>
<td>Training centre</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crochet</td>
<td>Training centre, Slum</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jute craft, Jute bag</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food preservation</td>
<td>Govt. Institute</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee keeping</td>
<td>Govt. Institute</td>
<td>45 days</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric Painting</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macrame</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal grooming</td>
<td>Training centre, Slum</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot decoration</td>
<td>Training centre, Slum</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft toys</td>
<td>Training centre, Slum</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic cooking</td>
<td>Training Centre</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese cooking</td>
<td>Training Centre</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 18 different courses were run, of which 2 were run by the respective govt. institutes. Around 3 girls attended courses like carpet weaving, macramé, cooking and block printing at the ‘women’s polytechnic’. The number of different individuals who participated in vocational training courses = 85. The maximum number of courses an individual could attend was limited to 5 to enable different girls to get opportunity to participate in various vocational training courses.
The Mid-line Questionnaire

The mid-line questionnaire used several similar items from the baseline to compare responses from the two surveys. Information on the following indicators was collected from the adolescents:
- Demographic information
- Adolescent group attendance
- Experience of vocational counseling and training
- Livelihood and employment history
- Experience with savings counseling and savings formation
- Follow-up
- Time use pattern
- Self-efficacy
- Connectedness and friendship
- Locality, autonomy and attitudes towards gender roles
- Knowledge of reproductive health and contraceptive methods
- Education history

staff to provide information about livelihoods and savings opportunities. They then conducted group sessions about livelihoods and savings using IEC materials developed for this purpose. Reproductive health sessions were held alongside vocational counseling sessions.

Population Council staff worked to provide a number of vocational training courses, both in the slums where the girls reside and in the city of Allahabad. The project developed 21 short-term vocational courses that were offered in a series of 6 – 10 courses each. Courses began in the Fall of 2001 and continued through June 2002. The selection of courses given was based on the interest (e.g., enrollment) shown by the girls - a minimum of 10 girls was required for a course to be offered. Mehndi (hand or feet painting) was the course almost all the girls were interested in. Other courses arranged by the project included tailoring, creative painting, dhari weaving, mending and embroidery, candle making, silver ornament / link making, pot decoration, crochet, jute doll, basic cooking, personal grooming and fabric painting. The project also made arrangements for older girls (18 years and above) to attend government-run courses, for example, bee keeping, food preservation, jute craft, macrame, cooking, carpet weaving, and block printing. Since many girls wanted to participate in more than one course, the project set a limit of five courses per girl, in order to allow as many newcomers an opportunity as possible. Concurrently with the vocational skills training, counseling and assistance was provided for creating savings accounts at banks or post offices. (See Huntington et al. 2001 and Sebastian et al. 2002 for more information on the AHRA project and the OR study).

The rationale behind this intervention program is that livelihood activities are likely to improve participation in the reproductive health program’s activities, increase girls’ mobility and visibility in the community, establish safe public spaces for girls, promote supportive relationships with non-family members, and help develop girls’ social and economic skills. In addition, livelihood activities are thought to change the attitudes of adults so they become more accepting of girls’ physical mobility and have a greater appreciation of girls’ economic potential. The project assists interested girls in linking up with other organizations for future livelihood activities. In addition, it helps to identify shops to sell products made by girls. However, it is not the objective of the project to find jobs for the girls completing the vocational courses.

Study Design

The OR study uses a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test design that compares the intervention (experimental) group with a comparison (control) group of adolescents. A baseline and endline survey of all adolescents living in the slums, and one of their parents (or guardians), will

...
measure the differential effects of exposure to the various elements of the intervention. Previous Project Updates have presented information on the findings from the baseline survey (Sebastian et al. 2002). In addition to the surveys that are being conducted prior to and following the intervention, the study also includes a mid-line assessment that measures the experiences of girls six months after they completed the first round of vocational training courses, or one year after the baseline survey.

The goal is to examine the extent to which the livelihoods and savings interventions have 1) increased girls’ physical mobility and contact with individuals outside the family, 2) enhanced girls’ skill development and sustained use of skills, 3) shaped the girls’ work aspirations and encouraged progressive gender role norms, and 4) increased time spent with peers and time spent in productive activities.

**MID-LINE SAMPLING RESULTS**

The mid-line survey was conducted in early April 2002 in the experimental slums only. Girls who took part in the first batch of vocational training courses offered in August/September 2001 were eligible. Of the 232 girls identified, 206 were successfully interviewed, yielding an 89 percent response rate. Of the 26 girls who did not take part in the survey, five girls had married and moved away from their previous residence, 13 girls were unavailable either because the family moved from the area or the girls were not staying at home at that time. Seven girls declined to be interviewed and one interview was only partially completed. Unfortunately only 62 cases have been linked to baseline responses. The failure to link all of the cases in the mid-line to their baseline responses was because girls either did not participate in the baseline survey or used different names (many variations are common in India). The low rate of successfully matched cases limits our ability to examine changes in the girls’ lives. Further investigation of the study’s impact will be undertaken by the comparison of the baseline and endline surveys.

Of the 206 adolescent girls interviewed, 104 were aged 16 years or younger and 102 girls were aged 17 years or older. Most (94 percent) resided in Allahabad since birth, while six percent had settled there within the past 10 years. Virtually all (96 percent) of the girls were unmarried. The girls selected for the mid-line survey were those who participated in the first set of vocational courses. Thereafter many more individuals attended other courses. Few new groups of adolescent girls were also formed during the following months.

Eleven percent of the girls interviewed in the mid-line survey were working as peer educators. In all, 44 of the 206 girls (21 percent) were working as peer educators with the CARE ASRHA Project.

Approximately 85 percent of the adolescent girls had attended school. However, only 39 percent of the girls aged 16 years or younger and 23 percent of those aged 17 years or older were currently attending school at the time of the survey.

All respondents had attended at least one reproductive health meeting; indeed the vast majority (94 percent) of the girls in the mid-line survey reported that they regularly attended these meetings (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Frequency of Attending Adolescent Meetings](image)

The adolescents were asked if they required permission of their parents before attending the adolescent meetings (Figure 2). Three-fourths (75 percent) said they required permission of parents or guardians the first time only. Fewer than 10 percent of girls needed to seek permission...
each time before attending the adolescent meetings. It is noteworthy that one-half of the girls reported that their parents encouraged them to attend the adolescent meetings. One contributing factor could be that about one-fourth (27 percent) of the girls' mothers had been a member of CARE’s women’s health associations (a sister project to the adolescent reproductive health project of CARE).

Respondents reported that they first heard information about vocational training from friends, peer educators and home visits by project staff (Figure 3), more so than at the adolescent meetings. The most frequently cited source of information about vocational training was an ASRHA project peer educator, followed by CARE ASRHA project staff. The results presented in Figure 3 suggest that for the younger adolescents, a visit by the project staff was more important than the peer educator in conveying information about the vocational training courses. Overall, this shows that most peer educators are well accepted by their peers and pass on information quickly. In addition, home visits by staff are also a good means to communicate information to adolescents.

A flip book was prepared with information about the 21 different vocational courses offered by the project, including details about the duration, fees and the skills involved. A photo of the item to be produced during the training was also provided to help the girls understand the skill. Each adolescent group was given a flip book and most of the adolescent girls found the information provided in the flip book useful.
Project Update, November 2002

The majority of the girls who took part in one or more vocational training courses reported 6 months later that they had used the skills learned (Figure 6). This includes more than 70 percent of those trained in food preservation, pot decoration, creative painting, mending and embroidery, 64 percent in mehndi, 59 percent in crochet and jute doll-making and less for other courses including tailoring (53 percent), beekeeping (40 percent) and candle making (33 percent). Both during and after training the items made or skills learned were mainly used within the home and for gifts.

Among those who had not used skills, the main reasons reported for not utilizing the skills learned were lack of time (100 percent), no money to buy materials (85 percent), lack of necessary equipment (50 percent) or no demand or opportunity to sell the product or service (35 percent).

While most of the girls were not engaged in paid employment after the courses ended, approximately one-fifth

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**Figure 4: Adequacy of information in the vocational training flip chart**

- Yes, information was sufficient: 27%
- Yes, information was somewhat sufficient: 22%
- No, information was not sufficient: 27%
- Other comments: 13%

**Figure 5: Percentage found the curriculum covered in the courses sufficient**

- Sufficient in all courses: 77%
- Not enough in all courses: 11%
- Not enough in some courses: 11%
- Don't know: 1%

**Figure 6: Use of skills learned in vocational training courses**

- Creative painting, pot decoration, mending and embroidery, food preservation: 70%
- Tailoring, crochet, jute doll: 50%
- Candle making, beekeeping: 30%
(21 percent) reported that they had worked for pay. Of these, only 34 percent (15 girls) got the present jobs as a result of the skill they learned during vocational training.

### Savings Formation

According to results from the baseline survey, girls were interested in opening a savings account in their name before the project began. About half of the girls had some savings but only 7 percent used a formal savings institution (see Sebastian et al., 2002). The results from the mid-line survey show that after the adolescent meetings began, 66 percent of the girls opened a savings account in their name in a post office close to their slum. Almost all of these girls (95 percent) who had a savings account said that it was very important to them to save. Some savings but only 7 percent used a formal savings institution (see Sebastian et al., 2002). The results from the mid-line survey show that after the adolescent meetings began, 66 percent of the girls opened a savings account in their name in a post office close to their slum. Almost all of these girls (95 percent) who had a savings account said that it was very important to them to save. Girls opened accounts in their own name because they felt that money kept at home gets spent (59 percent), because they could not save with joint accounts (22 percent), or because earnings were given to parents in the absence of savings accounts (21 percent).

The girls were asked if they had plans for the use the money saved. Only 29 out of the 63 girls (46 percent) who had savings accounts had definite plans. Five of these 29 girls wanted to purchase a sewing machine and four of the girls wanted to spend the saved money for household expenses or on themselves. A few of these girls (n=8) wanted to purchase raw materials to start an income generating project or to assist in the marriage of a younger sister. Saving money for marriage, helping a mother in crisis and buying a bicycle were some of the other ideas the girls had.

### Comparison between Baseline and Mid-Line Results of the Matched Cases

This section discusses the comparisons for the 62 girls who were interviewed in both the baseline and mid-line surveys.

### Time Use

While the sample of matched respondents is too small from which to generalize and also may be somewhat selective, there are some findings from the analysis of the linked data that suggest the project has had...
some impact. It is interesting to note that average hours spent on household chores, including sweeping, cleaning, cooking, and washing clothes, decreased, and average hours spent on recreation and personal care increased from baseline to mid-line. There was an increase in time spent on paid work, but time spent on unpaid work – using skills at home that were acquired during vocational course, helping mother in the shop or making things for sale – is seen to have increased as well, among others. As expected, there was an increase in time spent with peers and paid work.

**Mobility**

One of the objectives of the project is to test whether the livelihoods interventions will increase girls' physical mobility and contact with individuals outside the family. To assess this, the girls were asked if they could go alone to visit a friend, a shop or nearby village. The results from the baseline and mid-line comparisons show that only 29 percent were allowed to visit their friends during the baseline survey, while at the mid-line 77 percent and they could visit their friend (Figure 8). Similarly, only 45 percent could visit a shop alone at the time of the baseline survey, but 77 percent of the girls at mid-line were able to do this.

**Attitudes and Behavior**

The girls' attitudes about the roles of men and women in carrying out different tasks were explored. The results shown in Figure 9 (refer to the next page) indicates significant changes in the attitudes of adolescent girls between the baseline and mid-line survey. Of the matched sample, 45 percent of the girls at the time of the mid-line survey felt that they could convince other people of something they believe in, which was a significant increase from the 18 percent aware of the project's intervention and in the process allow new adolescents to participate in the intervention. It also hoped to show the community the quality of work produced during training. Some girls were able to get work orders from the community after the exhibition. Only one-third of the girls who participated in one or the other exhibition. 66 girls who participated in the exhibition mentioned it helped them. Mainly they learnt skills required for organizing sales (55 percent), the importance of neat work (38 percent) and new ideas about designs (33 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported activities during the day before the interview</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Mid-line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average hours spent on:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chores</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care (including napping)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid work</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average hours in previous day spent on:

*Does not include time spent sleeping at night (n=62)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 8: Can you go alone to visit?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A friend**</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A shop**</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby village*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A friend**</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A shop**</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby village*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05
Seventy-two percent were confident talking in front of a group now, whereas only 36 percent reported that they had confidence at the baseline. When asked at the mid-line whether “Boys make better leaders than girls?” 23 percent said “yes”, down from 68 percent at the baseline.

### Reproductive Health Knowledge

The results presented in Figure 10 show that the girls’ reproductive health knowledge increased from baseline to mid-line, in some cases significantly. While 89 percent could correctly name contraceptive methods at baseline, 97 percent were able to name contraceptive methods at mid-line. As compared to 67 percent in the baseline, 94 percent were able to name a sexually transmitted infection. As compared to 68 percent at baseline, 97 percent mentioned that they had heard of HIV/AIDS during baseline, at mid-line, 97 percent mentioned that they had heard.

### Figure 9: Attitudes and Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Midline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can convince people of what you believe*</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident to talk in front of group*</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do boys make better leaders than girls*</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 10: Reproductive health knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Midline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heard of HIV/AIDS*</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported Condom can Protect against HIV/AIDS *</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name contraceptive method*</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name an STI*</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible to tell if another person has STI*</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct period of gestation*</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls get pregnant through sexual contact between boy and girl*</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of HIV/AIDS. Ninety-eight percent were aware that condom could protect against HIV/AIDS. Thus the knowledge of STIs and HIV/AIDS increased compared to their baseline responses. All of the girls were able to correctly answer the question on the gestation period during pregnancy, and 98 percent knew that girls get pregnant through sexual contact between a boy and girl, whereas only 44 percent knew this at the baseline survey.

**Safe Places**

Having a safe place for girls to convene assures that girls and their parents will not only be willing to take an active part in project interventions, but also may be more likely to participate in future community activities. At the time of the baseline survey, only 13 percent of the adolescent girls indicated that there was a safe place in the community for unmarried adolescent girls to meet, but after the intervention began, 95 percent identified a place. Whether girls and their parents will continue to identify such places after the end of the intervention is unclear but that will be investigated at the endline survey which will take place over six months after the intervention period has ended.

Seventy-nine percent attended the adolescent meetings after vocational courses began and 97 percent want the adolescent meetings to continue after the intervention ends. Twenty percent said adolescent meetings are always enjoyable and 35 percent said it is usually enjoyable and 39 percent found these meetings somewhat enjoyable, while 6 percent did not comment on the adolescent meeting. There were various health topics other than reproductive health; the girls were interested to learn more about. Singing and dancing after the reproductive health meeting made these sessions enjoyable.

**New Friends**

In the survey, a few questions were asked to determine whether the girls developed friendships and felt connected to their peers. In the three months preceding the mid-line survey, over half of the girls had made a new friend (52.9 percent). The matched sample revealed that the proportion of girls making new friends had increased from 16 percent in the baseline survey to 48 percent in the mid-line.

The mid-line survey results point in the expected direction in terms of increased skill use, changing time use patterns, increased work aspirations and more progressive gender role attitudes. Girls expressed satisfaction with the courses, the trainers and used the skills after the vocational courses ended. They also expressed a desire for the adolescent meetings to continue (97 percent) and talked of these meetings as a time to relax and mix with their peers.

Concluding the finding that 13 percent felt there was a safe place in the community for unmarried adolescent girls to congregate during baseline survey in contrast to 94 percent at the mid-line reinforces this conclusion. A large number of participants opened a savings account and felt confident to go to the post office on their own to deposit money. The full effect of the intervention will not be known until the endline survey is conducted and the control and experimental groups are compared. However, the results from this mid-line survey of a partial sample suggest that the livelihoods project is having the desired effect on adolescent girls.
REFERENCES


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