



BUILDING LEADERS

Through Residential Workshop

CHETNA

Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action

www.chetna-india.org

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Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action (CHETNA), founded under Public Charitable Trust Registration Act in 2002, envisions building a child-friendly society. The organization seeks sustainable solutions to long-term problems of 'street and working children (SWC)' through an integrated, community-based, participatory approach that reinforces civil society as well as government initiative. Through an array of empowering measures, it works to open opportunities for SWC and improve their living conditions. CHETNA, at present, is engaged in working with over 4000 street and working children through a chain of 100 contact points in Delhi and its neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Contacts with the children are made by reaching out to their living areas or places of work with 'Alternative Education' and a package of 18 well-crafted activities pertaining to their health, recreation, awareness generation, and a host of collaborative activities.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



CHETNA
40/22, Manohar Kunj,
Ground Floor, Gautam Nagar,
New Delhi 110049
Tel: +91 1130585757
Telefax: +91 1141644470
E-mail: chetna@airtelmail.in
Website: www.chetna-india.org

P R E F A C E

Children and their participation are central to CHETNA's entire initiative. Of all the project activities that it implements, Residential Workshop deserves a special mention. It is one of those activities which have been assessed to be highly impactful in empowering street-connected children. In keeping with the CHETNA's core value, the children are acted upon by a number of participatory activities, guiding them groom into efficient leaders.

Street and working children are one of the most vulnerable sections of our society. Being voiceless, uncared-for and unrepresented, they are left in the mire of numerous forms of exploitation. It's been recognized that if they are empowered to make them able to voice their concerns and stand for their rights, a positive change in their lives can be made a reality. In order to realize the idea, CHETNA has developed a concept of empowering these children through leadership workshop in residential set-up.

The genesis of the workshop and its effectiveness can be traced back to the year of 2002 when CHETNA organized its first Residential Workshop with Street and Working Children (SWC) in Dehradun. In the wake of all the guidance and facilitation that the children received at the workshop, they got so motivated and empowered that they joined hands and formed their own federation, which later came to be known as Badhte Kadam (BK), a first of its kind for them. Since then, CHETNA has successfully organized over 50 residential workshops so far.

Although the workshop aims at a number of objectives, its emphasis is mostly laid on enhancing the SWC's leadership skills. The workshop's processes are simple and coherent. From the consent of their parents and employers, a group of 30-40 SWC are taken to a residential training centre, and sent through a systematic cycle of empowerment, which leads them transition from disoriented individualities of 'I' to togetherness of 'We,' from independence to interdependence, and from disintegrated thinking to collaborative pondering. The training is organized for 4 to 5 days on a module developed by CHETNA.

The residential nature of the workshop broadens the possibilities of learning new habits and unlearning old ones through a guided course of actions. It throws up learning opportunities not just during the training activities, but much beyond that. They are handed various responsibilities and placed in the committees created to oversee the workshop arrangements. Under able guidance of trainers, essentially, it all gets converted into an integrated process of 'learning and doing,' constantly feeding into each other. Thus, its being residential converts the entire period of the workshop into an integrated learning-whole, working on their development all round the clock of the days they stay in.



The workshop has demonstrated it successfully that, for lasting behavioural change it is important that children receive a stimulating break from the environment considered responsible for entrapping them into health-hazardous and poorly organized habits.

Residential Workshop: An Overview in the Context of Realizing Rights

Residential workshop is an annual activity of the project Realizing Rights. During the project period, that is, between 2012 and 2015, a total of six workshops were organized: two in Dehradun (Uttarakhand) and four in Damdama (Haryana). The workshops contributed immensely in realizing the project's basic objective of empowering SWC.

The transaction of the workshops' activities was done through a tested training module developed by CHETNA. By incorporating new learning from the field, the module has constantly been improved. Some changes into the module are also tweaked to make it suiting to the specific requirement of trainees. For instance, residential workshop with substance using children will have slightly different activities than that with the normal street children.

Workshops conducted

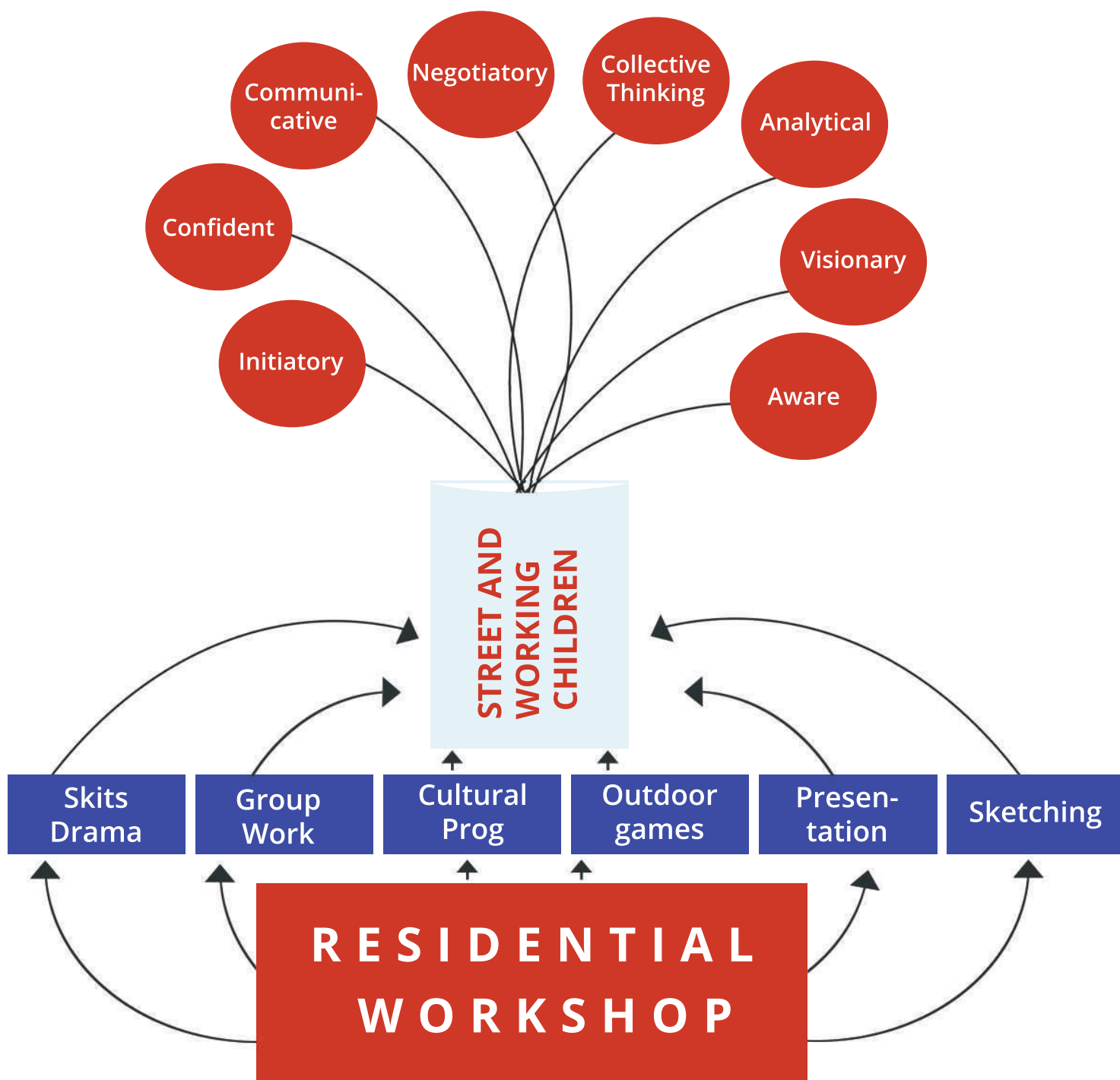
List of residential workshops conducted from 2012 to 2015 (under Realizing Rights project)

Training Location	Number of children	Date of Organization
Dehradun	20	07-05-2012 to 12-05-2012
Dehradun	35	14-10-2012 to 19-10-2012
Indira Gandhi Holiday Home, Damdama	28	24-10-2013 to 29-10-2013
Indira Gandhi Holiday Home, Damdama	28	21-04-2014 to 26-04-2014
Indira Gandhi Holiday Home, Damdama	28	09-09-2014 to 14-09-2014
Indira Gandhi Holiday Home, Damdama	28	20-03-2015 to 25-03-2015

The module of the workshop incorporated a host of relevant activities: group work, outdoor games, group presentation, art and craft activities, group discussion, and cultural events. Their smooth conduction required that the children are divided into various smaller groups, and opportunities provided to learn through introspection, visualization, thinking, sharing and a host of child-friendly exercises. Group competitions were also organized, in which children competed against one another in the categories of singing, dancing, extempore speech, Quiz, Newsletter making, etc.

The participation of children sought in handling the workshop's various administrative responsibilities helped the children in many ways. On the one hand it provided the staffs extra working hands, and, on the other, it built on the children's leadership skills by giving them opportunities to implement their learning straight away. Therefore, the workshops were well intertwined with the theoretical understanding of the leadership ideas and their execution at the same time, making the learning experiential, concrete and transcending.

The workshop in residential setup helped the children in many ways. Even the street and working children who received a set of services from CHETNA (through projects like Realizing Rights) happened to stay at the project contact points for a few hours only. After that, they would again be picking rags, chewing gutkha, sniffing solution, fighting with fellow children, being beaten up by police and witnessing the ugly fights of their own parents. Therefore, volatility in the changed behaviour brought about by the work at contact point was found to be very high. The Residential Workshop, on the other hand, was found to be quite effective in reinforcing the changes brought in the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of SWC. The workshop has demonstrated it successfully that, for lasting behavioural change it is important that children receive a stimulating break from the environment considered responsible for entrapping them into health-hazardous and poorly organized habits.



Key Objectives

- To enhance the leadership skills of street and working children.
- To enhance the children's confidence, communication and problem solving skills.
- To help children come closer, join hands and work united against the issues faced by them all.
- To help children develop a proper understanding of the issues of street life.
- To bring about reduction in their practice of substance abuse.
- To provide entertainment and exposure to adventurous games and sports.



Participation of children is central to all the strategies employed in the workshop

Methodologies and Strategies

- **Reflection and thinking:** It is done by asking the participants to close their eyes, reflect on the questions asked, and come up with innovative ideas on the same. A group discussion, thereafter, is held as they share their own ideas.
- **Use of drama, collage and sketching:** Children make presentation on various topics given to them through the media of drama, collage, sketching, etc.
- **Question Answer Method:** Clarity on complicated issues is developed through an open question and answer session between trainees and trainers.
- **Focused Group Discussion:** The method is important in sharing of ideas and understanding each other's perspective. It is equally important for developing consensus on difficult issues.
- **Role Play:** Through this participants are helped to develop deeper insights into specific situations. It requires active involvement of the trainees.
- **Strategy of handing affairs of workshop to children:** Through this approach children are made party in managing the affairs of workshop.

Major Activities

The entire workshop sessions are moduled around creative and participatory activities. Trainers facilitate the sessions by keeping themselves in the rear and putting children (trainees) in the front. Some of the major activities of the workshop are as:

Framing of rules: Rules to which all the participants are required to abide by, all through the 5 days of workshop, are framed following a democratic process. An open discussion is held for this on the first day of the workshop, wherein all the participants contribute in. One by one, children themselves state the rules that they feel would be significant in the smooth conduction of workshop activities. Most often children are able to frame exhaustive list of rules. However, at times, it may require that facilitators add on a few in the end. But that is done only after having a detailed discussion on their usefulness.

Distribution of roles and responsibilities amongst children: This is also fixed and finalized on the first day of the workshop. The dominant idea behind this is to make the workshop an effective learning tool, and this is done by distributing among the children the workshop's major administrative responsibilities. Following the participatory approach of the workshop, 5 different committees are formed to hand them the workshop's entire responsibilities:

- Food Committee
- Health Committee
- Time management Committee
- Cultural committee
- Cleanliness committee



Individual exercises: The module contains a number of tasks which are carried out individually. For instance, in 'the activity of drawing pictures on inflated balloons,' the children are supposed to draw happy or sad faces (on the given white balloons) of the children they have seen around their living or working areas. This is recognized to be an effective method of drawing out the children's inner feelings and the prevailing issues they are faced with. In the guise of drawing faces of other children, sometimes, they expressed themselves, their own broken lives through pictures. In all the workshops organized by CHETNA, the number of children who drew sad faces was found to be much more than the children who drew smiley faces. Most of the children who sketched smiling faces said that they were the children who used to collect scraps and pick rags all through the day, but on CHETNA's intervention they began going school. They were happy to see the change in their lives, and, because of that, drew their faces smiley. In a workshop organized in March 2015, Pooja, from Agra, drew a smiley face of her friend, Ganga, who had no father and mother, and worked as a rag-picker. But due to CHETNA's effort she got enrolled in a government school. Shifa, from Jhansi, after sketching the sad face of Naina, a 10-year-old girl, said that she was an orphan and picked rags to keep her alive. She had to sleep in open at the Jhansi Railway Station because some banjara community had occupied her house. The entire exercise helped the children understand their own challenges, and, at the same time, motivated them to act as ambassadors for one another, bringing happiness in the life of other children



Cultural programme forms the most action-packed activity of the workshop

Group Activities: These are the most important activities of the workshop. With the help of some interesting games children are divided into 3 to 4 groups. Though the task given to all the groups remains common, the mode of its presentation by each group is made unique. For instance, in the task of 'assessing the current condition of children,' the children are supposed to be divided into 4 groups. Each one of them would make presentation on the same topic, but through anyone of the following means: a) Drama/skit, b) Collage making, c) Media, d) Film.

Imagination and Group Discussion: The workshop also conducts some activities which involves the trainees' imagination as well as a follow-up group discussion on the same. 'Saponon Ki Duniya' is one such activity. This activity is generally followed by a session on 'Assessing the Children's Current Condition.' In the activity, the children are asked to imagine a life they would like to have for themselves. Essentially, the activity brought on the fore their collective felt need.

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Role Play in Group: Under this activity, children are first divided into various groups. Each one of them is given the task of playing role on a given situation. For instance, in a workshop conducted in 2014, a group was assigned to prepare and present a role on, 'the reaction of children to an opportunity of leaving railway station.' The outcome of the presentation threw light on the reasons why they inhabited railway stations and what could be the ways of rehabilitating them.

Cultural programme: After dinner, a routine dance and music programme is organized every night, which continues till the time of their going to bed at 11. This orgy of musical entertainment provides children moments of happiness, helping them release their negativity. On the other hand, it also helps in improving their skills of organization, dancing, singing and anchoring.

A cultural programme, organized on the last day, forms the most action-packed activity of the workshop. The entire team of children and coordinating staffs are divided into 4 groups, which are done on the second last day of the workshop, so that they have a full day's time for preparation. They work separately in their groups, mostly in the evening time, lest other activities of the workshop get affected. Performances are held in the evening of the last day, wherein all the teams compete against one another. At the end, the winner group is announced by a panel of judges.

In the sixth workshop held in 2015, the four teams constituted were: 1. Rock On, 2. Roshni, 3. Sapnon ki Udan, 4. Rangbaaz. The entire event was celebrated with great enthusiasm and fanfare. The groups came down from their rooms to the venue hall donning colorful costumes and chanting slogans in line with their team ethos. For instance, the Roshni group

Children's desire for their life as expressed by them in a workshop

- Decent house to live
- At least 2 decent meals a day
- Facilities of games and sports
- Quality education should be provided at school
- There should be playground and sports materials at school
- There should be provision of wash-rooms in school
- They should not be oppressed by police

Ways of rehabilitating children connected with railway station (as expressed by children in a residential workshop)

- Resolving family disputes and instituting a congenial environment at home.
- Parents must be stopped from punishing their children physically.
- Sensitizing community members so that these children are accepted by them and respected for their choices.
- Creating good 'children homes' for the children who sleep on platforms of railway stations.
- Sensitizing school teachers so that these children are not discriminated and punished by them.
- Creating 'open homes' for children who live near railway stations.
- There should be some decent livelihood options for the children living at railway stations.
- Shop keepers should be barred from selling harmful substances to children.



sparked the environment with the slogan: 'Padhi likhi ladki, Roshni ghar ki.' Therefore, not just the cultural programme, even the slogans carried the theme of the workshop.

A three-member panel was constituted to judge their performances. Each section of the programme was for children and staffs both. In the first round, they competed in the category of songs, which included film songs as well as regional and folk songs. Second round was quiz. The quiz had the questions based on street children, government institutions dealing with SWC, CHETNA's various projects, Badhte Kadam, and other general information. Dance came in the next round, which the viewers and the participants both found most exciting. In the section of speech, the participants had to speak on a topic impromptu. It was interesting to note that the children were found to be more extemporaneous than the adults who, unlike children, took some time to think on the subject before taking the mike. In the end, the panel announced Rangbaaz group as the winner. Amidst rounds of thunderous applause, all the members of the winning group burst into celebration, dancing and cheering. Soon they were joined by the rest of the teams, and, suddenly, the air of festivity filled the entire ambience. Children not just enjoyed the programme a lot, but also imbibed in the messages delivered through various performances. 'Success is earned by hard work. We must make effort in unison,' said Priyanka, a street girl, when asked about her opinion on the cultural programme and the workshop. Ajay, a street child from Jhansi said, 'Here I learned that we should not waste time. If we want success, we should kick out laziness from our life first.'

Chandini

Chandini is a 16-year-old girl, and currently the national secretary of BK. She lives with her mother in sector 18 of NOIDA, U.P. Her mother Noorjahan earns living for her 5-member family by selling roasted corn. She became a working child when she was just 6 years old. Her father worked as a madari, a street magician and entertainer. Chandini used to be part of the acts, in which she would get invisible and turn into snake. "All such acts required cumbersome training and I had to be very alert and agile during the performance, for whenever it went wrong I had to bear my father's ire for the mistake," says Chandini. She originally belonged to Bareilly in U.P. Villages and railway stations of the state used to be the venues of their programmes. After passing of the father, the legacy of the profession was carried on by her brother. But soon after his marriage he got separated from the family. The ensued economic strain forced them move to NOIDA. In order to support her family, Chandini first worked as a rag-picker, then sold flowers, and after that, with mother, started a bhutta (roasted corn) shop.

She came in contact with CHETNA in 2009. In her early days she could not spend much time at contact point for she had to support her mother in transporting corn from Ghaziabad. Chandini's first exposure to residential workshop happened in 2010, where she learned about children's rights and the legal provisions safeguarding children. After that, she began handling cases of police arrests. Earlier she feared police a lot, but awareness about laws made her strong from within. Her improved leadership skills led her march up in leadership responsibilities. She began representing other children at forums organized on the issues of children. In 2010, she became a district president of B.K, and in 2014, the National Secretary.

At present, Chandini is studying in class 10 through NIOS. Her exit from street-life has motivated other children too to follow her path. It was her improved confidence and leadership skills that won her land back from the illegal seizure done by a local builder. "Before joining CHETNA, I knew nothing. Now I can walk along with other members of the society. I feel that Residential Workshop is an important platform for children to enhance their leadership skills," says resurgent Chandini.



Leadership Development through Outdoor Games

Outdoor and adventurous games have been a special feature of CHETNA's Residential Workshop. Children enjoy them more than any other activity. As these games are adventurous in nature, their successful completion required conviction, courage and, most importantly, motivation from the spectators and friends watching them.

In the workshop, children get chance to enjoy the games like: Rappelling, Flying-fox, Burma Bridge, Wall Climbing, Monkey Crawling, Commando, Trekking, etc. All these games and activities have a common element, that is, all of them have some barriers and challenges that the participants are required to overcome. The morale of the children attempting the games is boosted up by the clapping and cheering that come from other children. Their morale support helps the attempters a lot in finishing the task successfully. Children themselves expressed that without the encouragement from their fellow children they would not be able to do the task as cleanly and successfully.

After each game, a kind of group discussion is held amongst the participants. They are helped to associate these barriers with their real-life challenges. They are made to realize that as the encouragement from friends helps them overcome the fear of the game and finish the task successfully, similar kind of support to one another can go a long way in meeting their day to day street challenges.

Sanjana, a 13-year-old girl from Agra, who participated in the recently organized workshop at Damdama in Haryana observed that, "Through these games I have found confidence that I can help a child in distress. Though I enjoyed all the games, but flying-fox the most."

Besides the fun quotient, the entire section of outdoor games helped the children a lot in enhancing their leadership skill. Discussion on the games as what they learnt from them was held at the end of each game. In a workshop held in 2014, children got to play cricket match. At the end of the match they shared what they learnt from the game. They were as follows:

- We must do our work in team, in coordination with one another
- We must choose a good leader to lead the team to victory
- A leader must be capable of leading the team
- Players must have faith in the leader's decision
- Strategy and planning pay good results

In another workshop, an interesting game called "killing the bad habit," was organized. In the game, the children had to share their bad habits and promise to leave them before pressing the trigger of the toy-gun. Some of the bad habits killed by the children were: using harmful substances, smoking, living on station, using abusive languages, showing anger, fighting, not going schools, etc.



Priyanka

Priyanka is a 12-year-old active girl from Prithivinath, Agra. She is the youngest of her 5 sisters. Her father sells seat-covers, peddling house to house in the streets of Agra. Her mother works as a labourer in potato field. She joined CHETNA in 2013. With the help of CHETNA, she is studying in class VII in a government school. She wants to become a teacher, and work for the education of other SWC.

Her first Residential Workshop exposure came in 2015. She expresses to have learnt a lot from the workshop; the most important being her improved understanding on the barriers responsible for the street children's poor living condition. Having learnt about leadership qualities, child rights, legal safeguarding for children, etc., she feels fortunate to be part of the workshop.

At the workshop, she enjoyed outdoor games the most. Except for climbing, she successfully cleared all the games she attempted, which she said were full of challenges, fun, and learning. She particularly liked the Commando-Net, in which she learnt how to get out from a trapped net. It was a life-long learning for her, which she expressed in following words, "One must not lose sight and confidence when trapped in problem." The exposure to the workshop's outdoor games made her confident in meeting the street's day-to-day challenges. 'Never get your fear take over you,' says she. She went back from the workshop with a resolve to take the learning of the workshop to other street, and use it for the children's betterment.

Children's Journey through Workshop: from Disorientation to Collaborative Effort

The workshop gives children tangible experience of transition from the attitude of 'I' to the togetherness of 'We.' Through the workshop's systematic processes their journey in building leadership skills is led from disoriented individualities to mutual effort, independence to interdependence, and from disintegrated thinking to collaborative pondering.

In normal circumstances, street children are not able to experience any wider cohesiveness, even on the issues faced commonly by them. They live in the street as segregated constituents of isolated street communities. Therefore, shaking them from their inertia of disintegration, to get them move in and united, is considered to be a significant step in the direction of bringing positive change in their life. As the dominant idea of the workshops is to enhance the children's leadership abilities, and then bind them together with their existing federation, that is Badhte Kadam (which came into being as a result of the first Residential Workshop held in 2002), the children in the workshops are taken through a systematic process from their individualistic existence to group feeling. It is achieved through a graded approach to workshop activities which can be depicted as:

Individual Exercises ➡ Group Activities ➡ Joint Cultural Programme

Individual exercises include the involvement of children in discussions, drawings, expression of opinions, question-answers sessions, and individual performances. A host of other assignments of the workshop are prepared and presented by the children in small groups. The group work requires that they work together in coordination with one another. For the cultural programme, which is organized on the last day of the workshop, all the participants of various batches are divided into big-size groups. By doing so, the workshop systematically increases the size of their working group, and thus their association. At the end of the cultural programme, when a group is declared winner, the children are trained to take it as a win for the entire SWC, and not just for an individual group. Therefore, the workshop works on to inculcate in them the feeling of oneness, and the need and importance of working together. The process of the workshop reaches to its height on the last day, when they all march together in rows, stand in V-shape and voice in chorus: We are, Badhte Kadam

The resurgence of the feeling of oneness has strengthened Badhte Kadam on ground, both in terms of its strength and the quality of work its members do for other children. All the six residential workshops organized under the Realizing Rights project have significantly contributed in strengthening the second-line BK leadership. The new member-children were prepared to become the future BK leaders, to lead the federation by becoming its district and national level representatives.

Major Learning

- A batch of 30 children is considered ideal for such workshop. If the children are more, they should be divided into more than one batch.
- Module of the workshop should have a right balance of learning and entertainment exercises. All the activities should be carried out in a fun-inducing environment.
- Residential workshop has been found effective in controlling or decreasing the practice of consuming harmful substances by SWC.
- The workshop positively affects children's behaviour vis-à-vis other children and their mentors at contact points. Cleanliness, hygiene, inter-personal relationship, punctuality, etc. are the areas where they are found to be doing quite well after the workshop.
- Residential workshop helps a lot in improving the children's confidence and their spoken skill. After the workshop, it has been noticed that the children become more expressive in the contact point's activities.
- The workshop improves the children's leadership skills by improving their communication skill, skills of working together, and their ability to think out solutions and meet challenges.
- The workshop has demonstrated that children can grow a lot by themselves. Only a little bit of support, direction and encouragement are required.

Qualities of a leader as expressed by children:

- A leader should be a good communicator, a problem solver and a good listener.
- He should not discriminate among the team members.
- He should be a good planner and team manager.
- He should understand the importance of time.
- He should be skillful in sorting out intra-differences.
- He should be visionary and a good decision maker.





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