

Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA)
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Child Right Project
Supported by UNICEF

Protecting child rights, in particular the right to education and protection in
Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh

Key Learnings and Case Studies
(Compiled from Quarterly Progress Reports)

Key Learnings During the Project

1. It has been learned that if community is educated on important issues relating to child right, the community starts acting on it e.g. in few villages when the awareness about the iodized salt was being done, the women participants started asking about the details of iodized salt. Some of the women gone to shopkeeper to demand iodized salt.
2. Another learning is that in initial visits, the community may not respond for participating in the meetings but the constant visits result in brining the women of marginalized communities to gather to give listening.
3. Very low level of awareness of the women from the marginalized communities about child protection issues could be improved by continuous interacting with them and use of awareness materials such as the charts provided by UNICEF.
4. We have to plan the meeting in the community according to the time schedule discussed with the community.
5. During harvest period, organizing the villagers in evening shall be useful.
6. If the parties and people who are directly or indirectly involved in settling and ceremonizing marriage in villages are made aware about Child Marriage Act, the child marriage in the areas could be minimized.
7. Large number of children are enrolled at primary level but actually not attending the school. This is serious issue which can be solved by constant discussion with parents' groups and School Management Committees (SMCs) in each village.
8. Implementing unplanned activities disturbs schedule of the planned activities.
9. The village pradhans are to be directed by concerned higher authorities for their active participation in the project activities.
10. Since most of the Self-Help Group (SHG) members and Child Protection Committee (CPC) members are illiterate, they need to be provided literacy kit for their exercise.
11. Like Community Based Trainers, the Field Animators need to be provided refresher training by an expert agency.

12. It is important to plan date of meeting on the convenience of CPC members. Peak sowing time and peak harvesting time should be avoided.
13. There should be consensus for the date of meeting in the village.
14. The women raised several questions regarding child rights. It should be properly documented and answered them.
15. Needs to be organized the experience sharing meeting with the neighbourhood women champions.
16. The folk song brings an impact. There is need of sharing the information through folk songs.
17. Some strategies need to be developed to bring the service providers close to SHGs.
18. Some SHGs needs to be identified and budgeting arrangement should be done for their travel to nearby block, villages for sharing of useful experiences.
19. The AWCs which were dysfunctional in the past, now started functioning. This indicates that the mobilization of the community on the issue has yielded in making the Aanganwadi Centre (AWCs) functional.
20. With the participation of Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) at block level CPC meeting, the situation of AWCs is also discussed. This participation has made a difference in the functioning of AWCs.
21. The changes of behavior of the community are shown in some particular components like Immunizations, institutional delivery, use of iodine salt, exclusive breastfeeding, colostrums and school enrollment.
22. Most of SMCs are being aware about RTE and their role and responsibilities; they are taking interest in school to improve the education quality.
23. Most of CPCs members are tracking Child Protection (CP) issues in their respective villages and can understands about function of CPCs and their partners.
24. The understanding about child protection issues has been developed among the communities, which is resulting in opposing in those issues which are against the child right or child protection.
25. The 10-Point Child Friendly Agenda (10.CFA) is being closely practiced by the people and it is bringing about behavioral changes in the family and the community. The major changes have been observed in immunization, institutional delivery, use of iodized salt, exclusive breastfeeding and colostrums.
26. Most of SMCs are aware about their roles and responsibilities about quality education in their respective schools. They are taking interest in school to improve the quality of education and participating in regular monthly meeting.
27. Continuous interaction and follow up has resulted in taking up of child right and child protection issues at panchayat level and Block level..
28. The understanding about child protection issues has been developed among the communities which are resulting in opposing in those issues which are against the child right or child protection.
29. In coming days, CPC may be improved as a better platform for prevention of child marriage and eradication of child labour.

30. Since the CPCs and SMCs are very important committees working at grassroots level, they must meet together once in a month for sharing the knowledge and status of each enrolled children to assure 100% attendance and to provide them quality education.
31. Video show on Anti Child Labour Campaign is very effective tool for developing understanding on child protection and to know the actual position of children in respective village.
32. In some cases, especially in Madihan block, the guardian/parents in vulnerable families agree to marry their daughter in rich families of western U.P because the rich family offers them a good amount of money for marrying the daughter with their son through marriage agents. In this case, the adolescents oppose the child marriage in their family. It proves that the adolescent boys and girls are more aware about the harms of child marriages as compared to their parents.
33. It was found in some of the schools that quality education needed facilities were not available in the school and children went to elsewhere or play instead of being in school and study. Now, the awareness about education has increased and parents have started demanding quality education and needed facilities in the schools and regular attendance of children in the school has also increased.
34. As a result of regular orientation of women group (WG) and CPC members and discussion on red alters, the cases under community monitoring of red alters are being identified by WG and CPC members and they carry forward the cases to Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members and pradhans (elected village council heads).
35. The understanding about child protection issues has been developed among the communities which are resulting in opposing in those issues which are against the child right or child protection.
36. Awareness on prevention of child marriage can be seen in the project area. Adolescent girls and boys are much aware about the harms of child marriage and they oppose the child marriage in their family. As a result of the project activities, child marriage rate among vulnerable communities is decreased.
37. The community is becoming aware about the importance of girls education and want to provide higher education to their daughters.
38. Since the CPCs and SMCs are very important committees working at grassroots level for the child education and child protection, at some places they effort jointly. The changes are seen towards improvement of child education in protective environment. It must be happened in every village.
39. Community is paying attention for daily attendance of their children.
40. Awareness on prevention of child marriage and child labour can be seen in the project area and most of people understand about the harms of these practices.

Case Studies

1. During an interaction with schoolchildren at leisure time, we met Kanchan, a dalit girl aged 13 years, who has completed her primary schooling is anxious to continue her studies in upper primary school but her mother has involved her in grazing the goats and arranging firewood from nearby jungles. She also cares siblings at home. There may be thousands of such girls who need special care and support for protecting for right of the education. Similar is the case of Rehana aged nearly 13 year belonging to a backward muslim family. Her mother is involved in earning her livelihood by making *bidis*.
2. Rita aged 12 years belonging to village Baidha (Halia block) has been engaged by parents for taking the cattle out for grazing. She says that she wants to go to school but she has a big work to perform. She anxiously says, "When I see the girls of my age going to school, I also feel like going with them. Cycling to reach to school and come back with the peer group from the school." CREDA will ensure her school enrolment from coming July (2012).
3. Ms. Seema aged 16 years D/o Mr Ram Sajeevan of village Semara Kalan was to be married. The social arrangements like *mangani* (engagement) were completed. The CBT and FA of the area, after knowing the fact discussed the legal, social and health related consequences with the parents. The girl, her mother and father send a refusal note to the parents of would-be bridegroom. The girl herself was adamant for not getting married. The advance of the bridegroom's father to the girl's father was returned. The advance was given at the time of engagement. This issue has spread to the local areas.
4. Shail Kumari of scheduled caste hamlet of Naugawan village (Halia block) was trained as women champion. She is doing home visit to her respective households. She is also making useful contribution on 10.CFA. Her 17 year old sister-in-law (hasband's cousin) named Savitri is studying in class 11th in Mother Teresa High Secondary School, Matihara village. Shail Kumari was very much impressed on 10.CFA. She objected parents of Savitri for her marriage within 18 years of age. The parents took seriously her objection and told that she will get married after 18 years of age.
5. Sushma D/o Hinch Lal Kol aged 17 years of village Kanhaipur of Madihan block, is a member of Kishori Sangam (AGG). She also writes the proceedings of Kishori Sangam and SHG meetings. She has taken leadership against child marriage and child labour. Although she is failed in High School but in spite of sheer poverty, she is willing to continue her education. She listened the conversation of her parents with the mediator and relatives of bride-groom who have come to finalize her marriage in this summer. She strongly protested about her marriage but it was not so easy. She has to face the abuses and threatening of the parents and for dire consequences. In spite of all these, her refusal still stands and she said that if situation arises, she will seek the help of CREDA to protect herself and other from becoming the victim of child marriage.

6. Women in Purva Ausan Singh in Halia block of Mirzapur district were not responding to immunization programme at all. They were not understanding the importance of immunization for children and pregnant women. Woman champion named Amarawati played an important role in persuading the women for immunization. She started the immunization for her two daughters-in-law and children under 5 years. This was the result of the behavioural change in Amarawati who became an example in the Kol hamlet of the village Purva Ausan Singh. Similarly, Mrs Dharmraji got immunized herself during pregnancy. She is also a woman champion. Now, the people of the hamlet are very positive towards immunization. This is the result of initiatives taken by Amarawati and Dharmraji.
7. A case of caste based discrimination in education sector has been identified in a village called Baraundha of Halia block. The dalit girl named Kamla passed class 5th and she along with the parents was desirous to get admitted in upper primary school in class 6th at Baraundha. The dalit girl Kamla D/o Rajendra constantly tried for six month for admission in class 6th. Although the admission was not denied but several problems were put before Kamla. She told her agony to the CRP staff and the village CPC members. The CPC members escorted the girl to the school. The members' referred RTE Act 2009 to the school headmaster and thus on 28th November 2013, Kamla got admitted in class 6th and now she is happy for being in the mainstream of education. Her case is being followed up by CPC members and CRP staff to understand any caste based discrimination after admission in class 6th.
8. In village Hardi Kalan of Madihan Block situated about 30 kms. away from the block office have the population of approximately 6 hundred. There is no Primary School around 4 kms., no AWW/AWC and no scheduling of ANM in the village for immunization and proper pregnancy checkup for safe delivery in the village. The elder persons of the village told that no immunization has been done in the village for 60 years and there is no institutional delivery. These issues were shared in the meeting of BCPC of Madihan block and individually approached to health department, ICDS and education as well as district consultants of UNICEF especially for education component. As a result of the organization's efforts, the Immunization Officer of the Madihan block included the village into micro-plan to start the routine immunization in the village from the month of March 2014. Also, ASHA and AWW will be appointed after taking decision by the district level authorities.
9. Fatima D/o Ghulam Hussain R/o village Veerpur of Halia block passed class 5th in 2012-13 and since then she was going to forest area with her father for grazing the goats. She was spending almost whole of the day in nearby forest and coming back to the residence in the evening with her father. The case was noticed by one of our field animators. The issue was taken seriously and her father was contacted. After long persuasion her father agreed for the admission of the daughter in class 6th in Junior High School Beerpur. Now, she is a regular student.
10. The case of illegal child marriage in the village Devari of block Madihan was noticed by village community as well as CPC and SHG members. Two child marriages have been stopped in this village. The role of village pradhan is commendable who came forward after all opposition and threatened that if child marriage is performed, the case under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act will be registered against those who will be in the party of child marriage. Thus, the marriage of Sarita Kumari and Kusum was stopped.

11. Rinka Devi (11 years) of Banki village is daughter of a dalit Rajbali who is also an agriculture labour. Rinka never went to school. Either she was working with her mother at home or as a child labour in agricultural activities. CPC member Mr. Shankar made several visits to Rinka's parents and at last persuaded them to send Rinka to school. Mr. Shankar himself took the girl child to school and got her admitted in Class 5th. Now, Rinka is very happy and engages herself in classroom activity and plays with peer group.
12. 13 children from Malua village were admitted in Primary and Upper Primary Schools on the initiatives of CPC member Mr. Heeramani. These children were working in production of bamboo baskets along with their parents. It took long time to CPC member to persuade the parents and take the children school for their admission. The children are regularly being followed up by the CPC member.

13. The Missing Child Aman Rehabilitated

Ms. Baby D/o Mr. Gama Kol is a member of the Child Protection Committee (CPC) of Boda Khurd village in Madihan block. On 25th July 2014 when she was returning home from Mirzapur in an auto-rickshaw, a child around 11 years of age was also traveling in the same vehicle. When she reached in her village and moved towards home, the child went along with her. Baby asked the child that why he was following her, he replied that she should take him in her home because there is nobody else who can take care of him. After asking by Baby severally, the child told that his name is 'Aman'.

Since Baby was aware through CPC meetings that if a child has no people to take care of him, it is the responsibility of the CPC and government for his protection, she took the child to her home, provided him meal and cloths of her brothers to wear.

On 28th July 2014, Baby informed Field Animator of CREDA Vinod Kumar about Aman. Vinod Kumar talked with the child and informed the Project Manager Mr. Abdul Valee Khan who suggested Vinod Kumar to give this information in nearby police station. Vinod Kumar, along with the child, Baby and CPC President Mr. Ramkeshav Yadav (Pradhan, Village Panchayat, Tulsipur) went to Kamlapur Police Chauki and informed the Sub-Inspector in writing.

It was decided at the Police Station that until the correct information about the parents of the child is not tracked, the child will be under the protection of CPC member Ms. Baby and care will be taken by her. On 2nd August 2014, the Project Manager talked with Child Protection Officer (ICPS), Mirzapur Dr. Ramesh Kumar. He also informed the Chairperson of Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Mirzapur Mr. Kanhaiya Lal Agrahari about this case. The CWC Chairperson suggested to present the child along with Baby in CWC Office.

Ms. Baby along with the Project Manager and Field Animator of CREDA presented the child in CWC Office on 6th August 2014 and informed about the case in writing. The CWC Chairperson send the child with a letter to *Balak Sampreshan Griha*, Almaura, Robertsganj, Sonebhadra through the Field Animator Vinod Kumar and Vinod Kumar handed over the child there on 7th August 2014.

When one of the staffs of *Balak Sampreshan Griha* Vanshidhar Maurya talked with Aman, the child given some information about his family but with address in Mumbai and also told about a village in SRN Bhadohi district and Vanshidhar Maurya found some clue about the native village of Aman. Later he tracked about the family of Aman. The parents of Aman live in Mumbai (at Rudra Housing Society, 12-A1/403, Sangharsh Nagar, Chandiwali, Farm Road, Andheri, Mumbai) and his father Mr. Dinesh Chandra Pandey is a salesman of Ayurvedic medicines. Vanshidhar Maurya contacted Aman's father and informed about Aman. Mr. Pandey told Vanshidhar Maurya that on 23rd July 2014 Aman after returning from coaching centre went outside home but never returned. On the same night he lodged the FIR of missing child in Sakinaka (Mumbai) Police Station.

After getting information about Aman, Mr. Pandey went to *Balak Sampreshan Griha* on 20th August 2014 and identified the child. *Balak Sampreshan Griha* handed over the child to his father. Aman is living with his parents and goes to school. Now, Aman and his family both are happy.