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ON CHILDREN IN INDIA

Kishori Chithrapata (KC): Empowering Adolescent Girls through ICTs – Documentation of Best Practices and Potential for Replication

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Acknowledgements

Acronyms

CCID: Centre for Community Informatics and Development

ITfC: Information Technology for Change

KC: Kishori Chithrapata

KGBV: Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

MM: Mahiti Manthana

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MSK: Mahila Samakhaya, Karnataka

NMK: Namma Mahiti Kendra

SSA: Sarva Shikhana Abhiyana

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

Glossary of Indian Terms

Caste: Categories in social stratification in the Indian society

Dalit: The caste placed at the lowest stratum of social hierarchy in India

kishori chithrapata: Images by adolescent girls

kishori(s): adolescent girl

Mahiti Manthana: Tapping information

Namma Mahiti Kendra: Our information centre

panchayat: village council

sangha(s): women's cooperatives

Executive Summary

This paper provides the review of the *Kishori Chitrapata* (KC) project and the evaluation of its potential for replication. As an alternative, informal educational programme that aims to empower out-of-school adolescent girls through a process of learning, in Mysore, India, KC has been implemented by IT for Change (ITfC), a Non Governmental Organization located in Mysore, and supported by UNICEF, since 2009.

Due to these multiple socioeconomic and cultural barriers that operate independently or jointly at micro-, mezzo-, and macro- levels, adolescent girls in rural India face unique challenges in completing their optimal level of schooling. Thus, less than one third of those who complete primary school enroll in secondary school, and four out of ten girls drop out of school. Dropping out of school has serious repercussions for girls' lives. Without many resources and supports to utilize, dropout girls in many rural areas face little or no opportunities to interact with their peers, expand their world view, and identify their personal goals; they are confined at home, attending to their assigned family roles and responsibilities. These limitations lead to a low confidence level and a lack of personal aspiration of the girls, which poses life-long challenges for them.

To tackle these unique issues facing out-of-school adolescent girls in India, in partnership with UNICEF, *Mahila Shikshana Karnataka*, and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, KC was conceived of and launched by ITfC in two Mysore District villages, Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi, in July 2009, as a two-year pilot project. It was further expanded to include the *Mahila Shikshana Kendra* bridge school in 2010. KC has explored the innovative use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as video, radio, and computing technology, to address the learning needs of out-of-school adolescent girls and empower them. KC has taken a social constructivist approach to learning; girls have engaged in a variety of activities and have explored, questioned, and redefined their social and cultural universe. The teaching method and style have also been highly sensitive to the diverse backgrounds, capacities, and needs of girls.

Despite formidable challenges both at the planning and implementing stages, such as girls' dropout from the program and the caste discrimination, KC has achieved remarkable success in educating and empowering girls. With enhanced confidence to use ICT, girls have gone beyond their local confines and have ventured out into their village to click pictures, shoot video, and interview people. Girls' increased mobility has reduced their fear of interacting with new people, especially with male members of their communities. It has also helped them obtain direct exposure to the various issues within the community and has accordingly raised their awareness of social issues that directly affect their own lives. Furthermore, as their works and achievements have become more and more recognized and praised by the village members, their self-confidence and self-esteem levels have been increased, which has also heightened their future aspirations.

This notable success of KC has been made possible by a number of good practices that have been done. First, KC has built on enabling structures that already existed in the villages. Second, strong

partnerships have been forged with multiple stakeholders to facilitate the design and the implementation of KC. Third, KC has been able to mobilize broad supports, because the goals of KC are closely aligned with national and international priorities. Fourth, the capacities of both right-holders and duty-bearers were thoroughly assessed and have been steadily strengthened. Fifth, an active outreach to the community and advocacy for girl's education and empowerment were persistently conducted. Sixth, the use of child-friendly teaching methods and materials has kept the interest and commitment of the girls high.

Currently, KC is being implemented for 8 adolescent girls in Hosavaranchi and for 33 girls at *Mahila Shikshana Kendra* bridge school. The programme has been temporarily suspended in Attiguppe, due to many girls dropping out because of marriage. Also, KC itself still needs to be improved to achieve sustainability, refining its monitoring and evaluation structure and securing a more stable funding mechanism, for instance. Nevertheless, it is still the case that KC has made outstanding achievements in educating and empowering out-of-school adolescent girls. Moreover, it has a number of other strengths. For example, as a cost-effectiveness project, it addresses inequity by providing quality education to one of the most disadvantaged groups in India, out-of-school adolescent girls.

Hence, this report suggests that KC should be replicated in other places, so that more adolescent girls can cherish the benefits of KC and thereby get educated and empowered. The following should be considered when it is to be replicated, because these practices are the essential features of KC that have led to its success.

- building on pre-existing structures

- creating strong and broad partnerships

- aligning its goals with national and international priorities

- assessing and building capacity

- engaging in persistent outreach and advocacy

- taking child-centered and child-friendly approaches

In addition, the local context should be carefully examined, in that KC must be modified in a way to adapt local conditions and realities, so as to increase its effectiveness.

This report starts with describing the initial situation and the specific issue of adolescent girls in India, with regard to education. Then, the process under which KC has been conceived, designed, and implemented is delineated, along with its theoretical framework and its main instrument. Next, challenges encountered at the planning and implementing stages are covered, including how some challenges have been resolved and how some challenges still remain unresolved and affect KC. Then, progress and achievements that KC has made are described. Next, the resources that KC has utilized and the way to promote sustainability of KC are mentioned. Then, good practices that have led to the success of KC are explained in a detailed way, and the replication of KC is recommended, in regard to why and how it should be replicated. Finally, the next step of KC is discussed.

1. ISSUE/BACKGROUND

1.1. Situation of Girls in India

Adolescent girls in rural India face unique challenges towards completing their optimal level of schooling. Although the passing of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in 2010 mandates free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 to 14 years old throughout India, records show that only six out of ten girls from that age group in rural India are actually attending school (NFHS-III, in ITfC, 2009). In addition, while primary school attendance across rural India has reached near-universal levels, only one-third of those who complete primary school enrol in secondary school. According to ASER, approximately 6.5 per cent of children in the age group 7-16 remained out-of-school in 2008 with the majority of them being girls over 10 years old (ITfC, 2009).

Socio-economic and cultural factors play a substantial role behind the high volume of girl dropouts. Adolescent girls – or *kishoris*[1] - drop out to get married, to take care of sick and elderly family members, to attend to household responsibilities or help their families generate an income (ITfC, 2009). Travel concerns play a role as well. The RTE mandates that Primary schools be located in every village, however, only one Secondary school is mandatory *in every district*, making transportation to and from school a problem for many youth (Siddhu, 2011).

Many *kishoris* live within communities in which deep-root patriarchy exists. Adolescence is typically viewed as a crucial window of time in which *kishoris* are meant to prepare for marriage, and accordingly their mobility and personal freedoms are often severely compromised (Indian Express, 2011). A report by the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development suggests that adolescence is a crucial stage for physical and mental development which is neglected in many ways in India (NIPCCD, 2008). Girls in India are treated differently compared to boys; they receive less health care, protection, sustenance and education, and are at times forced into marriage and the risks of giving birth as early as age 15 (UNICEF, 2011). In rural areas especially, drop-out girls have little or no opportunities to interact with their peers, expand their world view, gain leadership skills and identify their personal goals outside of their assigned family roles and responsibilities. These limitations lead to low confidence levels, lack of social agency and reduced career opportunities.

Despite the achievements in enrolment that have been made through the RTE, government schooling is still unable to reach all *kishoris,* and those who have dropped out are typically confined

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[1] *Kishori* is a Kannada word meaning "adolescent girl".

to their homes. Furthermore, government schooling alone is not necessarily equipped to provide girls with skills that will lead towards their empowerment. Informal educational opportunities are seen as a missing link towards helping *kishoris* become more empowered in this regard.

1.2 Kishori Chithrapata

IT for Change (ITfC), a Non-Governmental Organization located in Mysore, Karnataka (and based in Bangalore), first conceived of the *Kishori Chithrapata*[2] (KC) project as an informal educational programme to teach Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that would help lead to the empowerment of out-of-school *kishoris* in Karnataka. With the support of UNICEF, KC was initially developed as a two-year pilot project to be launched in two villages of Mysore district in the state of Karnataka, Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi.

The two village hubs were identified for the pilot for a variety of reasons, one being that they were both relatively close to the ITfC centre in Mysore City, yet they function autonomously from their nearby surroundings. Another reason was that both villages enjoy the active participation of *sangha* women - women's self-help groups established and supported by the Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (MSK), a project of the Government of India. Most importantly, ITfC had already established the Namma Mahiti Kendra[3], the information centre, as part of a project called the Mahiti Manthana[4] in the two villages to leverage ICT for the empowerment of the *sangha* women. KC was seen as a natural progression in these villages and was aimed at building upon the support structure already established.

Drawing upon the past experiences in community radio, video, and computing with the *sanghas* in the Mahiti Manthana project, ITfC in partnership with Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, UNICEF, and Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana (SSA) launched Kishori Chithrapata in July 2009. It was also later expanded in 2010 to include the Mahila Shikshana Kendra bridge school in the same district. KC addresses the learning needs of out-of-school adolescent girls through innovative uses of video, radio and computing technologies. Girls are encouraged, individually and collectively, to explore, question, and redefine their social and cultural universe through these technologies and to achieve the larger purpose of education – the ability to creatively negotiate one's ecosystem in order to fulfil one's potential and aspirations.

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[2] Kishori Chithrapata in Kannada means images by the adolescent girls
[3] "Our Information Centre"
[4] "Information Tapping"

2. <u>STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION</u>

2.1 Theoretical framework

KC takes a social constructivist approach in its pedagogy. Social constructivism focuses on lived experience, the world as it is understood by the social actors (Schwandt, 1994). This school of thought argues that there is no objective way to obtain knowledge as it is based on human construction (Kathryn H. Au., 1998). Cummins (1994) suggested a type of social constructivist framework in which empowerment is central to learning. He suggested the presence of either coercive relations of power, in which there is a definite power hierarchy between the instructor and students, or collaborative relations of power, in which power is not fixed and is assumed to emerge from the interactions between the various actors. He also suggested two ingredients for a successful training programme – the incorporation of the language and culture of the students into pedagogy and the involvement of community members in the programme. This would encourage ownership of the project by the participants and the community. Thus, the idea is to extend the boundaries of the classroom beyond the four walls and into the community. The instructors are sensitive to the background and culture of the students in such a set up. KC has closely followed this outline and has been keen on bringing in as many local stories and issues as possible in classroom discussions and themes. The trainers have taken special care to ensure that the *kishoris* feel comfortable to speak out through the interactive processes and role-play exercises.

KC has chosen to bring in the fruits of social constructivist learning using ICT as a tool. ICT has been proved to yield significant results in achieving women's empowerment. Target-8F of the Millennium Development Goals aims to make available the benefits of new technologies, especially Information and Communications, in cooperation with the private sector. Women's empowerment can be said to have five components: (1) women's sense of self-worth, (2) their right to have and determine choices, (3) the right to have access to opportunities and resources, (4) the right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside their home and (5) and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, both nationally and internationally (UNPOPIN, 2010). The use of ICT for women's empowerment gained momentum when the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) identified ICTs as an effective tool to secure women's empowerment and help them participate in decision-making processes (WSIS, 2003).

2.2 **Conception of KC**

The conception of KC has its origins in the social networks that were established as part of the Mahila Samakhya Karnataka project that was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1989 to organize women into collectives or *sanghas.* ITfC collaborated with Mahila Samakhya Karnataka in Mysore to come up with an information dissemination project called the Mahiti Manthana. The project aimed to initiate three different programmes to widen the channels available for information dissemination, (1) the Kelu Sakhi[5] radio programme that broadcast women's discussions on social issues meant for collective listening in the *sanghas*, (2) short films on issues related to the village and women meant for collective viewing and (3) the setting up of an information centre or Namma Mahiti Kendra in the two villages. The *sanghas* in each village appointed a *sakhi*[6]("friend") to collect important information from various government departments and operate computers.

The partnership between ITfC and Mahila Samakhya Karnataka reached a new level when the KC project was conceptualised in 2009. The project was the product of ITfC's larger commitment to spreading the fruits of technology for social development and the recognition of the large number adolescent drop outs, especially girls. There was a need to take into account the specific situation of these girls and to seek contextual solutions. It was expected that such a programme be child-centred, sensitive and pedagogically sound, and directed towards integrating the participants into the mainstream as well.

2.3 Goals and objectives

Under this context, KC started to be initiated in 2009 in two Mysore District villages, Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi, and one year later, the project expanded to include *kishoris* from the Mahila Shikshana Kendra bridge school set up by Mahila Samakhya Karnataka for drop out girls.

The goals of the projects are to[7] :
1. Initiate *kishori sanghas*[8] and build capacities for developing local audio, video, and computer based content through constructive learning processes.
2. Contribute to the empowerment of *kishoris* through new empowering learning processes, social

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[5] "Listen, my friend"
[6] "Friend", in the feminine form
[7] ITfC KC project Status Report
[8] Collectives of the adolescent girls

roles, and skills.

3. Contribute to community development by encouraging dialogue between the *kishoris* and the community members.

4. Use the content produced, as well as the related process, for various local community development objectives, including health-related activities, basic legal and rights awareness, strengthening linkages with self-governance bodies.

5. Advocate for absorption of the developed models in girls' education and empowerment programmes.

The objectives of the projects are to:

1. Build *kishori sanghas*

2. Create organic links between *kishor isanghas* and *sanghas* of women

3. Create platforms with the help of ICTs for voicing their opinions and aspirations

4. Generate acceptance and recognition of issues related to their lives at the community level

ITfC did extensive campaigning for KC in the villages. The *sakhis* of the information centres were given the task of collecting baseline data on *kishoris* who had dropped out of school. Initially, a total of 100 *kishoris* were identified in the two villages. Going by the criteria below, a set of 22 kishoris in Hosavaranchi and 13 in Attiguppe were selected for the programme.

Some of the criteria that ITfC put to short list *kishoris* were[9]:

1. Age: 13-20 years.

2. Priority and focus on drop out *kishoris*.

3. Equitable representation with regard to caste, poverty level, and if possible, religion.

4. Priority to those who are able to recognize the English alphabet

5. High interest in the KC project.

6. Ability to make a full, two-year commitment.

7. One *kishori* per family.

8. Priority if she is, or has been, part of a *kishori sangha*.

Around 10 trainers, mostly graduates, were initially selected by ITfC to impart training to the *kishoris*. Two classes for the *kishoris* were held per week, considering the fact that the *kishoris* would not be able to devote all their time to the project. The curriculum included social issues modules on subjects like decision-making, identity and gender issues. These were to be delivered through activities and story-telling. The trainers were clear from an early stage that the technical component and the social issues component should not be strictly demarcated or separated. Therefore, the two were interwoven together to make them more contextual and relevant to the

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[9] ITfC Monthly Progress Report, August 2009

immediate environment of the *kishoris*. Also, the kishoris who joined the program at a later stage were given a bridge course to bring them at par with the older participants. The bridge course contained a condensed version of the previous lessons and was made easier for the new girls by the assistance of the older participants.

2.4 Curriculum

The overall aim of the KC curriculum is to encourage the *kishoris* to explore, question and redefine their social and cultural universe through technology and creatively negotiate their ecosystem in order to fulfil their potential and aspirations. During the curriculum framing process, *kishoris* were initially gathered to know more about their interests, gain greater clarity about the disempowering factors, which hinder the autonomy of adolescent girls, and understand the knowledge/information gaps that exists. The effort was to thereby create a curriculum that addressed these gaps and helped them to gain better control on their lives, thereby offering them better choices.

The curriculum was designed keeping in mind the restricted mobility and deep rooted latent patriarchy existing within village communities. Interventions were planned in a way that was non-threatening and sensitive to the context. The effort was to mix photography/video-shooting skills with social awareness that focuses on identity strengthening, understanding local contexts, building networks of peer support, supporting the development of life skills and developing a deeper understanding of contexts and possibilities.

The common modules for Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi villages focus on[10]'Identity' and 'Patriarchy'. Additional modules for Hosavaranchi include 'Strength of a Collective' and 'Know Your Village'. Additional modules of Attiguppe include 'Kishori point of view and community point of view on ideal school', and 'Marriage'.

Besides, a photo exhibition was also held to create visibility for the *kishoris'* work and build their self-esteem and confidence, and social acceptance. This was aimed at changing the community's perceptions of adolescents as weak, vulnerable people who needed to be confined. A two day trip to the city of Mysore was also organized to give them a joyous collective experience, to make them reflect about adolescence-related socio cultural issues and to motivate them to stick with the training.

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[10] Refer to Appendix for more detailed information.

2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

As a funder, UNICEF has put in place a two-fold Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. First, meetings have been held at least every three months or more frequently so that UNICEF and ITfC would be able to keep each other informed on the progress of their work. Second, ITfC have been required to submit narrative progress reports – Monthly Progress Reports and Quarterly Monitoring Reports – which provided detailed descriptions of (1) the activities conducted, (2) an assessment of the achievements and impact for the activities, and (3) obstacles to overcome. In addition, ITfC has put its own M&E system into place. After each session, trainers take notes in an informal log, where they write about how individual *kishoris* have responded to the days' activities. The log has been used to instantly reflect on the preparation of the next session, so that the session could be more tailored to *kishoris'* interests and needs.

3. PROCESS

3.1 Challenges that have been resolved
3.1.1 *Mobilizing kishoris*

When ITfC started identifying and selecting *kishoris*, their initial goal was to bring around 15 girls to each node. In Attiguppe, of the 13 *kishoris* who met the selection criteria, 8 agreed to participate in the project. In Hosavaranchi, of the identified 22 kishoris, only 10 confirmed participation, while the remaining 12 did not. The reason for the low participation rate in Attiguppe lay in the patriarchal environments in which girls' mobility is highly restricted and their interactions are limited to their own household members and neighbours. The main reason for Hosavaranchi was caste. Since the information centre where the KC training was held was situated in the *Dalit*[11] colony, upper or other caste members were not willing to send their children to the training.

On the one hand, some parents had high expectations about the KC training; parents asked whether or not the KC training could lead to their daughters' employment in television, for instance. On the other, the values of learning camera, video, and audio were not easily accepted by the entire communities. Since the acceptance from the community and the realistic expectation towards the benefits of the KC training were significant factors for *kishoris* to continue this learning avenue, the pedagogical values of ICT training had to be made clear, without overstating its benefits.

In the face of these challenges, ITfC was able to successfully launch KC, and the s*angha* women played a crucial role in that process. When ITfC did extensive campaigning in the villages,

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[11] Dalit caste refers to the lowest caste within India

the *sangha* women mobilized the communities, organized meetings, and helped ITfC build rapport with village people. As local anchors of the project, they created outreach strategies and facilitated the meetings between ITfC and villagers. During their Management Committee (MC) meetings, *sangha* women incorporated the KC project into their agenda and discussed issues like how KC has progressed and where they needed to pitch in more to accelerate its progress. They also spread the word amongst the community to publicize the project. The s*angha* women also agreed that they would accompany the girl's outdoor activities to lessen the apprehension of girls and their parents. In sum, the support from *sangha* women, some of whom are kishoris' mothers, has been essential in carrying out the KC project.

> *"We went around creating awareness in the villages about the benefits of KC. Although it was difficult to convince parents, we did not give up and finally managed to convince them."*
> - Sannama and Jayalakshmi, *sangha* members at Hosavaranchi

> *"My mother was in the sangha. This helped me convince her to allow me to go for the KC project easily."*
> - Pallavi, KC participant at Hosavaranchi
>
> *"There is nothing comparable to education in terms of the importance."*
> - Pallavi's mother and sangha member

ITfC trainers were apprehensive about taking on the KC project as they were not familiar with ICT and they had not had experiences teaching adolescent girls. Therefore, training for the internal team members (ToT: Training of Trainer) was a top priority for ITfC to capacitate the trainers. Regular trainings were held, with focus on three major areas: (1) how to handle ICT, (2) how to design education modules, including social issues, and to conduct trainings and (3) how to deal with *kishoris*. Trainings on ICT were conducted by an external resource person. In addition, ITfC team members also had discussions over what constitutes a good training, what kind of methodologies should be used and how to prepare education modules and teaching materials. Furthermore, during ToT, the ITfC team members were asked to place themselves in the *kishoris'* shoes and to think of the questions that they might raise, so as to sensitize themselves to *kishoris*.

> *"I was scared to conduct this training. I was shivering, when I had a mock presentation during the ToT. However, I got more comfortable and confident."*
> - ITfC female trainer

ITfC initially had difficulty in procuring some basic equipment. Also, due to the unreliability of electricity in the village information centres, ITfC had to abandon the idea of projecting images on the wall with a projector and had to make do with the laptop instead. Even using the TV or the desktop was difficult for the same reason. Yet, these technical challenges were solved by using laptops. Laptops were convenient, since they could be charged when the power was there and they could be used even if there was no power.

3.2 Ongoing challenges that have NOT been resolved

3.2.1 *Dropout*

The biggest challenge facing ITfC in implementing the project has been kishoris' dropping out of the project. Kishoris dropped out for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of interest or responsibilities at home, including caretaking of younger siblings, cooking, filling water, and house maintenance. Yet, the main reason was engagement and/or marriage of girls. For instance, the field-work revealed that Kumari from Attiguppe dropped out due to a marriage, and Nayana and Rekha dropped out because they were engaged.

ITfC decided to intervene in this issue, with the support from *sangha* women. ITfC held meetings with parents and persuaded many of them to postpone their daughters' marriages. However, subjective reasons for girl's marriages were sometimes so strong and reasonable that ITfC could not dissuade their parents from arranging marriages in all cases. ITfC had to come to terms with this issue, as both ITfC and *sangha* women were not equipped to deal with its repercussions. Also, the local governing bodies, that had the power and authority to actually intervene, preferred to keep out of this issue.

> *"Child marriage is a very difficult and delicate issue and hence we can't intervene. The sangha women are currently working on this issue and it is better that they only continue to do so."*
> - Dalit community head, Hosavaranchi

> "Renuka, a 16 year old *kishori* was engaged to a 38 years old man. Renuka comes from a poor family and the groom is rich. He offered to bear the cost of the wedding if they give their daughter to him. This was treated as a lucky proposition in the context of their poverty. Renuka is a bright young girl who has not completely stepped out of childhood yet. She looks like a 12 year old child. We decided to strategize and intervene. We held meetings with MC members, her parents, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka staff and with her. Some *sangha* women were against Renuka getting married and majority were for it. Their logic was, 'now she is getting a rich man who is willing to bear the cost of the wedding. If we stop the wedding now, then what guarantee is there for her to find a nice match like this again? Her parents will ask us to take responsibility and how can we take it? If we speak like this then our husbands will pull us out of *sanghas*'. The age old stereotype around poverty and good match because the groom is rich played out. MSK decided not to intervene since it is a sensitive issue and they are not equipped to deal with its repercussions. After many rounds of negotiating, we were pushed to drop the issue as it started to affect the *sangha* support."
> - *IT4C – Quarterly Report from October to Decembe)*

While ITfC was making a maximum effort to keep girls in the training, they engaged in reaching out to neighbouring villages to bring more girls to the training. For instance, in Shiriyur, a neighbouring village of Attiguppe, ITfC hosted a training day and gave the girls cameras, so that they could take photographs in their own village. Although the girls enjoyed the session, they declared at the end of the day that they would not join the KC training. Therefore, retaining girls in the training and bringing more girls to the training still remain as big challenges.

3.2.2 *Caste*

Caste has been a severe obstacle to both the planning and the implementing phases. Parents from the upper castes did not send their daughters to the training, because they did not want their daughters to get along with girls from a lower caste. Thus, in Hosavaranchi, all the girls were from the same *caste*, the *Dalit* community. At the implementing stage, caste has been a severe obstacle to building sense of collective identity. In Attiguppe, two of the six kishoris are from the *Dalit* community. Thus, the trainers had to be careful when dividing *kishoris* into teams for the activities, so that caste would not adversely affect the group dynamic. Also, caste restricted girls' mobility when they engaged in activities. A *kishori* from the *Dalit* community was not able to step into upper

> *"While conducting the baseline survey, I had to talk to people of different castes. The people from higher caste did talk to me but did not allow me to enter their houses"*
>
> - Radha Sakhi, Attiguppe

3.3 *Specific challenges faced at Mahila Shikshana Kendra*

Since Mahila Shikshana Kendrais a residential school located in the town, *kishoris* have limited mobility. While *kishoris* in the village settings of Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi were able to go around the village, interact with diverse people, including males in the village, and explore various perspectives, *kishoris* in the Mahila Shikshana Kendra had nowhere else but the temple nearby to engage in outside activities. As mentioned before, the value of using ICT for girls' education and empowerment is that it increases girls' mobility, so that girls can have a broader range of experiences and explore more diverse perspectives. Therefore, the restricted mobility of Mahila Shikshana Kendra *kishoris* has limited the benefits of using ICT.

> *" In MSK, desks are removed from the classroom to make the set up like villages for conducting KC classes. Yet the freedom to out and explore different things is not as much in MSK as it is available in the villages."* -
> ITfC trainers

4. PROGRESS AND RESULTS

Despite these ongoing challenges, KC has achievement remarkable success in educating and empowering kishoris.

4.1 Output level

4.1.1 Enhanced confidence to use ICT

The KC project was the first encounter of the *kishoris* with ICT and so they were scared of using it initially. However with the support and encouragement of the ITfC field associates they have overcome this fear and are now confident to use ICT independently. The aim of ITfC was to ensure that the *kishoris* never felt intimidated by the technology. This was done by 'demystifying the technical', that is by developing localized examples to explain a technical aspect and also allow *kishoris* to develop their own jargons. The most basic things were introduced initially to help them overcome any inhibitions i.e. digital camera training was first introduced and then slowly and gradually they were exposed to the handy camera.

> *"If in a wedding ceremony, the photographer feels tired, I am confident that I can replace him."*
> - MSK KC participant
>
> *"Earlier kishoris used to do only household work but now they are learning so many things like photography, computers, etc.This program has benefitted them a lot."*
> - Sangha Women, Sannama and Jayalakshmi, Hosavaranchi

4.1.2 Increased enthusiasm about the course

Kishoris expressed an appreciation for the teaching style and attitude of the KC field associates as compared to their school teachers. Initially, it was difficult for the *kishoris* to break away from the hierarchy of a teacher-student relationship experienced at school but with consistent effort from the ITfC field associates to build trust and rapport, the*kishoris* came to view them as non-threatening, warm and approachable individuals.

The *kishoris* reported that they really enjoyed coming for KC and wished that it could continue even after two years. Every KC participant who was interviewed also stated that they would like to encourage other girls in their village to attend this course. Their level of enthusiasm is evidenced from the fact that they actually wake up early to complete all the household chores on the

> *"I never miss my class. Even if it rains, I wait for the rain to stop and then walk to Hosavaranchi for my class"*
> - Rekha, bridge course KC participant from Halevaranchi
>
> *"Out of seven people who initially joined the course from Halevaranchi only two have continued; yet we send our daughter."*
> - Rekha's parents

Some *kishoris* also walked from neighbouring villages for about three kilometres to reach the information centre.

No *kishoris* expressed any disappointment with the curriculum or the teaching style or the teacher's attitude at KC. *Kishoris* who have dropped out have done so due to socio-cultural factors and not due to factors related to the course. ITfC trainers have tried to keep the *kishoris'* enthusiasm high for this course by planning various activities keeping each *kishoris'* age, educational background and interest in mind; forming localized analogies for different technical aspects thereby making it simple to understand; doing mock presentations in front of other field associates and learning how to handle different situations in class and being flexible with the lesson plans; cracking jokes and playing with the *kishoris* whenever they noticed low energy; and conducting reviews after each class and also weekly to understand its effectiveness and the possibilities of replicating the same activity in other KC centres.

> *"I am very happy with the course. I wait for it everyday"*
> - Reetha, KC participant
>
> *"I have never missed a class. I want to have a class every day."*
> - Pallavi, KC participant
> -
> *"Asha really enjoys attending KC classes so even if she goes to her sister's house she runs back home on the days of training"*
> - Parents of Asha, a KC participant

4.2 Outcome level

4.2.1 Increased mobility and enhanced self-confidence:

The *sangha* women always accompanied these *kishoris* initially when they ventured beyond their streets. This initial support helped girls gain confidence, and they now feel empowered to go without the company of these *sangha* women. The *Kishori Mela* event (photo exhibitions) organized by ITfC also made the *kishoris* more confident. The photo exhibition of the creative and artistic expressions of the *kishoris* exposed the villagers to the talents and potential of these *kishoris*. The recognition and praise that these *kishoris* received through these exhibitions increased their sense of self-worth.

> *"I have no fear at all to go alone and speak to the village heads. If I am given a camera now I can do it right away."*
> - *Geeta,* KC participant
> -
> *"Asha has become very courageous and can address and issues without fear. I am very happy to see the change in Asha."*
> - KC Participant Ashas' father

By inviting parents of Mahila Shikshana Kendra girls on school reopening days and showcasing the work that they have done parents often become more aware of their work and feel proud about them. In *Kishori Mela* and *kishori* camps they have received recognition at the *taluk* level and have Mahila Samakhya Karnataka's support.

> *"The Friday classes have helped a lot in increasing the confidence levels of the girls. The girls are usually very inhibited in other classes. If KC had not happened, only about five girls would have achieved appreciable confidence level."*
> - Bhavya, Mahila Shikshana Kendra teacher

4.2.2 Increased comfort around males

In general, the *kishoris* have reported an increased level of comfort to interact with male trainers after attending the KC project. The following steps were taken by ITfC in order to make the *kishoris* comfortable with male trainers:

- Initially male trainers went to the information centres as observers rather than trainers and gradually tried to build a rapport with the girls. Female trainers always accompanied male trainers so that girls do not feel intimidated by their presence.
- Male field associates also built a rapport with the families of those *kishoris* by going to their residences for tea and interacting with their parents. Also, *kishoris* were always in a group of three to ten girls and so that they felt safe to talk to the male field associates.

- Male field associates asked the *kishoris* to call them 'Anna' which meant 'brother' rather than calling them a teacher and assured them that they do not need to be scared of them. This helped the *kishoris* feel more comfortable to approach them.

This enhanced level of comfort with male field associates has also led to *kishoris* becoming more open to interact with people other than their family members (especially with male members of the community). *Kishoris* report that they now feel confident to even independently talk to any male members (even village leaders). There is, however, a difference in the *kishoris*' level of confidence to interact with people based on their initial level of empowerment with which they began the course and also differences in their age, educational background, family support, etc.

> *"Pallavi used to be a silent girl, and used to be at home. Now she moves around, talks to people, has gained confidence, and is not frightened. She has completely changed."*
> - KC participant Pallavi's parent

4.2.3 Expression of future aspirations and economic empowerment

Most *kishoris* expressed a desire to open their own studios in the future; in fact some girls have already received job offers from studios (Soumya, Pallavi and two Mahila Shikshana Kendra girls). They also wish to teach KC to other *kishoris* and help solve their problems. One thing common amongst these *kishoris* is their desire to work outside even after marriage and not just remain at home doing household chores. Even parents of *kishoris* (Asha, Rekha, Geetha, Pallavi) expressed that they would like their daughters to take up a job after the course and were in fact hoping that some support would be provided for their daughters to seek employment.

> *"I want to open my own studio as most studios are run by men. There are very few run by women."*
> - KC participantatMahila Shikshana Kendra
>
> *"We have come from poor backgrounds. But now we are able to look at the future confidently."*
> - KC participantatMahila Shikshana Kendra

4.2.4 Enhanced social awareness and ability to negotiate:

Most *kishoris* were aware about the issue of child marriage and repercussions of early marriage. Some *kishoris* (Geeta, Reetha, and Gowri) have even been able to postpone their weddings after undergoing KC training.

> *"All my friends got married early but after this course I realized that child marriage is not good and so I postponed my own marriage and I have decided that I will get married only after I complete this course. Although I will get married at the age of 20, if I have a daughter I will get my daughter married after she is 23 years so that she can get more opportunities in life to do even better than what I did."*
>
> -   Gowri, bridge course participant

Some *kishoris* (Tara and Radha- the *sakhis* at Hosavaranchi and Attiguppe respectively) were able to negotiate with their in-laws to return to their villages after they got married to continue their work as a *sakhi*. Other *kishoris* felt confident to negotiate with their parents for delaying their marriage. It is important to note that in several cases cultural and socio-economic factors compel *kishoris* to give in to marriage proposals often against their wishes. However, the fact that these *kishoris* have at least been able to start negotiating with their parents and other elders in the family seems to be a sign of empowerment.

Many *kishoris* expressed their desire to shoot films on social issues like: the effects of child marriage, school dropout, child labour, *caste* discrimination, poverty, cleaning the roads, drainage system, etc. and bring about awareness in their community.

> *"I know it is risky, but I know this is important, so I have to show it."*
> -   Pallavi , KC participant, on shooting village issues

The current KC program has helped *kishoris* become aware about social issues that are directly relevant to their lives and also discuss ways in which they could address these issues. They even role play how they would advocate as a group for a cause with the village *Gram Panchayat*[12] leaders. Although, they have not yet spoken to the village leaders directly, they do feel confident to do so. They have interviewed *sangha* women and understood the challenges and strengths of forming collectives. In Attiguppe, the *kishoris* played a key role in exposing the local doctor who charged the villagers at the otherwise free Public Health Centre. These steps could help *kishoris* become prepared for joining community mobilization groups in the future for addressing issues.

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[12] The village council

This increased level of confidence to speak to male members along with the awareness about social issues and the ability to negotiate could be critical steps to create political empowerment for girls in the future. Overall, the interviews with *kishoris*, their parents, *sangha* women, village leaders and trainers all suggest that KC has been successful in empowering and educating adolescent girls in these nodes.

> *"Change in the kishoris is very evident and day by day they are becoming more talented. KC has not only benefitted the kishoris but each and every one of us."*
> - Dalit Sangha Head, Hosavaranchi
> -
> *"I would definitely encourage other girls in my village to join this course".*
> - Rekha's mother, Sangha member at Halevaranchi

The success of this program is also evident from the responses of the non-participants or KC drop-out participants.

> *"I really enjoyed the three weeks that I attended. I dropped out because my brothers did not like me attending this course. I want to continue but my family is not getting convinced. Even I want to be confident like the other girls."*
> - Renuka, bridge course drop-out participant, Halevaranchi
> -
> *"When I see other girls going around the village clicking pictures, I also feel like doing it. I want to be like them."*
> - Shruti, non-participant Hosavaranchi
> -
> *"I think I will be able to speak more boldly and solve problems after attending this course, just like other kishoris who have been attending this course"*
> - Sowmya, newly joined participant, Hosavaranchi

5. **RESOURCES**

Based on the research findings, it has been determined that the following resources and skills are needed to carry out the good practice:

- Direct, on-going support from the implementing agency, to provide general project supervision, direction, and M&E.
- Expertise of field associates, who have undergone Trainings of Trainers.
- Sustainable funding.

- IT infrastructure (i.e. one camera per centre).

- Pre-identified space (information centre or classroom space) for project to be conducted in.

- Pre-existing relationship between the villages and the implementing agency.

- Local support structure (e.g. the *sangha* women's collectives).

- Partnerships between the implementing agency and government bodies (e.g. Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana).

6. <u>SUSTAINABILITY</u>

While nearly all of the necessary resources and skills have been in place throughout the duration of the project, sustainability has not yet been reached. The greatest reason for this can be attributed to socio-economic and cultural factors that prevent *kishoris* from completing KC. The following key components may be implemented in order to help address these issues and achieve KC program sustainability:

6.1 Sustainable Funding

Steady funding is crucial for KC sustainability, as one of the central project goals is to build strong, long-term *kishori* collectives that will lead towards social change and *kishori* empowerment. This aim cannot be accomplished without an adequate and sustained stream of funding. UNICEF funding for the two-year pilot ends in2011, after which ITfC will need to secure money from alternate source(s) in order to complete the current project courses and provide future programming.

6.2 Monitoring and evaluation

The current monitoring and evaluation systems include monthly and quarterly reporting and maintaining an informal log of *kishoris'* progress. However, in addition to the above it also seems important to develop indicators to measure success or progress in relation to the project objectives at two levels:(1) *Kishoris* progress: this would include having a baseline survey of their initial level of empowerment and skill levels and then tracking their progress on an on-going basis to see tangible results. (2) Program evaluation: *kishoris* giving feedback on their experiences of undergoing this training at regular intervals and this feedback being incorporated in the planning of the future course of action.

6.3 Economic empowerment

The KC project has led to some *kishoris* getting job opportunities and placements in different ICT sectors. However, making the *kishoris* economically empowered is not formally a part

of the aims of the KC project and thus field associates are only informally encouraging *kishori*s to seek employment. ITfC is also putting in efforts to find government schemes through which *kishoris* can buy IT equipment for themselves and become independent. However, for the long term it is recommended that additional funding sources are made available to buy these equipment and support structures be created to help the *kishoris* to get employment. In the absence of such support there is a fear that *kishoris* might not be able to utilize ICT skills after completing the course and may go back to their usual life at home. In addition, economic empowerment could help increase the expected utility of this program and could act as an incentive to increase the commitment of parents to let their daughters complete the course. However, creating such opportunities would require ITfC to create partnerships with other agencies for helping girls get jobs, as well as to hire a larger pool of personnel to support *kishoris* at all stages of seeking employment.

6.4 Integrated Approach

Furthermore, *kishoris* dropped out of school and/or KC due mainly to multiple socioeconomic and cultural reasons. Thus, in order to increase the effectiveness of KC and to fully educate and empower *kishoris*, the root cause of *kishoris'* dropout must be addressed. The provision of an integrated package of key interventions, incorporating services to address main reasons for *kishoris'* dropout, must be considered, and to this end, more extensive alliances and collaborations must be pursued with multiple partners, such as other international/national/local NGOs, line ministries, and municipal administrations. If a joint intervention can be provided by agencies with different expertise and skills, addressing issues affecting *kishoris* in a more comprehensive and holistic fashion, then it would significantly improve the effectiveness of KC and accordingly the education and empowerment level of *kishoris*.

7. GOOD PRACTICES

The success of KC has been made possible by a number of good practices. Among them, particularly noteworthy are (1) building on pre-existing structures, (2) creating strong and broad partnerships, (3) aligning its goals with national and international priorities, (4) assessing and building capacity, (5) engaging in persistent outreach and advocacy, and (6) taking child-centered and child-friendly approaches.

7.1 Building on pre-existing structures

Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi were chosen as a target of intervention, not randomly but intentionally, with a clear idea that KC would be able to build on pre-existing structures that had been established in these two villages. Thanks to the multiple projects initiated in these villages, enabling conditions conducive to the success of KC had been formed, and they were adroitly exploited by ITfC.

Women's collectives, or *sanghas*, were organized through Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, and further strengthened through the Mahiti Manthana project, These *sanghas* became so deeply embedded as an essential institution within these villages that the values of women's education and empowerment was already widely recognized by the village people by the time KC was introduced. Furthermore, the basic infrastructure required for KC was established through the Mahiti Manthana project. The information centres were built, and some people in the village became familiar with ICT. Additionally, during the years when ITfC implemented the Mahiti Manthana project, they gained reputation as a credible agency and created and maintained a sound relationship with villagers.

ITfC noted these favourable conditions in two villages and took advantage of them. By leveraging their close relationship with *sangha* women, ITfC successfully persuaded *sangha* women to become ardent advocates for KC. These *sangha* women played a crucial role in bridging between ITfC and villagers, mobilizing community and facilitating interactions between them. Also, the information centres were used as venues for the KC training, because they contained computers and other necessary equipments to use during the courses.

If a totally new community that (1) had no experience of cherishing the benefits of women's education and empowerment, (2) had no adequate infrastructure, and (3) had no connection with ITfC, had been chosen, more severe challenges would have been encountered. However, since the villages with favourable conditions were selected and KC built on them, the probable difficulties that could have arisen at the planning and implementing stages were warded off, and the apprehensions of the villagers over KC were lowered.

7.2 Partnerships

Not only were pre-existing structures exploited, but also strong partnerships were forged with multiple stakeholders to facilitate the design and the implementation of KC. All of the relevant stakeholders, such as ITfC, UNICEF, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, and Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana, have gathered together every three months for meetings to exchange their thoughts and perspectives. During these meeting, all of the partners have been able to see the progress made and

the obstacles encountered. They have provided inputs and feedbacks on the basis of their own knowledge and expertise. Feasible and durable solutions for the challenges have been thought out, and ways and means to enhance KC discussed. Finally, the recommendations proposed during the meetings have been reflected on in the next steps of KC to further sharpen its focus and effectiveness. Therefore, these meetings have functioned as an integrated monitoring and evaluation mechanism for KC, in which findings of monitoring and evaluation have constantly fed into the planning and implementing phases, so that KC can be improved instantly.

Furthermore, partnerships with government institutions like Mahila Samakhya Karnataka or Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana also helped promote the sustainability of KC, because a political will is one of the important necessary conditions for the sustainability of any given project.

7.3 Alignment with national priorities and internationally agreed principle and norms

Strong and broad partnerships could be made because the goals and objectives of addressed many crosscutting issues, such as gender, education, equity, and youth and children. Also, KC was closely aligned with national priorities in India, such as promoting Education for All (Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana) or addressing gender inequality (Mahila Samakhya Karnataka), and with internationally agreed principles, such as gender mainstreaming and refocusing equity (UNICEF). Therefore, extensive supports could be mobilized from the multiple partners, whose mandates and organizational goals were different.

7.4 Persistent advocacy and outreach efforts

Although Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi had conditions favourable for the implementation of KC and broad partnerships were made for KC, socioeconomic and cultural barriers have still been formidable. Thus, active outreach to the communities, and advocacy for girl's education and empowerment have been persistently conducted. With the assistance of the *sangha* women, ITfC initially visited the house of each eligible *kishori* and had meetings with *kishoris'* parents to explain KC and persuade them to send their daughters to the project. Even when no parents showed up at their first meeting in Hosavaranchi, they did not get frustrated but held another one in the next month, which most of the parents attended. Furthermore, when *kishoris* started to drop out of KC, ITfC, along with *sangha* women, went to dropouts' houses to find their reasons for dropout, to address the reasons, if possible, and to bring them back to the training.

> *"We discuss issues related to KC drop out in our weekly meetings and we go and talk to parents of these kishoris. We tell them that if your daughter drops out she will lose out on the learning of KC and since this program is happening in our own village we must take advantage of it."*
> - Sannama and Jaylakshmi, Sangha women

In addition, in order to increase the number of participants of the project, ITfC actively reached out to *kishoris* in neighbouring villages. Selection criteria for *kishoris* were applied in a flexible manner, so as to bring more *kishoris* to the KC training. Yet, this was not a shortcoming but a good strategy, because more adolescent girls had an opportunity to benefit from KC, while no *kishoris* who met the selection criteria was precluded or excluded from KC to give a seat for those who did not meet the criteria. When new kishoris joined the program, bridge courses were provided to them, so that they could easily and quickly get immersed in the KC trainings.

One year after the initiation of KC in the villages, KC was further expanded to be implemented in a new setting, Mahila Shikshana Kendrabridge school. The expansion of KC produced two desirable outcomes. First, more *kishoris* were able to benefit from KC. Second, exploring a new setting for KC and implementing it in the different environment helped ITfC find ideal conditions, under which KC can produce maximum results.

7.5 Capacity building

When ITfC was engaging in active outreach, they also focused on improving their own capacities simultaneously to be an effective and efficient service provider. The capacities of ITfC staff themselves were assessed, and it was concluded that their own capacities had to be strengthened. Therefore, the so-called Trainings of Trainers were held to equip ITfC staff with necessary skill-sets to provide ICT trainings and social issues trainings for *kishoris*. In addition, new equipments were procured, considering the local context, in which the KC training would be conducted.

In addition, the capacities of *kishoris* to get ICT trainings were also thoroughly assessed and steadily strengthened. Baseline data on a wide range of items, including (1) *kishoris'* socioeconomic status, (2) education level, and (3) the level of empowerment, were collected and analyzed, and the findings of the baseline survey were reflected in the design of education modules. Then, the trainings started with an easy and simple module and advanced to a more difficult and complicated one, so that *kishoris* developed skills gradually, without being intimidated by the technicalities of ICT.

7.6 Child Centred and Child Friendly Teaching Styles and Materials

The use of child-friendly methods along with contextually relevant curriculum to teach ICT skills has played a major role in keeping the interest and commitment of the *kishoris* high. This is especially true for those who dropped out of school because of lack of interest or because they were

unable to relate to the content taught and thus could not pass their exams. The schools - especially higher secondary ones - use a lot of rote learning and teacher centred methods of teaching in class and thus create distinct hierarchies between teachers and students. There is fear among students of approaching teachers, and asking for explanation about unclear aspects is not encouraged, leading to gaps in their understanding.

The above issues have been addressed by ITfC by encouraging friendly and warm relationships between the trainers and Kishoris and slowly building trust and rapport to a level where *kishoris* felt comfortable to ask questions and clarify doubts without any inhibitions.

> *"I used to be frightened of school teachers but here our trainers are very friendly so I really like it"*
> - Gowri - Bridge course KC participant from Halevaranchi

The contextually relevant curriculum devised on the basis of the baseline study and the on-going feedback received from the *kishoris* helped sustain their interest and keeps them engaged in the process of learning. The openness and flexibility to improve and include topics depending on what the situation demands has proven to be strengths of ITfC's approach to education and development.

Furthermore, social issues trainings were provided in a manner that could avoid unnecessary conflicts within the family and the community. Social issues, such as child marriage or the *caste* system, were so sensitive that it could have been a seed of friction if *kishoris* had directly confronted and challenged their parents. This explosive nature of social issues trainings was fully taken into account when the trainings were prepared and conducted, and thus the intended goals of social issues trainings were achieved without causing any troubles.

8. POTENTIAL APPLICATION

8.1. Why KC should be replicated

The positive impacts of KC on (1) kishoris and (2) the community are substantial. Also, KC has created a more favorable condition for a larger-scale project promoting the higher level of empowerment, i.e., political and economic empowerment of kishoris.

8.1.1 *Kishoris' empowerment*

Kishoris, who used to be left off from the society, have picked up important life skills. They have committed to take responsibility for their own learning and also their own lives. They have learned how to articulate their opinions and feelings and how to negotiate with relevant people to obtain what they want. Their understanding of themselves and their own community has been enhanced, and they have begun to build a sense of collective. They now see new things with openness and interact with new people with ease and confidence.

8.1.2 *Tapping the collective agency of the Kishoris*

KC also shows that the village girls can use their collective agency and become agents of change in the villages. As kishoris' achievements have been acknowledged, kishoris have been recognized by village people as rich resources that can be tapped into, and correspondingly community acceptance of kishoris' education and empowerment has been enhanced. Also, the photos and videos shot by the girls could become important records for the issues in the village. This is especially useful considering the fact that the coverage of rural issues is poor in the media.

8.1.3 *Promoting a strong sense of communitarianism within the community*

As different groups of people, including kishoris, their parents, sangha women, and village leaders, have come together and played an active role in designing and carrying out the project, a strong sense of community ownership for KC has been developed. A strong sense of communitarianism is an enabling condition for any future bigger project that would substantially increase kishoris' political and economic empowerment. The project would also promote strong linkages among the community, the government and NGOs allowing the villagers to form new partnerships.

8.1.4 *Need to Address Critical Issues in Rural India*

There is an urgent need to address the issues of child marriage, early marriage and female drop-out, and recognize the crucial stage of adolescence. KC demonstrated an apt way to intervene in the village matters to create awareness in this regard and sow the seed of change in a strategic yet non-confrontational manner.

8.1.5 *Cost-Effectiveness*

KC demonstrates the implementation of a low resource intensity project. The trainers were trained only after they were inducted into the project. The same equipment was used in all the three nodes making the project cost-effective. The very inclusion of village issues into the training of the *kishoris* helped impart learning in a fast-paced and time-saving manner.

8.2   How KC should be replicated

8.2.1 *Contextualised curriculum*

KC shows how contextual curriculum weaved into ICT training can help in boosting the confidence levels of the adolescent girls and empowering them. Making the modules contextual has made the learning more meaningful and useful to the girls. This aspect could have wide-scale application in other villages in the country where women are kept away from discussing political or social issues.

8.2.2 *Understanding the local context*

The social realities in different parts of the country are different. The level of progressiveness and responsiveness of people to the introduction of the project would, therefore, differ accordingly. This would mainly depend on how deep-rooted patriarchy is in the respective villages and the general attitude towards girls coming out of the houses, mingling with others and getting educated. Any intervention programme, such as KC, should therefore be preceded by a careful examination of the local context and the community's preparedness to open up to the programme.

8.2.3 *Two formats of application*

KC shows two different formats of imparting technical skills to drop-out adolescent girls - in villages and in a school for drop-outs. As noted in the progress and results section, KC has been successful in empowering and educating *kishoris* in both formats. However, if there is limited resources and if a choice has to be made between the two formats then village could be a more preferred site than the school set-up to implement the programme. This suggestion is based on our observation of the *kishoris* at all three nodes and interviews with the ITfC trainers and MSK. The school has a limited campus that constrains the mobility of the girls to explore the environments and click pictures. This not only restricts their creativity but also their mobility, which in a way affects

their level of empowerment. In contrast, the village provides a large working environment to shoot pictures and also helps *kishoris* increase their mobility over time.

There is also relatively higher utility of this project for *kishoris* in the villages as they do not have any other opportunities to get educated or empowered. Since they drop out of school they are at home doing domestic work and are unable to transcend the barriers of patriarchal norms of the society. On the other hand girls who are getting educated already have other opportunities for becoming empowered and can choose different career paths if they continue to get educated.

Since the project has been conducted in the heart of these villages (Hosavaranchi and Attiguppe) the *kishoris* have gained recognition and acceptance from the village community members and support of *sangha* women to able to practice these skills after completing the course. However, the *kishoris* trained in the school set up do not have that level of recognition (except from their own family members and from taluk level). In such circumstances it might be difficult for these *kishoris* to use their skills once they go back to their villages especially because photography and film making are stereotyped as male professions. Without sensitizing the community about the potential of the girls to be able to learn these skills, there could be a backlash from the community and further restrictions could be placed on girls' mobility.

However, the dropout rate of the *kishoris* in the villages has been high, as they have been easily pulled out of the project by their families, owing to a number of reasons as mention before. While replicating the project, these drawbacks should be noted and a suitable format chosen.

> *"If given a choice between villages and schools, I would like to see the programme being implemented in the villages."*
> - Savita, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka Mysore district office

The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya schools, the Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana's schools for dropouts could be a potential venue for the replication of KC. This would be a practical step towards replicating the project as the basic infrastructure needed is already there. SSA had proposed this in the initial meetings with ITfC and UNICEF. There is a need to follow up on this proposal.

8.2.5 *Partnering with the numerous women's co-operatives in the country*

The self-help groups of women are becoming more and more popular in rural India. Many NGOs have taken up the task of organizing women into collectives. To provide perspective, it could be noted that there are about 2.2 million SHGs in India, according to the National Bank for Rural Development (EDA, 2006). Similar partnerships as that of ITfC and Mahila Samakhya Karnataka can therefore be identified and implemented in other parts of the country.

> *"Intervention should be made only through NGOs that have built credibility and a strong relationship with the community over years. Outsiders entering the village with a project in hand are likely to be rejected by the community."*
> - Aparna Kalley, Coordinator, ITfC

9 NEXT STEPS

9.1 ITfC's plan

ITfC plans to complete the training at Hosavaranchi node with funds from ITfC and at MS Kendra School with funds from *Mahila Samakhya Karnataka*. Based on the learning from these two years and after reviewing the impact of ICT for empowering *kishoris*, MSK will plan if they wish to continue the funding in bridge schools for future. Similarly, based on the results, SSA will also decide if they would fund this project in other schools. ITfC is also trying to seek funds from other funding sources to continue this project in other areas for the future.

9.2 Challenges and recommendations for future replication

Currently, KC is the only option available for the dropout girls in the two villages to get empowered. From a long term perspective, *kishoris* must have other options to choose from, to make sure that there is not a saturation of professionals from the same field in one village. If the supply exceeds the demand in the job market, it at times leads to the unemployment. Likewise, if the sheer number of KC graduates exceeds the demanded number of employees in the ICT sector in the region, some of the KC graduates would not find an adequate job. Also, since KC is the only option available to them, *kishoris* who are not interested in ICT lose out on the opportunity to become empowered. Thus, *kishoris* must be given different options to choose from.

In addition, the profile of these *kishoris* showed that there are a significant number of them who have dropped out of school or college just before they graduated because of lack of interest, failure in some subject or family restrictions. In fact, everyone involved in KC, including *kishoris* themselves, acknowledges the primary importance of formal, mainstream education. KC has been regarded not as a complete substitute for the regular schooling, but as an alternative means of education. Even the field associates of ITfC have motivated *kishoris* to go back to mainstream educations, but there has been no formal support structure created to ensure that they do complete their schooling or pre-university. Since sending *kishoris* back to school is not a part of the ITfC mandate, it is important for ITfC to create partnerships with different community based organizations or NGOs to ensure that *kishoris* complete their education.

"Although I didn't study after 7th I want my daughter to get educated and if she gets an opportunity to take up a course like me then even this but no dropping out of school."
- Gowri, bridge course participant, Halevaranchi

Girls should study till which ever standard they want they should be allowed. But Gauri got matured in 7th std and so my mother-in-law is not allowing her to go to school although I wanted her to study.
- Gowri's mother

"I like this KC program more than school. Here we are treated very well in a friendly manner but in school we used to be fearful of our masters but here it's not like that. But for my daughter I want to send her to school that's a priority and then if there is time then even this course."
- Rekha, bridge course participant, Halevaranchi

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ANNEXURE I

Methodology

Framework

Since this research deals with understanding the subjective perspectives of the kishoris and other stakeholders on KC, the method used is interpretative. The interpretations are not considered as final truths. These can be viewed as diverse views rather than correct or incorrect views.

This research adopts a view of children as capable beings and as agents of change rather than being a product of their environment which is based on voluntarism. It thus merits the use of qualitative research which according to Creswell (2009) is also a medium to understand and explore the meanings people attach to a social or human problem. The researcher hence focuses on interpreting the meaning of the data collected. Besides, the qualitative approach also enables the researcher to build a new theory while also drawing upon the existing ones. They can also work to create original concepts while interpreting the data collected (Neuman, 2006). If a particular concept or phenomenon is not much researched then it requires a qualitative method as this method is exploratory (Creswell, 2009).

A thorough review of the available documents was adopted to guide this project. Documentary analysis is very helpful as it avoids any duplications of study already conducted in the field and adds authority to the current study (Laws et al., 2003). Laws et al. (2003) and Cohen et al. (2007) point out that another benefit would be its cost effectiveness and accessibility. These were some factors that led to the choice of this method. Some documents are written live therefore a lot of information about the situation then can be captured which help study the event in greater depth (Cohen et al., 2007). This is relevant to the current research as the monthly and quarterly reports gave the researches a chronology of the events that happened during the planning and implementation of the project.

Tools

Three basic tools were used to understand the implementation and assess the effectiveness of KC: (1) review of literature and documents pertaining to the KC project; (2) focus group meetings with project participants and stakeholders; (3) in-depth personal interviews with project participants and stakeholders. In order to be initially familiarized with the project, all ITfC monthly and quarterly reports were reviewed. This provided a good deal of insight as to how KC has been implemented

and what ITfC feels have been the significant challenges (overcome and ongoing) and achievements made thus far.

Sampling

A list of respondents to interview was created with the help of ITfC. Our respondents were clubbed into two categories following the Human Rights Based Approach: rights-holders and duty-bearers. Rights-holders consisted of the KC project participants: adolescent girl or "kishoris" from the villages of Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi (as well as neighboring village of Halevaranchi), and from the MS Kendra bridge school. Village kishoris who had never participated in KC were also included as rights-holders. Duty-bearers encompassed other project stakeholders: Parents of kishoris, *sangha* women, village elders, and project affiliates from ITfC, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (District & State level), Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana, and UNICEF. (Please refer to the complete list of data sources at the end of this document).

Respondents

Interviews were planned to be done with the following stakeholders:

1. *Kishoris*
   1.1 Those who have remained in KC for the duration (6)
   1.2 Drop outs (3)
   1.3 Late comers (3)
   1.4 MS Kendra kishories (20)
   1.5 Non participations (never joined KC) (1)
2. Parents
   2.1   Parents of those who have remained in KC for the duration (3)
   2.2   Parents of drop outs (0)
   2.3   Parents of late comers (2)
   2.4   Parents of MS Kendra kishories (0)
   2.5   Parents of non-participations (never joined KC) (0)
3. Village Leaders (village Council Head) (1)
4. ITfC (16)
5. Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (1)
6. UNICEF (0)
7. Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana (1)

Interviews

Next, separate questionnaires were created for each of the data groups. The questions were aimed at determining the scope to which KC has been a good practice, and at understanding or clarifying the specific factors that have facilitated its success. The interviews began with a round of rapport

building with the kishoris in Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi, which included observing a KC class. The second round consisted of focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews. At Mahila Shikshana Kendra, the school for drop outs, the kishoris were split into two groups of ten each. The interviews with other stakeholders were also conducted in the subsequent field visits.

The interviews were mediated by a translator to bridge the gap between English and Kannada. The interviews were audio and video recorded and transcribed. Each interview was then analyzed and compared alongside others for common themes or areas of distinction.

Limitations

The study was limited by the small sample size of *kishoris* in the two villages. Hence, there was little scope for quantitative evaluation. The study has, therefore, largely drawn on qualitative, techniques. Secondly, the onset of monsoon and other incidents in the villages delayed field visits, and hence some of the stakeholders could not be interviewed. A total of 10 field visits were made to the villages, bridge school and ITfC.

ANNEXURE II – data collection form[13]

Baseline data collection fields – formats:

1. Name of the Village _____
2. Kishori Name _____
3. Age _____
4. Name of the father _____
5. Name of the mother _____
6. No. of brothers ---- No. of sisters -------
7. Religion-------- Caste --------
8. Marital status, if married, husband's name _____
9. Children? If yes, how many? Male ----- Female -----
10. If unmarried, when do you think you'll get married? _____
11. Do you have a say in it? Yes ___ No ___
12. Occupation:
    - School_____
    - house work_____
    - agri labours_____
    - own land labour_____
    - self-employment_____
    - other _____
1. If not going to school, till what class have you studied? _____
2. How many years since you left school? _____
3. Reasons for leaving school
    - --------------
    - ------------
    - -------------
1. If going to school, which standard --------
2. Where is the school? _____
3. How do you go there? _____
4. Do you know how to use computers? Yes _____ No ____
5. If yes, what all do you know? _____
6. Do you listen to Kelu sakhi radio programme? Yes ___ No ____
7. Are you in any sangha? Yes ___ No ___
8. If yes, which one? Kishori___ MSK___ SS___ other___
9. Were you ever part of any sangha? Yes ___ No ___
10. If yes, which one? _____, _____.

Information collected by _____   Date _____

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[13] UNICEF monthly progress report, July 2009

ANNEXURE III

Sl no	Village	Topic	No of days of training	Module preparation in
1	**Attiguppe**	Identity	8	November
		Patriarchy (3 day workshop)	2	December
		Kishori + Commuinity POV of ideal school	12	January
		Marriage	12	February
			34	
2	**Hosavaranchi**	Strength of a collective	12	November
		Patriarchy (3 day workshop)	2	
		Identity	6	
		Know your village	12	February
			32	
3	**MS Kendra**	Identity	3	
		Menstruation	3	December
		Livelihood Options for Kishoris – Govt depts	8	January
			14	
4	**Films will be made**	Livelihood Options for Kishoris – Other institutions		
		Education Options for Kishoris		
		Gram Panchayat		
		Post office		
		Bank		
		Dowry		

ANNEXURE IV

Overview of modules

- The 'Identity' module aims to help kishoris:
    - think of themselves as individuals with likes, dislikes, dreams, opinions and expectations
    - explore the "Who am I" question and also understand what others think of her and how it affects her

- The 'Patriarchy' module aims to help kishoris:
    - understand that it exists everywhere
    - how to identify invisible barriers and overcome them

- The 'Strength of a collective' module aims to help kishoris:
    - introduce the kishoris to the concept of a collective
    - understand why people form collectives and its advantages
    - discuss the achievements of collectives in their own villages and its challenges as well as means to overcome them
    - articulate what they think is an ideal collective

- 'Know your village' module aims to help kishoris:
    - understand the issues in the village in an in-depth manner

- Kishori POV and community POV on ideal school aims to help kishoris:
    - define ideal home and community attitudes and elements that aid their education
    - explore what an ideal school would be like from their POV
    - understand the concerns and anxieties of from the POV of the community regarding girls education in the current system and how that could be addressed

- Marriage:
    - Why and when to get married according to health reasons
    - What are their aspirations and choices for marriage while also exploring what patriarchy promotes (understanding what is acceptable and what is not)
    - Become aware about family planning, safe sex, etc.

- Other modules on which films will be created:
    - Livelihood and education options for kishoris
    - Gram panchayats
    - Post office
    - Bank
    - Dowry

ANNEXURE V

Strength of a Collective – 10 days rough map

Day 1	Perspective building 1: Vox pop with different sangha members	Why did you form a sangha
Day 2	Perspective building 2: Vox pop with other community members	What is a sangha? What do sangha members do?
Day 3	Perspective building 3: Achievements of sangha – interviews, discussion and scripting	Interviews with sangha members about achievements of sangha, discussion among kishoris after they listen to diff women, then the kishoris choose three achievements to enact, script and assign roles to themselves
Day 4	Perspective building 3: Achievements of sangha – refine script, rehearse	They rehearse the script
Day 5	Perspective building 3: Achievements of sangha - shoot	They enact and shoot the enactments depicting 3 diff achievements of sangha
Day 6	Consolidation and articulation: What are collectives, why are they important - audio	Audio interviews among kishoris – what they have understood thus far about sanghas
Day 7	Analysing and deeper thinking: Challenges to collective action, possible solutions – role play 1 and discussion	We divide the kishoris into two groups and give each group a situation to do role play on. After they enact the role play, we do discussions. One group enacts on day 1
Day 8	Analysing and deeper thinking: Challenges to collective action, possible solutions – role play 2 and discussion	The second group enacts this day and the discussion continues.
Day 9	Envisioning and articulation: Their ideal sangha – discussion, script, rehearse	The kishoris are asked - if you were to form your own sangha, what would that sangha be like. They then pool ideas, we facilitate a consolidation and then ask them to put these ideas video
Day 10	Envisioning and articulation: Their ideal sangha – shoot, recap	They shoot this video – describing their ideal sangha. We recap the past 9 days' learning, experience

ANNEXURE VI

A typical training module:
Each of the 9 units (each unit needing a full day), comprised of the elements illustrated in the format below. The training module for the unit – background for the morning half of the day reads like this:

ACTIVITY	TIME	MATERIAL	METHOD
Introduction	10:00- 10:30	---------	Each one will share their favourite photograph among the one's which they have clicked (they would have taken quite many pics by then), they will share the experience of that photo and will describe the photo, and also tell why they liked the photo.
Watching prabha's photo. with back ground and also without bsckground.	10: 30- 11: 15	Projector, laptop, photos	All will watch the photos. They will tell where the person is standing/ what they can see in the pic, behind the person./ or what they can see behind the central object in the pic. Only such pictures will be shown where there is a central object(prabha) and which is obvious. So, what ever we can see behind the person in these pics is called "back ground". The concept of subject and background will be introduced.
Watching photos in a magazine	11:15- 11:45	Magazines	they will select three photographs from a given magazine and describe it. where the object is placed, will identify the object, will identify the background, and also imagine what meaning the photo would have given them if that background wasn't there.
Break			
Gals clicking photos.	11 45- 12 30	Camera.	Each one will click photos on a given topic.
Projecting the photos	12 30 – 1 30	Projector, laptop	Each person will identify the back ground in other's pic. The photographer will tell which is the place in the background and why that place is her favourite.