

## Summary and Main Findings

By  
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The following report stems from the fieldwork done in the ISST community outreach programme (COP) in Delhi primarily in the period from January 2010 till March 2010. The fieldwork focussed on those programmes under the COP that attempt to cater to children up to 12 years of age. The main purpose of the fieldwork and the subsequent report were:

1. To observe and document ISST's intervention through the Bachpan Programme for children in the 6-12 age group, methods used and its impacts.
2. Assess these interventions with a view to providing non-formal education to children, and in a secondary vein to see how/if this alleviates the care burden placed on mothers (engaged in paid or unpaid work) and young girls.
3. Explore and assess gaps, scope of further interventions given the mentioned framework of protecting child's right to quality care and protection as well as women's right to work.

The main methods employed were non-participant observations, interviews with staff, mothers and focus group discussions with mothers and young sisters of children studying under the Bachpan programme. We also spoke with the children studying in Bachpan, although the way this was carried out varied depending on the age of the children (conversational and informal with younger children and more formal, and interview-like with older children).

The main challenges for the ways forward, based on the fieldwork, report and discussions with COP and HQ staff and the report were:

### **Overall:**

1. The demand for care and development inputs for preschool and school going children is much larger as compared to the existing services like anganwadi. Therefore, there is a huge unmet demand for the same which becomes an urgent need in cases where parents are employed in the informal sector.
2. Need for an approach which is based on a holistic and continuous support services rather than a compartmental approach for child development. There are no linkages or continuity in the present available services for eg. Anganwadi and government schools.
3. Continuity in children's attendance, The proposed solutions included:
  - a. the introduction of a daily snack
  - b. focus on improving the 'play way' method and increasing staff skill in order to attract children through the activities conducted, rather than materials given out
  - c. Increasing the community outreach by having monthly parent-teacher conferences, staff going out into the community and talking to the parents of children who attend irregularly and so on.
2. Follow-up: This is needed in a variety of areas including:
  - a. Freeship: The process where the COP helps with enrolling in freeship and how that pans out, especially financially, how sustainable it is for families, what are the kinds of problems

encountered. This is especially important since advocating for families to take advantage of the freeship quotas has been a policy of the COP, but the fieldwork suggests that its financial impacts on families may fall in a grey area.

b. Children's attendance

3. Nominal fee for enrollment to the programme: This would hardly solve the cash problem, but as one staff member<sup>1</sup> suggested, it could help attendance as parents might feel that they get more value if they pay as opposed to if the services are entirely free.
4. Lack of COP staff/time management. The lack of staff has been a major concern, with only the outreach programme at both Nehru Camp and Sonia Camp being shut down within months of each other. Suggestions in tackling this, to get at least one running again, includes streamlining volunteer intake, taking only those volunteers whose skills are specifically needed, and keeping volunteers not for main activities such as community outreach and teaching, but more for the documentation, record keeping, filing RTIs and so on.
5. Need for a greater dialogue about the vision and goals for Bachpan both amongst the COP staff and the COP and HQ staff. As discussions both at the community center and at the HQ office revealed, staff members have different understanding about the needs and priorities of the children who attend Bachpan. For most of the points below, that COP staff opinions were strongly divided. A few discussion sessions to thrash out the main challenges facing Bachpan and how best to face them would certainly be beneficial in first establishing a vision and then implementing it.

***Specifically:***

The specific gaps we observed in the Sonia Camp center and the Kalyanpuri center are outlined below:

	<b>Kalyanpuri Center</b>	<b>Sonia Camp</b>
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<sup>1</sup> Uday Sir

<p><b>Gender and Care</b></p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> Anganwadis not running in the way they are supposed to. Extension of Anganwadi working hours to last a whole working day</p> <p><b>Solution 1:</b> Advocacy on a large scale. Use of RTI to investigate this further and apply pressure where necessary</p> <p><b>Problem 2:</b> Children younger than 6 rarely attend the Bachpan center.</p> <p><b>Solution 2:</b> Definition and plan change to state that Bachpan caters to those children who attend, who typically end up being in the 6-14 age group.</p> <p><b>Problem 3:</b> Women's perceptions that childcare is their responsibility, so anything from the state is seen as extra, not a right.</p> <p><b>Solution 3:</b> Increase awareness and dialogue on working women's childcare rights</p> <p><b>Problem 4:</b> Center's location cross a main road means mothers wary of sending children</p> <p><b>Solution 4:</b> liase with police station to paint zebra stripes on the road to make it a crossing, hang up a sign indicating that young children cross the road frequently as a warning to vehicles; for a few days, have a policeman escorting young children until they get used to it; road crossing session for children.</p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> Need better center timings and facilities for helping working mothers</p> <p><b>Solution 1:</b> Use of RTI to investigate lack of presence of anganwadis. Train girls from Sonia Camp to run the center (as they already do for an hour each afternoon) for a while after their school and perhaps pay them an honorarium.</p> <p><b>Problem 2:</b> Women's perceptions that childcare is their responsibility, so anything from the state is seen as extra, not a right.</p> <p><b>Solution 2:</b> Increase awareness and dialogue on working women's childcare rights</p>
<p><b>Outreach</b></p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> lack of outreach with children and families who attend Bachpan, especially within 18<sup>th</sup> Block</p> <p><b>Solution 1:</b> increase outreach via home visits, parent teacher monthly meetings and so on (main aim of outreach to trace children back to families). Since parents seem to be reluctant to come for parent teacher meetings to the center, the staff could pick one day to go to each 'area' on a rotating monthly basis and conduct a collective parent-teacher meeting there.</p> <p><b>Problem 2:</b> minimal if any outreach with men, which means that the overall atmosphere of this area is still replete with crime, lack of safety for women and so on.</p> <p><b>Solution 2:</b> Increase outreach with men of all ages, ie via discussions, meetings, home visits and so on. Perhaps the male staff at ISSST COP could play a leading role in this</p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> Outreach has been extensive, but has not made the community self sufficient even 9 years later.</p> <p><b>Solution 1:</b> COP and HQ staff need to brainstorm how to plan an outreach which will make communities aware, informed and ultimately independent. Reassess plan of intervention to emphasise making the communities self-reliant on issues such as RTI etc.</p>

<p><b>Services and Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> No one to focus on the ‘never been to school’ children  <b>Solution 1:</b> increase in trained staff and volunteers.  <b>Problem 2:</b> Utilising the skills of the volunteers in the most efficient way possible.  <b>Solution 2:</b> COP and HQ staff to brainstorm what is expected from volunteers, what qualifications they should have, what kind of training they should undergo, and where in the COP they are most needed  <i>Additionally: workshop on RTE for COP staff working at both centers to improve their involvement, resource mapping etc</i></p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> Lack of basic materials such as a few mats, chairs, stationery  <b>Solution 1:</b> Better coordination amongst HQ and COP would mean that a lot of the resources that are ‘waste’ at HQ can be utilised in craft activities by the children here.  <b>Problem 2:</b> Lack of space at the center  <b>Solution 2:</b> If/When resources permit to look into building a second level  <b>Problem 3:</b> Resources/personnel for special needs children  <b>Solution 3:</b> staff to be know of facilities addressing this in neighbouring areas and to act as a sort of ‘directory’ to parents in guiding them to the available resources (ie neighbourhood schools for special needs children, legal rights and provisions etc)  <b>Problem 4:</b> Lack of access to services offered by area GRC for young girls and mothers  <b>Solution 4:</b> GRC to coordinate with Savera GRC to explore options. Some ways:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through contact with the mother NGO, work at higher levels</li> </ul> </p>
<p><b>Planning</b></p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> Better collaboration with police station staff and other government and civic bodies such as the MCD, anganwadis and so on in the area.  <b>Solution 1:</b> Even though difficult, collaboration with police is necessary for the long-term smooth functioning of the COP, and they can be useful allies. Some ways of increasing a spirit of camaraderie:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- File out the application to request training for police station staff on gender.</li> <li>- Use women police officers/lower staff to make an inroad into the larger police station staff.</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>Problem 1:</b> How best to continue the ‘pull out’  <b>Solution 1:</b> Brainstorming amongst HQ and COP staff to see if staff can be rearranged to give more stability to the center here.  <b>Problem 2:</b> Assessing other impacts of the pull out and addressing them as best as possible.  <b>Solution 2:</b> Brainstorming</p>

In conclusion, one of the main roles of this report was to serve as a starting point to see how to render the Bachpan programme more effective. To that end, the above should be seen mainly as challenges that need to be addressed given the resource capacities of ISST.