



## Integrated Effort is Required for Attaining Quality Education

*Despite the good intentions of the Indian government, a significant proportion of children in the State of Rajasthan still grow up without reading, writing and numeric skills. Most of these hard-to-reach children come from the poorest and most vulnerable backgrounds, including minority ethnic children, girls, children with disabilities and those who are engaged in hazardous labour. Although significant progress has been made with school enrolment rates, nearly 70 percent children still drop out before completing their education. A variety of factors contribute to these drop out rates, including poor teachers' poor attendance, overcrowded classes, inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of teachers trainings, poor basic infrastructure and amenities (toilets, drinking water, and mid-day meals), inadequate health facilities and more significantly a lack of children's and community's participation in school management and educational processes.*

*Efforts are being made to initiate a dialogue between various stakeholders. However, lack of convergence of individual thoughts has failed to support the policy to add quality in education. In order to expedite the efforts for policy advocacy with government machineries, a need was felt to start a dialogue between various stakeholders at local, regional, state and national levels.*

CUTS succeeded in initiating a dialogue at the local level through various consultation workshops and discussions. The second step was to start a dialogue with various stakeholders at the regional level. In this regard, the regional level consultation workshop on 'Challenges & Opportunities for Attaining Quality Education' for Udaipur division was successfully held in Chittorgarh, on April 21, 2009.

About 93 participants from various non-government organisations (NGOs), social workers, activists, government officials, teachers, *Panchayati Raj* Institution (PRI) members, students and researchers from Udaipur division participated in the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to begin a discussion among various stakeholders on quality education and make use of recommendations for advocacy work with the administration and policy makers. 14 speakers including chair persons spoke during the workshop on issues related to quality education.

Amit Chowdhury, Centre Coordinator, CUTS CHD welcomed all the participants and resource persons and provided a brief introduction about the need and objective of conducting the workshop. Dr Veena Dwivedi, Assistant Prof, Udaipur School of Social Work; Dr SN Vyas, Lecturer, PG College,

Chittorgarh; Kalyani Dixit, Principal, Government Girls' School, Chittorgarh; Jai Prakash Bhatnagar, Principal, Alakh Group of Schools, Chittorgarh; Narmada Bhambi, Additional District Education Officer – Primary, Chittorgarh; Govind Tripathi, Bureau Chief, *Dainik Nawajoyti*, Chittorgarh; Satya Narayan Inani, Additional Block Education Officer; Kumar Bikram, UN-District Representative, Chittorgarh; Anshu Bhatnagar, Director, Integrated Child Development Scheme, Chittorgarh; Suresh Chandra Sharma, Additional Coordinator, *Sarwa Sikhsha Abhiyan*, Chittorgarh; Hemendra Chandaliya, Journalist and Professor in English Department, Rajasthan Vidhapeeth, Udaipur; Munna Lal Dakot, Principal, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Chittorgarh; and BL Sisodia, Senior Advocate, Chittorgarh participated in the workshop as key speakers.

The presenters shared their views on the existing education system, policies, teaching methods used, level of teachers' and children's knowledge, infrastructure and resources available, role of administration, people and



various committee members in maintaining quality education, existing monitoring system to measure the status of quality education and emphasised for coordinated efforts to bring quality in education. The participants were government officials, NGO workers, media persons, parents, children, PRI members, community leaders, School Development & Monitoring Committee members, teachers and social workers. Participants actively participated in the discussion and raised concern on the current pattern of education. Speakers and participants expressed their views for improving education status in villages.

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### Inter Loaning Helps Empowering Women

The Project Implementation & Monitoring Committee (PIMC) meeting of National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) Bhilwara project was held at Baroda Rajasthan Grameen Bank's Regional Office on April 21, 2009. Five members of the PIMC attended the meeting. HS Shekhawat, District Development Manager, NABARD; GS Johari, Chief Manager, The Bank of Rajasthan; SK Shaw, Regional Manager, Baoroda Rajasthan Grameen Bank; and Staff of Bhilwara Central Cooperative Bank attended the meeting. Amit Chowdhury and Shiv Lal Prajapat from CUTS attended the meeting. Members reviewed the progress of the project and approved the release of next installment. Shekhawat requested bankers to cooperate in opening bank accounts.

The PIMC meeting of NABARD Chittorgarh project was held at CHD on April 23, 2009. The meeting was attended by the five members of the committee. Mathura Prasad Jaat, Chairman and Managing Director, Cooperative Bank; AK Surana, Chief Manager, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur; NK Sandhya, Lead District Manager, Bank of Baroda; and Sudhanshu Kumar, District Development Manager, NABARD attended the meeting. Amit Chowdhury and Madan Giri Goswami from CUTS attended the meeting. The committee after reviewing the progress approved the release of next installment and requested to finish the formation part by June 2009. The committee also requested to start loaning to at least 50 Self Help Groups (SHGs) with banks before the next PIMC meeting.

During the PIMC meetings, the committee members suggested to encourage women for inter loaning. It has been recommended to explore entrepreneurial activities in which SHG members could be involved.

### DNGO to Play the Change Agent Role

The meeting of District NGO (DNGO) forum was held at CHD, on June 21, 2009. CHD is the secretariat of the DNGO forum. Members of DNGO forum are NGOs working in Chittorgarh. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role of DNGO forum in supporting district administrations' initiative in developmental work and re-elect the core working committee. About 15 NGOs participated in the meeting. It was decided during the meeting that DNGO forum should raise issues like good governance, consumer awareness, quality education and health facilities in the district.

All members accepted that DNGO forum should act as a facilitating agency and help the local administration in raising awareness of local people. It was decided to support the 'Green Chittorgarh' initiative of the government. Responsibility was given to couple of people to draw a plan. Restructuring the DNGO forum was also discussed. It was decided new working committee of DNGO forum will be elected during the meeting to be held on June 28, 2009, and the 'Green Chittorgarh' plan will be finalised.

## CUTS to Take a Lead in 'Green Chittorgarh' Initiative

The DNGO forum meeting was held at CHD on June 28, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to restructure DNGO forum, elect a new working committee and finalise the plan for the 'Green Chittorgarh'. About 17 NGOs participated in the meeting. The previous working committee was dissolved and a new working committee was selected.

Dinesh Joshi, President, Anubhuti Sira; Madan Giri Goswami, CUTS CHD; Mohan Lal Namdhar, Treasurer, Gopal Goshala; Kailash Singh Dewal, Help Sansthan; and Kamlesh Dwivedi, Vice Chairman, *Ummid Samiti* were selected for one year. The team has been provided the responsibility to draw a plan for supporting local administration. Amit of CUTS was requested to draft a network based proposal and involve DNGOs and also build their capacity on various issues. The 'Green Chittorgarh' plan was finalised.



Vinod Malhotra, Person In charge of Green Chittorgarh (also holding the post of *Tehsildar* and Deputy Registrar) joined the meeting later and briefed about the 'Green Chittorgarh' initiative. Vinod was sent by the District Collector to seek support of NGOs. CUTS has decided to plant 1500 saplings with the help of its *Bal Panchayat* members under its 'Improving Quality of Elementary Education Project' (IQEEP). CUTS will also work with DNGOs in plantation in and around the Chittorgarh city.



## Alternate way of Learning for *Bal Panchayat* Members

CUTS is working with the children in 28 villages to bring quality in education for more than a year under Save the Children – *Bal Raksha Bharat* project. During the meeting, children showed their interest to know about administrative offices and to interact with officials. For building confidence and raising the general awareness among children, an exposure visit was planned on April 27-28, 2009. 130 *Bal Panchayat* children from 13 villages took part in the exposure visit on April 27, 2009 and 102 members took part in the exposure visit on April 28, 2009. The purpose of the exposure visits was to let the children know about the use and work of police stations, central jail, education department, high-tech kitchens (where lunch for children under mid day meal scheme is cooked) and hospitals. Children showed their enthusiasm and participated actively passively during the discussion with various officials. Children were taken to a local park, where they played games and enjoyed their freedom in their own way.

### Successful Advocacy

#### Case I

Ghagsa is one of the villages of *Devri Panchayat* in Chittorgarh district, Rajasthan under IQEEP, which is approximately 15 km from CUTS CHD office. The population of this village comprises mainly of the *Bheel*, *Dangi* and *Lohar* castes. Durga, President of *Bal Panchayat* is a student of Class 5 in the Government Primary School of the village. She attends *Bal Panchayat* meetings regularly and actively participates in the debates and discussions held thereof. One day, she informed Nitu Joshi of CUTS CHD that her parents are under immense pressure from the *Lohar* community to get her married as she is now 12 years old.

Durga wants to continue her studies and was not in favour of getting married. She wrote a letter to her parents expressing the desire to continue her studies and create an identity of her own. And still if her parents would choose to go against her will, she will revolt. She narrated the incident to some of her *Bal Panchayat* friends. Nitu decided to help her and explained to her parents about the physical and psychological impact of child marriage on a child. Nitu succeeded in convincing her mother. Durga's ordeal against child marriage was also aired on All India Radio. Durga is enjoying her studies and at the same time is a source of inspiration for other young girls to continue their studies and protest against child marriage.

#### Case II

Village Shehnava is located 12 km from the Chittorgarh town. *Jaat*, *Bheel*, *Vaishnav* and *Gariya* are the major communities residing in the village. Raju Salvi, an 11 year old boy of the village, studying in Class 7 in



Government Secondary School, is a member of the *Bal Sabha*. He attends regular meetings of *Bal Sabha* in which information is provided on health, education and other issues.

Before attending the *Bal Sabha* meetings, Raju was addicted to chewing tobacco (*Gutkha*). The *Bal Sabha* members decided to help Raju give up consuming tobacco. Raju's friends explained him about the ill-effects of consuming tobacco. Once convinced, Raju decided to give up consuming tobacco. Initially, he reduced his intake and after sometime, completely gave up consuming tobacco. He is living a healthy life and motivating other children to give up tobacco consumption and smoking.

#### Case III

Bojunda is the one of villages of *Sehnava Panchayat* of Chittorgarh district, Rajasthan under IQEEP, which is 5 km from the CUTS CHD office. Nine year old girl Anita Prajapat, daughter of a farmer Kalu Lal Prajapat, is the member of the *Bal Panchayat* lives in the village. Anita's one leg was amputated when she met with an accident a year ago. They concluded that no one will marry a disabled girl and

started considering her as a burden for the family. Family members demotivated her by saying that education will be of no use to her as she is disabled and no one will marry her. Anita lost her confidence and was unable to concentrate on her studies.

Slowly Anita became irregular in attending school which came to the notice of the *Bal Panchayat*. During the *Bal Panchayat* meeting she was invited to become a member of the *Bal Panchayat*, which she readily accepted. The members involved her in games, and raised her confidence through songs and stories. With the support from the members of the *Bal Panchayat*, she got back her confidence and started concentrating on her studies and began attending school regularly. CUTS staff made her family members believe that she is normal like any other girl and requested them to provide their support to her. She has a good number of friends and now her family members also motivate her to concentrate on her studies. CUTS staff has also requested District Head of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* to provide an artificial leg to her. Anita has become a source of motivation for other children.

## CHD REPRESENTATIONS

- Amit Chowdhary met Suresh Sharma, Additional Education Officer, *Sarwa Sikhsha Abhiyan*, Chittorgarh on April 18, 2009 and held a discussion on improving basic requirements of IQEEP schools to promote quality education.
- Amit Chowdhary attended a Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management (JTCDM) Second International Roundtable on 'Exploring Human Security and Disaster Management' organised by the JTCDM in Mumbai, on April 24-25, 2009, Amit presented a paper on 'Resorting to Psychosocial Care and Community Support for Ensuring Human Security'.
- Amit Chowdhary attended a meeting of MNGO partners on April 24, 2009. Archana Sharma, NGO State Coordinator, Rajasthan attended the meeting as a state representative. The purpose of the meeting was to review various National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) projects in the district.
- Amit Chowdhary attended a district level consultation meeting on the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act in Chittorgarh, on April 02, 2009. Amit Chowdhary presented CUTS plan to implement the project in the district. CUTS will be the leading partner for implementing activities of PCPNDT Act project in Chittorgarh.
- Amit Chowdhary, Madan Lal Keer and Sanjay Moud attended a consultation meeting of IQEEP organised by Save the Children – *Bal Rakhsha Bharat* in Jaipur, on June 01-02, 2009.
- Amit Chowdhary and Madan Giri Goswami visited Bhilwara to meet Regional Managers of Bank of Baroda, Central Cooperative Bank, Baroda Rajasthan *Grameen* Bank, The Bank of Rajasthan, AGM-NABARD in Bhilwara districts to discuss SHG related issues on June 11, 2009
- Amit Chowdhary attend MNGO meeting organised by the Department of Health, Medicine and Family Welfare at *Swasthya Bhawan*, in Jaipur, on June 26, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to review the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of MNGO project.
- Madan Giri Goswami attended the meeting of '*Sudh Ke Liye Yudh*' in Chittorgarh, on June 29, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to review the action taken by the local administration against adulterators.

### Interns

Two interns (Anupriya & Anupam) from SC-BR visited CHD during April 22-27, 2009 to carry out an impact assessment study of IQEEP. They visited IQEEP villages: *Thukrawa*, *Raghunathpura* and *Bilola* and had interaction with project stakeholders.

## VISITORS

- Manomoy Dutta, Accountant, Save the Children – *Bal Rakhsha Bharat*, Jaipur office visited CUTS Jaipur to provide suggestions on IQEEP fund utilisation report
- The independent auditor Dharmender of SC-BR for IQEEP visited CUTS Jaipur to verify IQEEP fund utilisation report for the period of April 2008 to March 2009 on April 10 & 11, 2009.
- Sunil Kumar, Official from Oxfam-Novib visited CHD on May 07, 2009. CHD programmes and projects were briefed to him. Discussion was held on CHD accounting system and fund flow process as well.
- Akbar Mehruz Alam and Partho Banerjee, Programme Officers; and Narendra Chand, Area Finance and Support Services Manager of Sightsavers International visited CHD on May 25-26, 2009 to conduct pre-partnership programme and financial assessment. They interacted with the *Bal Panchayat* members. They also met Dr Gangadhar, Eye Specialist in the District Hospital; Dr Krisnaiya, Chief Medical Health Officer; and Suresh Sharma, ADEO, *Sarwa Sikhsha Abhiyan* and discussed about the project.
- Allan Asher visited CHD on June 16, 2009. He visited two villages named *Lal Ji Ka Khera* and *Badi Ka Khera* to see *Bal Panchayat's* (children parliament) and SHG's work. Allan lauded CUTS' efforts at the grassroots.