SAKAR MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT

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| **Executive Summary** |

The project under review is called ‘Social and Economic Empowerment of Adolescents in Rural Uttar Pradesh, India’ known as SAKAR project -Skills & Knowledge for Adolescents Rights. The project is currently on in the four districts of Rae Bareli, Allahabad, Pratapgarh and Fatehpur and aims to promote the right to quality education and other services for marginalized dalit communities in rural UP through innovative provision of informal education, vocational training and influencing local and national service provision. The overall goal of the project (2011-15) is to contribute towards the elimination of poverty and rights abuses in Uttar Pradesh, India, and support MDGs 1, 2, 3 and 6. The key elements of the project are generating awareness and mobilizing communities of their rights so that demand for quality education and entitlements comes from communities, provide informal and vocational education to adolescents and establish VECs so that issues related to RTE and other rights and entitlements are taken up with Government officials.

The SAKAR project started in July 2011 consisting of seven project cycles and the Ist cycle was initiated from Sept. 2011. As a part of assessment & evaluation of project’s progress this Midterm Evaluation (MTE) was undertaken. This MTE was undertaken with the support of team from FYF, SIT and the partners. The MTE was carried out systematically with tools and methodology in 31 villages of the project areas of three partners. The MTE ensured the participation of all major stakeholders.

The overall progress of the project as observed during the MTE has been found to be quite remarkable. The evidences indicated that there has been effective implementation of the project activities such as awareness, informal education to adolescents, formation & strengthening of VEC and community mobilization on rights & entitlements resulting to significant changes in the lives and mindset of dalit and marginalized communities in the project.

The summary of the progress on the project’s log-frame vis’-a-vis’ mid project milestone (set for March 2013) is given as under:

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| **The Impact indicator 1-** Average monthly household income |

Average monthly household income has been found to be Rs.4412 per month as compared to midterm milestone of Rs 4500 per month.

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| The Impact indicator 2- Percentage aware of their rights as Indian citizens |

Percentage aware of their rights as Indian citizens (able to name at least 2 rights), The MTE revealed that there are 33.6 of respondents/ households (24.8% Women and 45.72% of men) that are aware of rights as Indian citizens as compared to midterm milestone of 30% eliminating gender gap.

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| **The Outcome indicator 1-** *Number of children 6-14 who are not enrolled in school (disaggregated by gender)* |

*Number of children 6-14 who are not enrolled in school (disaggregated by gender)*, the MTE revealed that the number of boys and girls between 6-14 years that are not enrolled in the schools are 7 and 5 respectively from the households interviewed. In terms of percentage from the total children between the age group of 6-14 years of the

households interviewed, there are 7% girls and 11% boys of 6-14 years of age are not enrolled in school is comparison to 6% of baseline data. The families that have not enrolled the children to schools were found to be the children with special needs.

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| **The Outcome indicator 2-** Inclusion of adolescents in family discussions |

*Inclusion of adolescents in family discussions* (Percentage increase in inclusion in family discussions as reported by adolescents on completion of training) has been found to be 77% during MTE (73.6%, 92 out of 125 female respondents and 81.6%, 75 out of 92 Male respondents). It is relevant to mention that there is no baseline data on the indicator and the midterm milestone proposes to seek 20% increase. The relative increase in the inclusion of adolescents in family discussion is 64%.

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| **Outcome indicator 3:** Percentage of girls aware of HIV/AIDS |

*Percentage of girls aware of HIV/AIDS* has been found to be 91.2% (124 out of 136 girls that have attended AEC). The situation shown at the baseline was 64% and midterm milestone propose to achieve 75% girls aware of HIV/AIDS.

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| **Output Indicators 3.1**- Percentage of eligible targeted people with BPL card |

Percentage of eligible targeted people with BPL card has been found as 77.9 %, however this has been calculated based on the families interviewed during MTE and do not portray change in overall scenario (as new BPL cards have not been issued).

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| **Output Indicator 3.2-** Percentage of eligible targeted people with NREGS card |

Percentage of eligible targeted people with NREGS card has been reported as 53% against the baseline data of 70%, (as in the case of output indicator 3.1) the information is reported on the basis of data collected with specific respondents during MTE & thus cannot be drawn as definite scenario for the indicator. However the regular awareness campaign and monthly meetings in the project villages enhances the understanding of the marginalised communities on issues related to entitlements, health and quality of life aspects.

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| **Output Indicator 4-** Communities mobilised against effective implementation of RTE Act |

The progress on the Output indicators pertaining to awareness on Right to Education (RTE) Act has been found to be quite remarkable (80%) relatively to the midterm milestone of 45%. One of the crucial contributions of the SAKAR project is the formation of VEC in the project villages.

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| **Output Indicator 5-** Network partners have increased capacity of project management, advocacy, campaigning, learning & sharing information with both internal & external stakeholders. |

In MTE it was found that within this due course of project period regular capacity building workshop has been organized by SIT to ensure effective implementation of the project management. In every quarter training being organized for strengthening potential of the project staff for better project delivery. Trainings were imparted over the

issues of Project Orientation; Module Orientation; Child Rights & Child Protection; Right t Education; Best Practices for effective governance by community- led- organization; Module Refresher Training; Sessions upon Reporting, Documentation & information sharing with partners. Evidences were found for strong liasoning with media, government officials, state departments & other organizations working over similar issues. Such external networking is resultant of efforts made by the implementing organizations during their project activities. Tribunals & health and social mela came up as effective platform for establishing wider external networks.

During the MTE, it has been categorically mentioned by various stakeholders that there has been a substantial transformation in the knowledge and attitudes of the adolescents that have attended the centres (AECs in the project villages) and a significant increase in willingness for acquiring skills to start IGAs among adolescents. The impact of the project in seen through various indicators like the rise in self esteem and confidence level of adolescents, their being involved in decision making and finding a voice in the family as well as the community. There is evidence of how girls’ participation in a life skill and vocational education program gave them a voice in family discussions about their marriage and mobility—a voice that previously had been silenced. There is evidence of gain in vocational skills and setting up income generation activities. Also noticeable in the adolescents were important behavioural changes, translation of knowledge and information imparted at the AEC, to real life situations as well as budding agents of awareness building within their community. It is clear that the life skill/informal education has a sustainable short and long-term impact in empowering the adolescents to better shape their lives by making them aware of some specific issues,

such as: assertiveness in decision making, health-seeking behaviour, awareness about reproductive health, rights and services, early marriage, and dowry. The community in general has appreciated the role of AECs and the project in generating responsiveness among the marginalised communities and enthusiasm to live with dignity among the adolescents.

At another level the project has created awareness within the community about the Right to Education Act as well as set up Village Education Committees to monitor and raise issues regarding the state of education in the villages. At the level of the community the project has created awareness regarding services and entitlements as stipulated by the government, ways to approach and acquire these services and entitlements as well as has built confidence in the community that they are able to raise issues related to their village on a common platform, where government functionaries are also present. They are slowly but steadily demanding what is their right.

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| **Background** |

The project under review is called ‘Social and Economic Empowerment of Adolescents in Rural Uttar Pradesh, India’. The project is currently on in the four districts of Rae Bareli, Allahabad, Pratapgarh and Fatehpur and aims to build on and expand the work of the previous two projects. The overall goal of the project (2011-15) is to contribute towards the elimination of poverty and rights abuses in Uttar Pradesh, India, and support MDGs 1, 2, 3 and 6.The project will address the problem of poverty of adolescents in rural eastern UP experienced as poor health and lack of income, education and opportunity.

The mid-term evaluation seeks to generate insights into the functioning of the project so far both in terms of process and results adopted with a view to inform and enrich the future project implementation strategy on the ground.

The SAKAR project started in July 2011 and the Ist cycle was initiated from Sept. 2011. As the project completed more than a year and a half year and third cycle’s VE trainings were going on, it was decided to plan the Midterm Evaluation (MTE) ofthe SAKAR Project. This MTE was undertaken with the support of team from FYF, SITand the partners. The preliminary meeting was held on 7th March 2013 and subsequently the evaluation was initiated while adopting following process and methodology:

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| ***Process and Methodology*** |

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| ***Planning and preparation*** |

A meeting with FYF and project team at SIT was held to work out the details of the MTE based on the TOR.

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| ***Literature review*** |

The FYF and SIT team provided the documents related to the project including the six monthly reports from the partners and of the SIT. A careful review of the literature to understand the project approach, strategy and the components was undertaken. With the thorough literature review, the evaluator developed the clarity on the project and the progress.

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| ***Plan for the Field assessment*** |

It was decided with FYF to include all the major stakeholders in the MTE such as households, VEC, community, Adolescent boys/ girls that have attended AEC and also the ones that have started IGA after VE training. The other stakeholders, that have

played roles in the project implementation such as Counsellors, Project Managers, Partners and most importantly IED, UP, were also consulted.

In consultation with FYF, the appropriate sampling methodology has been worked out. The following sampling methodology has been adopted for the MTE:

1. Minimum of ten villages of each partner in different cycles
2. Seven households per village
3. Six adolescents per project village
4. Two each from the adolescent boys and girls that have started IGAs/ not started IGAs from each partner
5. Interview with VEC representatives
6. Consultation with community based on checklists in each project village
7. Consultation with Counsellors at the level of each partner

On the basis of discussion with FYF and literature review, nine set of tools were developed that are given below:

1. Household interview format for Households survey.
2. Interview format for Adolescents boys/ girls that have attended AEC
3. Interview format for VEC representative
4. Interview format for adolescent boys/ girls that have started/ not started IGAs after VE
5. Checklist for community consultation
6. Checklist for counsellors consultation
7. Interview format for the project manager
8. Interview format for the partners
9. Interview for the representative of IED.UP

It was ensured that the survey tools have same terms and definitions that have been accepted and used in the project. The nine set of tools were shared with FYF & SIT teams and pre-testing of the tools was undertaken on 19th March 2013.

The tools were developed to gather all relevant information to capture signs of change in the project area. The household interview was largely in consonance with the baseline household tool and included diverse information. The tools were finalised

based on the feedback received from the FYF/ SITTeams and observations from the pre-test exercise.

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| **a) Impact and results**  |

A comparative situation of the progress observed during the MTE on the Log frame is given below:

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| *LOGFRAME LEVEL* | *INDICATOR* | *Baseline data* | *DATA SOURCE* |
| Impact | Average monthly household income  | Rs.4076 per month | Rs.4412 per month{from the MTE household survey data} |
|  | % aware of their rights as Indian citizens (able to name at least 2 rights)(disaggregated by gender) | 5% women, 7% men | Women: 24.8% (31 out of 125 women respondents) Men: 45.7% (42 out of 92 Men respondents){from the MTE household survey data} |
| LOGFRAME LEVEL | **INDICATOR** | **Baseline data** | **DATA SOURCE** |
| Outcome | Number of children 6-14 who are not enrolled in school(disaggregated by gender) | 6% girls, 6% boys not enrolled | Female children: 28 girls in 23 households out of the total 217 households (7% of the total girls of 6-14 years of age)Male children: 29 boys in 23 households out of the total 217 households (7% of the total boys of 6-14 years of age){from the MTE household survey data} |
|  | Inclusion of adolescents in family discussions (% increase in inclusion in family discussions as reported by adolescents on completion of training) | Not measured. | 66.3%  (73.6%, 92 out of 125 female respondents) Male: (81.6%, 75 out of 92 Male respondents){from the MTE household survey data} |
|  | % of girls aware of HIV/AIDS  | 64% | 91.2% (124 out of 136 girls that have attended AEC){from the MTE, data from interviews with Adolescents that have attended AEC } |
| Output 1 | Number of adolescents who have completed informal education courses(disaggregated by gender) | No data (as the AEC did not exist). | Adolescents female=588 Adolescents Male=330(from the annual report 2013, SIT) |
| % adolescents who have increased confidence as a result of attending AECs | No data (as the AEC did not exist). | 86.6% (795 adolescents out of 918 adolescents)(from the annual report 2013, SIT) |
| Output 2 | Number of adolescents completing vocational education courses (disaggregated by gender) | No data (as the AEC did not exist). | Adolescents female= 462 Adolescents Male=256(from the annual report 2013, SIT) |
| Number of students who have completed vocational education courses who are involved in micro enterprises (disaggregated by gender) | No data (as the AEC did not exist). | Adolescents female= 67 Adolescents Male=34(from the annual report 2013, SIT) |
| % of those who have attended VE course who have gained skills and knowledge to set up an enterprise (disaggregated by gender) | No data (as the AEC did not exist). | 100% (718 out of 718 adolescents that have gained skills & knowledge to set up an enterprise)(from the annual report 2013, SIT) |
| LOGFRAMLEVEL | **INDICATOR** | **Baseline data** | **DATA SOURCE** |
| Output 3 | % of eligible targeted people with BPL card | 68% | 77.9% (169 {123 BPL+46 Antodaya} out of 217 HHs)(*This data has emerged from the households interviewed and should not be construed as the change in overall scenario).* |
| % of eligible targeted people with NREGS card | 70% | 53% (115 out of 217 HHs) {from the MTE household survey data} |
| Output 4 | % aware of RTE Act (disaggregated by gender) | 0% | 42.2% Female= 37.6% (47 out of 125) Male= 52.2% (48 out of 92){from the MTE household survey data} |
| % of VECs raising issues regarding RTE Act with key stakeholders e.g. head teachers | No VEC in existence. | 80.6% (25 out 31){from the MTE VEC survey data} |
| Output 5 | Partners are sharing information and learning through project network and wider FYF partner network |  | Quarterly Peer learning and sharing meetings are being organised at the project level.(Information gathered from partners & SIT) |
| Exit strategy developed and reviewed annually |  | Exit strategy developed by the partners and sent for approval.(Interview conducted with partners & SIT) |
| Partners are sharing information and learning with external stakeholders |  | Quarterly/ six monthly meetings are organised at the partner level for sharing the issues/ concerns with external stakeholders including civil society organisations & media.(*Interview conducted with partners, SIT & other relative stakeholders eg. Govt. Officials, PRI’s).* |

**Narrative analysis of the log frame results**

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| **Impact:**  |

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| 1. *Average monthly household income*
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The average monthly household income during the MTE has been found to be Rs. 4412 which is quite an improvement as compared to the Base line average monthly household income of Rs 4076. The average monthly household income emerged from the MTE is very much close to the midterm project milestone of Rs. 4500. The end of the project target of Rs.5500 seems to be quite realistic in view of the current state of inputs and support.

The efforts made during MTE was to conveniently capture the income from the different occupations, the household survey collected the yearly income from households. The average yearly income from the household survey is Rs. 52940.48 which implies the average monthly income of Rs. 4411.71. This yearly income average varies across the project area viz. Allahabad/ Pratapgarh- Rs. 53848.85 (Rs. 4487.4 per month), Fatehpur- Rs. 53299.80 (Rs. 4441.65 per month) and Raebareilly- Rs. 51636.86 (Rs. 4303.07 per month).

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| **Yearly Income slabs** | **Monthly Income slab** | **Number of Households** | **Percentage of the total Household interviewed** |
| Less than Rs.20000 | Less than Rs. 1666.70 | 3 | 1.38 |
| Rs.20001 to Rs.40000 | Rs.1666.75 to Rs. 3333.33 | 71 | 32.72 |
| Rs.40001 to Rs.60000 | Rs. 3333.42 to Rs. 5000 | 90 | 41.47 |
| Rs. 60001 to Rs. 80000 | Rs. 5000.1 to Rs.6666.67 | 29 | 13.36 |
| Rs. 80001 to Rs. 1 Lac | Rs.6666.75 to 8333.33 | 13 | 5.99 |
| Above 1 Lac  | Above Rs. 8333.33  | 11 | 5.07 |

Table: 1.1: Households in different Income slabs

From the surveyed households, a pattern of different households falling in different Income slabs, the six slabs of yearly and monthly income is shown in the table.

The occupational pattern emerged from the Household survey indicates that maximum number of families are living on farming and survives working as labour in village (including agriculture wage labour) as major occupation. The occupational pattern indicates that there is more than one occupation of the families that have been interviewed. The majority of the 217 household largely depend on wage labour within and outside village (about 82 & 113 respectively from the interviewed households), self farming (144) and wage labour under MNREGS (76 households). The families shared that there is preference of taking up wage labour within and outside village due to high wages and also limited number of work days under MNREGS (majority received work for 30 days). The occupational profile of the households indicates that there are diverse options of managing their family income and the thrust is given on continuous inflow of income to the family.

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| Occupations & Average Yearly Income |
| Main Occupations | No. of families | Average yearly Income (Rs.) |
| Self farming | 144 | 28433 |
| Shared farming | 48 | 16183 |
| Labour in village | 113 | 15090 |
| Labour outside the village | 82 |  22620 |
| Artisan | 13 | 19086 |
| MNREGS labour | 76 | 5628 |
| Government service | 11 | 88967 |
| Private service | 28 | 39417 |
| Petty trading | 9 | 20278 |
| Livestock rearing | 7 | 11142 |

The situation is quite optimistic as the average monthly household income has reached to a realistic level in view of end of the project target. The rationale assigned for such an improvement by the MTE is intensive awareness generation on variousentitlements including RTE & RTI, procedural aspects of accessing wage labour under MNREGS, equal wages, citizens’ rights and right of women for equal participation. This awareness has resulted in the generating drive among the target communities to rightfully value their physical labour and optimise the economic return from the wage labour (within and outside village).

The change in the type of houses also indicates improvement in the economic conditions of the target communities of the project villages. There are 40.6%



households possessing Pucca houses and 33.2 % households that still live in Kuutccha houses (thatched roof/mud wall). There is sharp increase in the percentage of Pucca house from 28% to 40.6% as compared to Baseline. There are indications of improvement in family income in about last one and half year.

It emerged from the MTE that there has been a very critical role played by VEC as pivot in the implementation of the project activities. The adolescents attending AEC have alsobeen found strengthening the VEC activities & supporting the awareness generation activities. In some villages, the households have been found developing time allocation plan for wage labour in and outside to maximise their wage labour. The improved average monthly income of households from the target community is also indicated by the improvement in the family assets like cell phones etc. The income from IGAs as being pursued by some of the adolescents after undertaking the VE (vocational education) was not taken into consideration for various reasons. In some cases the IGAs are still the initial phase so the income is more periodic in nature and in some, investments are large so the period where profits can be accrued, has still not started.

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| 1. Percentage aware of their rights as Indian citizens (able to name at least 2 rights) (disaggregated by gender)
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The awareness generation activities and issue based monthly meetings deserves an appreciation for bringing a huge transformation in the levels of knowledge and understanding of the target communities. The contribution of the adolescents that have attended the AEC and subsequentlybeen instrumental for change

Knowledge on Legislations

| **Key Legislations** | **Male (Total Male (92)** | **Fem Total Women (125)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  Right to live with dignity | 53 | 93 |
| Right to Employment  | 1 | 0 |
|  Bonded labour Act | 20 | 24 |
| Right to Education | 84 | 115 |
|  Minimum Wages Act | 82 | 108 |
|  Right to Information | 70 | 105 |

in their village is also acknowledgeable in the awareness on citizens’

rights.

It has emerged from the household survey that there are 65 families (36 male respondents & 29 women respondents) that are aware of one right as a citizen of nation. However among these 65 families, 41families (25 male respondents & 16 women respondents) mentioned that they are well aware of second rights of Indian citizen. There has been an improvement in the knowledge about the rights due to the community meetings and awareness campaign.

Subsequently 24.8% women and 45.7% men are aware of two rights as Indian citizens, as evaluated in the MTE household survey as compared to the baseline figure of 5% women and 7% men. This is a result of awareness as created by the project, through the Adolescent Education Centres (AECs) and these adolescents who have been instrumental in spreading this awareness within the community. There has been an improvement in the knowledge about the rights also due to the community meetings and awareness campaign, as conducted through the SAKAR project, in various villages, through different methods.

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| *Outcomes* |
| 1. Number of children 6-14 who are not enrolled in school (disaggregated by gender)
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The total number of boys and girls between 6-14 years in households interviewed are 64 boys and 67 girls respectively. The number of boys and girls between 6-14 years that are not enrolled in the schools are 7 and 5 respectively from the households interviewed.

There are 15 households where none of the children between 6-14 years is excluded from the enrolment in the schools. There are 17 households where one boy of 6-14 years of age is not enrolled in the school. There are 6 households where two boys of 6-14 years of age are not enrolled in the school. Likewise, there are 18 households where

one girl of 6-14 years of age is not enrolled in the school. There are 5 households where two girls of 6-14 years of age are not enrolled in the school. These girls and boys of 6-

14 years that are not enrolled to school are the children with special needs and are not physically capable of attending school regularly.

In terms of percentage 7% of children are not enrolled in school as against 6% as reported in the Baseline survey (7% girls and 11% boys are not enrolled in school).

Whereas this figure shows a marginal up from the baseline study, the MTE household survey clearly indicates that children with special needs are the ones who are not enrolled in school. In the MTE qualitative survey, it was found that the Village Education Committees (VECs) are working towards this aspect and in Raebarielly (SABLA), they have been able to get a special teacher appointed in a Primary School. The process is complex and time taking and much depends on the government rules and regulations. This marginal up in figure is also indicative of the fact that most other children are enrolled in schools.It also indicates the impact of the VECs, in convincing parents not only to enroll but also to ensure that children physically report to school. There is a building community awareness regarding this aspect and people spoken to during the Mid Term Evaluation (MTE), reported that if they found children out of school, they enquired from parents about why their children were not going to school. Teachers from the primary schools also said that they found the community taking interest in sending children to school. The meeting with the community, on a regular basis, the capacity building of the VECs by the project has lead to such a visible impact. Yet, it must be also stated that government school teachers also take initiative in enrolling students into schools as well as ensuring their attendance.

This is indicated by high degree of interest of ensuring quality education for their children. Out of 217 households, 215 households (all 125 women respondents and 90 men respondents) shared that the children should be sent to school.

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| 1. **Inclusion of adolescents in family discussions (% increase in inclusion in family discussions as reported by adolescents on completion of training)**
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Out of the 217 households interviewed, 167spoke on inclusion of adolescents in the family discussions, after attending AEC. This reflects that 92 are women

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| Response | Number of households | Number of women respondents (125) | Number of male respondents (92) |
| Adolescents included in family discussions | 167(77%) | 92(73.6%) | 75(81.5%) |
| Adolescents not included in family discussions | 50(23%) | 33(26.4) | 17 (7.8) |

respondents which are 73.6% of the total women respondents (125) and 72 men respondents which is 81.5% of the total men respondents. There are only 50 households that have shared that the adolescents are not included in family discussions.

These findings are further validated by the responses received from the adolescents that have attended AEC. The adolescents that have attended AEC shared their perceptions on their involvement in family discussions by their parents before and after attending AEC. The summary of the responses are presented in the table.There are 63 adolescents (58 girls and 5 boys) out of 186 adolescents (34%) that have mentioned that their parents never use to involve them in family discussion prior to the project and before attending AEC. This situation of never involving adolescents in family discussions has significantly transformed from 34% to 8% after attending AEC.

The perception on situation of parents always involving adolescents prior to the adolescents attending the AEC was 10% which was found amplified to 75% after the adolescents attended the AEC. The proportion of girls vis-à-vis’ boys also have increased significantly because of regular attendance and participation in the discussions at AEC.

**Adolescents’ perceptions about their involvement by parents in family discussions**

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| **Involvement of adolescents by parents in family discussions** | **Before attending AEC** | **After attending AEC** |
| **Girls** | **Boys** | **Total** | **Girls** | **Boys** | **Total** |
| Yes, Always | 15 | 4 | 19 | 97 | 42 | 139 |
| Yes, sometimes | 27 | 17 | 44 | 16 | 6 | 22 |
| Yes, rarely | 36 | 24 | 60 | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| Never | 58 | 5 | 63 | 15 | 0 | 15 |

The inference that can be drawn out of this data is, the adolescents that have always been included in their family discussion were 19 out of 185 before attending the AEC, however the figure raised up to 139 after attending AEC. In percentage, the increase in adolescents’ inclusion in the family discussion is 64.86%. Simultaneously, the data also reflects that there is sharp decrease in the percentage of adolescents who were never included in the family discussion. If we compare both the data, then the percentage of adolescents excluded from family discussions before attending AEC were 34% (63 adolescents out of 185) reduced to 8% (15out of 185) after the project’s intervention.

Hence there is a decrease of 26% amongst the adolescents who were being excluded from the family decision making process.

For better understanding what need to be reflected upon is the scenario of the community where we work, in a community where girls were assimilated into traditional gender roles with no questions asked or options explored, the Adolescent Education Center (AEC) was the first chance where the girls had to convince families and

communities at large, to allow them to take a different role, within that structure. It was clear that the AECs were viewed by the adolescent girls as an embodiment of their ‘hope to a new dimension.’ That girlsare taking part in family discussions is a mere reflection of a larger change. They sometime also see the continuum between outcomes and processes. *We can take an example of Shreedevi from Sehrivillage ,Reaberilly (SABLA), as shared by her that she was an introvert and did not participate in family discussions. The AEC gave her an environment where she realized that her opinion was heard and accepted at the AEC. With this confidence she convinced her father to get the old and redundant sewing machine that was lying unused at home, repaired so that she could utilize her tailoring skills, as learnt at the AEC, into an IGA. Until she came to the AEC, Shreedevi was inhibited in expressing her opinions to her father.*

Unlike girls, boys traditionally have had a space within families to express opinions and make their point of view, though young adolescents are not taken seriously in terms of their information base and knowledge levels. Yet there are examples where younger boys (aged 14-16) were able to convince their families on the basis of their knowledge as learned at the AEC, to bring in certain changes in the family.

*Shiv Babu of Jaisawa village in Allahabad district (PEPUS) says he has been able to convince his mother to wash all green leafy vegetables before she chops them to retain nutritional content. Sanjay and Rohit of village MotiramkaPurwa (SABLA) have been able to start a small food stall at the local village market to earn around Rs. 80 as profit, in a day. They had trained for mobile repairing but due to lack of confidence in the skill gained as well as financial inability, they could not start their own unit*. But the VE (vocational education) training instilled in them a feeling that they could explore the local market to find opportunities of starting an enterprise and earning profit.

This can be inferred as that, life skill education and VE catalyzes girls’ capacity to make important near-term decisions (e.g., concerning marriage, changing traditional behavior patterns)[[1]](#footnote-1)and enables them to cultivate longer-term well-being (e.g., by being able to support themselves and their families in the future through vocational skills learnt) which

is evident from various citation as quoted under this report ; it also increases their decision making power.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The change in the situation related to the involvement of the adolescents in the family discussions after their attending the AEC indicates the impacts of the AEC training module, its quality delivery by the Counsellors and efforts made to develop life skills among the adolescents.

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| 1. Percentage of girls aware of HIV/AIDS
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There are 170 adolescents (91.4%) out of 186 that have shared their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Out of these 170 adolescents, 124 are girls (91.2% of the total girls (136) interviewed) and 46 are boys (92% of the total 50 boys interviewed).

The situation reported in the Annual report of SAKAR (April 2012 to March 2013) indicates the 80.33% girls (that have attended AEC) aware of HIV/AIDS. This astounding progress on this indicator is largely because of quality of delivery of inputs on HIV/AIDS at the AECs by the counsellors’ and further involvement of the adolescents in the awareness activities at the community level.

While assessing HIV/AIDS awareness at the AECs, some girls were vocal to say that while they could learn a vocation skill on payment of a fee, they would not get information of HIV/AIDs and reproductive health even by paying a fee, though this had significant relevance to their lives.[[3]](#footnote-3) The significance of this information was well understood by most of the girls interviewed.[[4]](#footnote-4) Some of the girls even admitted to asking local doctor and nurse to open syringes in front of them, after they learnt about its significance.

Outcomes of the intervention have been two fold.

* Improved quality of and access to youth friendly reproductive health and HIV and AIDS information.
* Increased awareness among vulnerable adolescent girls and boys about reproductive health issues including HIV and AIDS.

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| Project’s Outputs:  |

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| Output 1 |
| * 1. Number of adolescents who have completed informal education courses (disaggregated by gender)
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There are 588 girls and 330 boys (918 adolescents) thathave completedthe Informal Education at AECs. There are positive indications that the milestone 2 set for Sept. 2013 will be achieved. The MTE has interviewed the adolescents that have attended the AEC and gathered evidence as to what changes have been found among the adolescents after completing informal education courses.

This has been validated by the interviews with VEC. As it is evident that the VEC has played a crucial role in supporting the mobilization initiatives of the counsellors undertaken for the ignorance and sometimes reluctant parents to send their adolescent girls or/ and boy to the AEC. Also the VEC has been involved in the subsequent follow up of the AEC, organizing community meeting, awareness activities and also facilitating informal discussions for community by the adolescents on contemporary rights based issues. Since the VEC were involved in mobilizing adolescents, their parents and ensuring their regular attendance at AEC by generating peer pressure, there role in AEC functioning deserves an appreciation. As the VEC has observed the adolescents and their knowledge & attitude before they started going to AEC, it was found necessary to capture the feedback from VEC representatives on the changes observed in the adolescents that have attended AEC.

The changes observed in the adolescents that have attended AEC mentioned in the VECs representatives’ responses have been gathered and are categorized in the following manner:

1. Increase in confidence level to face people/ outsiders
2. Improved understanding on issues related to health, NREGS, HIV/AIDS etc.
3. Improvement in Interpersonal communication (IPC).
4. Improvement in decision making abilities with the inputs on life skills.

Similar kinds of responses have been received from the community consultation, in all the villages visited. More than 85% representatives’ in the community consultations have shared that they have found increase in confidence, comprehension and understanding of rights and duties. In 85% villages, the community consultations have categorically appreciated the change in focus towards making efforts to transform their lives among the adolescents that have attended AEC. Earlier these drop outs and out of schools adolescents were loitering around and wasting time all days.

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| Total Households that have mentioned the positive changes observed among adolescent that have attended AEC |
| 217 Households interviewed during the survey | Total Households | Men respondents | Women respondents |
| Positive changes  | 181 | 82 | 99 |
| Increased confidence  | 78 | 37 | 41 |
| Improvement in decision making  | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Two positive changes  | 61 | 24 | 37 |
| Three positive changes  | 24 | 11 | 13 |
| Four positive changes | 14 | 7 | 7 |
| Any five changes | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| All six changes | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Positive changes: 1. Increased confidence 2. More knowledge about the Citizen’s rights 3. Improvement in decision making 4. Increased abilities of leadership 5. Improvement in understanding on health & HIV/AIDS 6. Learnt to start the IGA  |

Similarly the community consultations also revealed that the adolescents that have attended AEC have now become conscious of using the time purposefully and there is an inherent enthusiasm to improve their quality of life by engaging themselves in productive activities. The women in the community consultations (more than 90%) shared that the girls have shown remarkable change in their behaviour and interpersonal communication after attending AEC.

Qualitative data validated that the informal education was able to bring about a change in the level of adolescents’ knowledge creation on various personal, biological and social issues[[5]](#footnote-5). The course proved to be a useful source of information for adolescents making informed choices/decisions in their lives, i.e. being assertive about attending the

centralized VE course in Lucknow, asking the ANMs for iron tablets and TT injections[[6]](#footnote-6), checking for new syringes at the doctor’s clinic[[7]](#footnote-7), starting small IGAs at home[[8]](#footnote-8), being aware of menstrual hygiene[[9]](#footnote-9) and some being assertive about continuing to study[[10]](#footnote-10).

In relation to girls, the importance of the AEC and VE is greater in many more ways. The limited access that girls have to schooling, results in an intergenerational transmission of poverty and traditional values that imprisons successive generations of women in cycles of child marriage, early motherhood and often domestic violence. In such a scenario, the AEC is like an alternative avenue for acquiring life and vocational skills. The meeting with many adolescent girls during this evaluation also revealed that girls were not far behind boys in taking decisions that they thought have a consequence on their lives. These decisions are mainly related to education, marriage and money. The girls ‘participation’ and ‘control over decisions’, in certain cases surely reflects a possible effective drive towards empowerment.

It is clear that the life skill/informal education has a sustainable short and long-term impact in empowering the adolescents to better shape their lives by making them aware of some specific issues, such as: assertiveness in decision making, health-seeking behaviour, awareness about reproductive health, rights and services, early marriage, and dowry. What was critically reviewed in the qualitative evaluation is how the adolescents are connected to a process through this project which in a way is linked to organizing possibilities in their lived reality. It can be said is that the project has created an identity for them and somewhere affected the ‘way they walk through the world’.

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| * 1. Percentage of adolescents who have increased confidence as a result of attending AECs
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The Annual report indicates that there are 795 adolescents (86.6%) out of the total 918 adolescents that have increased self confidence as a result of attending AECs. In view of the current level of progress, there are strong indications of the achievement of Milestone 2 set for September 2013.

In the household interviews under MTE, there are 181 households, which are 83.4% of the total217 household, that have shared about the positive change in the adolescents that have attended AECs. Out of 125 female respondents interviewed, 99 (79.2%) shared that there is a positive changes in the adolescents after attending AEC. Similarly, out of 92 Male respondents interviewed, 82 (89.1%) mentioned about the positive changes observed among the adolescents after attending AECs.

There are 78 households that have mentioned increased confidence observed among adolescents that have attended AEC. There are 61 households (24 men respondents and 37 women respondents) that have observed two positive changes among the adolescents that have attended AEC.

There are about 48 households that have observed three and more three positive changes among the adolescents that have attended AEC. Only 4 households observed all the six positive changes among the adolescents that have attended AEC. All positive changes can be referred from the table as mentioned in the output number 1.1.

The maximum numbers of 119 adolescents (94 girls and 25 boys) out of 174 are in the age group of 17 to 19 years of age.

The above findings of increase in self confidence are further reinforced by the findings from the VECs representatives’ interviews. The changes observed in the adolescents that have attended AEC as summarised from the VECs representatives’ responses have been gathered and are categorized in the following manner:

1. Increase in confidence level to face people/ outsiders
2. Improved understanding on issues related to health, NREGS, HIV/AIDS etc.
3. Improvement in Interpersonal communication (IPC)
4. Improvement in decision making abilities with the inputs on life skills

Subsequently VEC’s similar kinds of responses have been received from the community consultation, in all the villages visited. More than 85% representatives’ in the community

consultations have shared that they have found increase in confidence, comprehension and understanding of rights and duties among the adolescents that have attended AEC. In 85% villages, the community consultations have categorically appreciated the change in focus towards life by making efforts to transform their lives among the adolescents that have attended AEC. Earlier these drop outs and out of schools adolescents were loitering around and wasting time all days.

To sum up, it is clear from various evidences that there has been an incredible change in the self confidence level of the adolescents that have attended AEC found from the findings from MTE and the Annual report. This is fundamentally due to the kind of inputs to inculcate the practices related to interpersonal communication and life skills by the devoted and focused Counsellors’at the AECs in the project villages. In relation to girls, the importance of the AEC and VE is greater in many more ways.

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| **Output 2** |

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| * 1. Number of adolescents completing vocational education courses (disaggregated by gender)
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The third cycle VE training is on-going at the time of the compilation of the Annual report of SAKAR. The SAKAR annual report indicates that there are 529 girls and 257 boys that have completed the VE trainings in the project. The Milestone 1 set for March. 2013 of 720 is already achieved and there are good possibilities of achieving the Milestone 2 set for Sept. 2013 which is 1200.

Some adolescents do not attend the VE, held at IED UP due to parental pressure. The parents are reluctant to send girls to a new city for ten days, despite all assurance of the SAKAR project. The target community is very backward and the prevalent values prevent them from sending girls outside the village. However the percentage of such dropouts is nearly ranges between 10- 15%, yet project has successfully achieved its milestone.

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| * 1. Number of students who have completed vocational education courses who are involved in micro enterprises (disaggregated by gender)
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The Annual report March 2013 shares that the number of girls and boys undertaking IGAs are 67 and 34 respectively. The significant aspect to be understood here is that while most of the adolescents live in an environment where they generally follow the

accepted societal norm of either occupation or traditional values, to take on different IGAs, have newer aspirations, to perceive a life of hope and dreams through economic independence is a major impact of the SAKAR project.

During the MTE, an assessment of girls and boys that are undertaking IGAs was also undertaken by way of interviews with selected ones (minimum 4 per partner) that have started or not started IGAs after attending VE courses.

Out of these interviews with adolescents engaged in IGA’s or who are aspiring to start up an IGA it was found that the IGAs started by the boys and girls are skill based with the minimum capital requirement. Most of the adolescents that have started IGAs have developed skill during the VE training. Some key findings from the interviews with adolescents started IGAs are given below:

* There are 13 (9 girls and 4 boys) out of 15 adolescents that have received the VE training and have started their IGAs.
* The initial investment for IGAs ranges from Rs 115 to Rs. 400 for Beautician, Rs. 20000 to Rs 25000 for Mobile repairing and Rs. 6000 to Rs. 25000 for Electronic item repairing, Board making and wiring.
* The adolescent that have started with diverse services such as mobile repairing centres, electronics repairing centres & provides other ancillary services (like motor binding, songs downloading, software downloading etc.) for both are able to manage viable IGAs and earn about Rs 1500 to Rs 5000 per month.
* Most of the adolescents that are doing viable IGAs have made efforts to organise initial investment from their own resources and loan from the family.
* These adolescents shared their dire need for facilitating access to some financial institutions, collaboration with Government rural entrepreneurship development programme and some kind of corpus to support the initial investment for taking the IGAs.
* All the adolescents shared the requirement of follow up and refresher training after VE training. There is a need of follow up or refresher training after VE to sort out the problems created during the IGAs. As ten days skill training provides skill
* in a limited manner, thus it would useful if the project envisage regular refresher training for the adolescents that have started IGAs to keep them up dated on the state of the technology. However some have had the opportunity to retrain with the Bank of Baroda SwarozgarYojana (Raebareilly and Fatehpur), Dr. Reddy’s

LABS (Raebarielly), the Jamshedji Tata Training program (Allahabad) or work as apprentices in shops and repairing units. The adolescents that have started IGAs are contributing to their family in different proportions (varies from 60% to 40% of the profit).

* There are two adolescents out of 15 interviewed that have not started IGAs due to the lack of money for initial investment. They have already sought for the support from IED, UP in proposal development for financial assistance under Government schemes. It would be a great help if the project envisages some financial support for such kind of adolescents for the initial period.
* All the 13 Adolescents that have started shared their dire need of working capital to expand the IGAs. It is a known fact that the target community in the project are extremely poor with inadequate resources to support such kind of initial investments. Though all adolescents except a girl are using their income for re-investment purposes with some share going in supporting the family (varies from 40% to 60% of the income).

The current progress is quite optimistic and possibilities to achieve the milestone 2 set for Sept. 2013 are quite high. In order to improve the progress, there are few suggestions that could be useful to expedite the progress in the remaining project period:

* Some web research on existing skill training modules (like Modular Employable skills (MES) courses by DGET, GOI) on the selected skills by the adolescents of the project area along with developing need based skill training module by specialised technical training agencies could be useful.
* Some kind of refresher or/and follow-up training is likely to be useful in clarifying the doubts, problems and catalysing the skills developed for the adolescents that have attended VE training.
* Inputs from other DFID supported projects pertaining to skill and entrepreneurship development (with and without financial assistance in terms of soft loans) could be useful to develop comprehensive strategy for viable IGAs promotion.
* Some support from the agencies specialising in providing incubation support for enterprise development with establishment of the financial linkages could be explored to start a pilot with selected adolescents.
* Some corpus fund for providing financial assistance in terms of soft and short term loans to the adolescents that do not have enough resources for initial investment could be explored. This fund could be established at the SIT, project, partner or/ and VEC. This kind of financial assistance for the deserving adolescents could be a catalyst in establishment of viable and sustainable IGAs in the project areas.
* Some kind of hand holding & support mechanisms for adolescents keen to start IGAs need to be envisaged as these adolescents are first generation of entrepreneurs’.

The shift in the training location from the AEC (in Ist cycle) to IED, UP (in 2nd and 3rd cycles) have been made strategically to maintain the quality and usefulness of VE training. There have been numerous challenges that have been experienced by the counsellors, project manager, partners and SIT in organising the VE training in three cycles. There have been various experiences of the adolescents utilising the supportive skill (developed during AEC module) with the skill developed through VE training to optimise their return from the IGAs.

The representatives from IEDUP, who were responsible for the VE training, were of the opinion that the VE of the project must not be viewed in isolation. What should be taken into consideration is the fact that adolescents from the most marginalised community, with meager exposure levels to ‘market forces and enterprise’, low confidence levels, nonexistent financial backing and a VE of only ten days, have been able to overcome the limitations and start IGAs or utilize the training to earn some profit, is a big leap forward.

Thus looking upto the entire scenario & analysing various social & economic elements related to VE component of SAKAR it would be useful to undertake a brainstorming

session (at the project/ partner/ target community) with a bottom up approach to explore the potentials and possibilities of utilising optimally the allocated two months for the skill and entrepreneurship development for facilitating the viable and sustainable IGAs as livelihoods options for the adolescents of the project area.

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| * 1. Percentage of those who have attended VE course who have gained skills and knowledge to set up an enterprise (disaggregated by gender)
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The findings from the interviews with Adolescents indicates that there are 160 adolescents (119 girls, 87.5% of total girls interviewed and 41 boys, 88% of the total boys) that have planned to start an Enterprise. Out of these 160 adolescents that have planned to start an Enterprise, only 123 (84 girls and 39 boys) have attended the VE training. Out of these 123 adolescents, 59 girls (43.4% of the total girls interviewed) and 30 boys (60% of the total boys interviewed) shared that they have found the VE training to be sufficient to start business. It has emerged as a finding that the girls that plan to start an enterprise (84 girls), 60 girls shared that they have made selection of enterprise as tailoring.

The Annual report of March 2013 indicates that there are 718 adolescents that have completed VE who have skills and knowledge to set up an IGA (include both those who have set up an IGA and those who have not yet set one up but are capable of doing so).The interests of the adolescents that have attended VE training to start IGAs have been found in general in the project area.

With the 718 adolescents in process to start the IGAs after completing VE, the current status indicates that the project has actually crossed milestone 1 set for March 2013 and it is quite possible that the Milestone 2 for Sept. 2013 will also be achieved. Within theseconstraints, the sustainability of IGAs is yet to be examined.

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| **Output 3** |
| * 1. **Percentage of eligible targeted people with BPL card**
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It has emerged from the document review that the target communities of the SAKAR project are the most marginalised families in the project villages. The maximum households that have been interviewed during the household survey are in the BPL and Antodaya categories.

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|  | Female  | Male | Total |
| APL | 27 | 21 | 48 |
| BPL | 71 | 52 | 123 |
| Antodaya | 27 | 19 | 46 |
| Total  | 125 | 92 | 217 |

There are 169 families (123BPL+46 Antodaya card holders) which are 77.9% of the total households interviewed during MTE. Antodaya card holders are BPL families that are the poorest among the poor.

The situation emerged from the MTE shows that there are 77.9% households from BPL (BPL + Antodyaya card holders as compared to 68% shared in the Baseline survey.

*\*Note:This is based on the households interviewed and should not be construed as change in overall scenario as there is no addition in BPL list in last two years.*

The possibilities of these targeted marSginalised families of the project areas getting the fresh BPL card are quite uncertain but the marginalised families of project are making efforts to realise their rights and entitlements. The knowledge about their rights and entitlements is generated through the awareness activities under the project.

With regard to the knowledge of the rights of the BPL, from the households interviewed (217), 59.1% households (130 households) shared that they have knowledge of rights of BPL. Out the 130, 68 (out of 125) were women respondents and 62 (out of 92) were male respondents. In the BPL category households, 22 out 27 women respondents and 17 out of 21 male respondents shared that they have knowledge of rights of BPL.

The increase in the knowledge about the rights of BPL among the households is largely due to the discussion on the rights during the community meetings and transfer of knowledge from the adolescents to the family.

*\*Note:To report progress against this indicator (3.1) is difficult at MTE, as the work for fresh allotment of BPL cards is suspended by the government since the project started. However, efforts are made by the partner’s to get the target beneficiary group listed in the new survey list& getting the beneficiaries enlisted into the eligibility survey list is a first step towards achieving the above mentioned indicator .*

*The scenario that need to be understand in this context is, that the target group under the project are people with more vulnerable voices to be raised for exercising their basic rights and reach to the concerned officials like PRI members. Under such crisis, even if project is providing eligible target group accessibility to the entitled government schemes & benefits then it should be taken as a progressive sign of accomplishment of theoutput. Through the activities like public tribunals, health & social mela, raising awareness & RTE campaigning the project provides a platform to the eligible community members to raise their concerns/issues to the government officials which viz -a -viz is contributing extended accessibility for the government benefits & entitlements . Though attaining the milestone of 75% by the end of project period is very ambitious, because this particular indicator is majorly regulated by the governance system of the nation formally &project efforts in this direction has a limited role.*

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| 3.2 Percentage of eligible targeted people with NREGS card |

Out of these 208 households that are aware about the MNREGS, there are 115 from the total 217 households that do have MNREGS Job cards (53%) and 95 do not have the MNREGS job cards. This status of families having MNREGS cards is based on the families that have been interviewed during the household survey. The actual situation may be different as it was observed that there is a tremendous awareness about MNREGS and significant advocacy efforts for accessing rights under MNREGS are going on in the project villages. The sample size and families came under the sample for households’ survey may also be different as compared to Baseline. The situation depicted in the Baseline shows that there are 70% families having MNREGS cards. The improvement in the situation regarding accessing MNREGS benefits is also explicit from the number of families that have asked for wage employment through MNREGS job work families received the employment under MNREGS.

**Few facts on growing awareness towards accessing rights under MNREGS**

Though the data related to percentage families having MNREGS cards have been found in household survey is 53% during the MTE but there are ample evidence that indicates level of awareness and community tendency to have access to benefits under MNREGS as their rights.

As mentioned earlier that the community mobilisation on various Government schemes and services including MNREGS has been able to bring a great change in the understanding and mindset of the communities to ensure their access to their rights and entitlements. In the community consultation in 31 villages visited during MTE, about 80% community members in 27 villages shared their knowledge about the MNREGS and efforts undertaken to know the status of their job cards under MNREGS. Out of the 80%, about 40% meet their respective Gram Pradhans along with VEC representatives once in a month to pursue the issue of their job cards and wage employment under MNREGS.

From the VEC consultations, it has emerged that there are 27 VECs that are regularly enquiring from the Gram Pradhan about the wage labour under MNREGS. The VECs in 25 villages are constantly pursuing the pending matter of issuing Job cards under MNREGS to the target community’s families. There are substantive indications that the milestone set for Sept. 2013 of 75% would be achieved in the light of current pace of community initiatives under MNREGS.

There are208 families that are having MNREGS cards (115 households -59 women and 56 men respondents), 96 have asked for wage employment through MNREGS Job work .and 87 (91%) has received the employment under MNREGS.

The source of information about the MNREGS varies different between different sources especially the Gram Pradhan who is the key person under MNREGS at the Gram Panchayat level. There are diverse sources such as Counsellors’ (5%), Other MNREGS wage earners (21%), Panchayat (4%), Gram Pradhan (64%) and TV/Radio (3%). The rationale of the households sharing the source of information about MNREGS from the Gram Pradhan (64%) is because of the repeated references made during regular awareness meetings of the role of the Gram Pradhan as the key person for MNREGS. It has been validated that the project team mentions the crucial role of Gram Pradhan and suggested the target families to contact Gram Pradhan for wage employment and job cards under MNREGS. This is the main reason that the Gram Pradhan has been found as the main source of the source of information about MNREGS in the project villages.

It is clearly evident from the MTE that there is a good amount of awareness undertaken on MNREGS through project activities under the project. The 87 households that have received employment under MNREGS, 44 households received Job work for less than 30 days, 20 households received Job work for 30 to 50 days, 10 households received 50-70 days and only 7 households received the employment for more than 70 days.

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| Output 4 |
| 4.1 Percentage aware of RTE Act (disaggregated by gender) |

There are 95 households (42%) from 217 households that have knowledge about Right to Education (RTE). Out of these 95households, there are 47 women respondents (37.6 % of 125 total women respondents) and 48 men respondents 52.2% of 92 total men respondents).

Out of the 95 households having knowledge of RTE, there are 29 households that are from APL category (out of total 48 households in APL), 51 households are from BPL category (out of total 123 households in BPL) and 15 households out of total 46 households in the category of Antodaya card holders.

42.2% of people in the target community were aware of the RTE Act. [[11]](#footnote-11) This evaluation also found people to be aware of the RTE. They said that the SAKAR project was instrumental in raising awareness about the Act. Efforts through community meetings, village level awareness camps, the VEC members as well as the adolescents of the AEC, were instrumental in this.[[12]](#footnote-12) They were also of the opinion that it gave them a feeling of empowerment as in certain places they have seen visible changes. Some members of the community though, were of the opinion that change was slow in happening as much of the process as initiated by the VECs got stuck in bureaucratic files.

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| 4.2Percentage of VECs raising issues regarding RTE Act with key stakeholders |

There are various kinds of responses received from the VEC depending upon their perceptions and access. There are 25 VECs (80.6%) out of 31 VECs that have raised issues regarding the RTE act.

There are five mechanisms that have been compiled based on the responses from the VECs representatives that are given below:

1. Meeting with Headmaster was useful and therefore no application was sent.
2. Speaking to Gram Pradhan on irregularities in school was useful.
3. Mobilising community representatives to exert pressure on teachers was useful in ensuring their regular attendance.
4. Filed application to BSA.

There are 20 VEC that have used only first mechanism- meeting with Headmaster-to sort out the RTE related issue. Twenty five VECs used all four mechanisms to sort out the issue related to RTE. There are two VEC that have made no effort to sort out RTE related issues. Four VEC shared that there was no need for any issue to be sorted under the RTE.

Another perspective to understand the changes brought in the school facilities was gathered from the VECs interview. The changes that have been brought in the school facilities are related to attendance of children and teachers plus provision of basic facilities in schools.

The changes that have been compiled based on the responses are given below:

1. Regular attendance of teachers & students
2. Timely distribution of school uniform & scholarships
3. Quality of MDM improved

There are 3 VECs out of 30 that have brought improvement in all three aspects in the schools facilities in their villages. There are 17 VECs that have brought changes with regard to two of the above mentioned three changes in their villages. There are 10 VECs that have only brought change in ensuring regular attendance of teachers and students in the village schools.In case of all 30 VECs, the representatives are visiting regularly (at least twice a month) to monitor the quality of teaching, attendance and MDM.

The above finding indicates that the VECs are raising issues related to RTE at local, block and district level as the situation arise. There are evidences that VECs have streamlined the functioning of School Management Committee (SMC) and collaborated with them to sort out the issues related to education facilities and teachers’ attendance.

It is too early in the life of the project to be able to give a concrete view on this as the VECs are still in a nascent stage. Currently, the VECs are still in the handholding phase hence to make a clear judgment today will not be valid. Yet understanding that only those VECs are effective, even now, where the individual members are highly motivated, a picture does emerge the VECs sustainability will be dependent on the members’ motivation level. Without the support and a push that the project is currently providing the VEC, it may be ambitious to think that the VECs will function as independent structures, well after the project phases out. Here it is important to understand the background of the VEC members. All of them are daily wage workers or small and marginalised farmers and they come from the most backward community where the process of life is fraught with myriad of difficult issues. The social and the cultural context of the VEC members play an important role in their involvement levels and have to be accounted for. The political and social dynamics of the village also play

an important role here. It was clearly noticeable in Pratapgarh block, Allahabad that most VEC members were vary of all the Gram Pradhans as well as government officials who had affiliations to the Member of the Legislative Assembly. Yet even in such a scenario we can see some examples of impact due to the driving force of some individuals. If such individuals are identified and certain interventions continue even after the life of the project, there may an extended sustainability of the established structure. The following examples from the project partners will demonstrate that the motivated VEC members are raising issues regarding RTE with these stakeholders at each level.

Ram Prasad Singh Suryavanshi, of village Behrampur, is an active member of the VEC, in Fatehpur. The hand pump of the village school in Behrampur was not functioning so the VEC organized a Jan Sabha (open meeting of villagers) gave a written application to the Gram Pradhan, which ultimately led to the repair of the hand pump. An application to get the boundary wall of the school made has also been submitted to the Gram Pradhan (March 2012), leading to fund allocation. Physical work of building the walls is still awaited. Photocopies of all such applications have been kept as records. The attendance of the school teachers is monitored by this VEC as well as the quality of

the midday meals. Another major achievement of this VEC was when they were able to get the Behrampur primary school teacher to unlock the school toilet (for students but used exclusively by the teacher) for all the students in the school. It took a lot of effort as the teacher filed an FIR against some VEC members claiming that they were unnecessarily harassing her. The VEC brought the issue to the notice of the villagers and they held repeated meetings with the teacher until she relented. The other positive aspect of this incident is that the concerned teacher now comes to school on time and is aware that the VEC as well as the villagers will not accept irresponsible behavior.

Ram Prasad Singh Suryavanshi says that once the SAKAR VEC was established, people became aware of their rights as members of the VEC, as well as the RTE. Before the SAKAR VEC came into existence, there was a SMC (School Monitoring Committee) in the village but its members were not aware of it. One other important aspect of this VEC is that they also take interest in the health issues of the village. They helped in referring women for the Janani SurakshaYogana (safe delivery) as well as pursue TB patients in the village to see if they are getting medicines under the DOTS program, regularly.

This VEC also works closely with the Kisan Club (Farmers Club), as they believe that when they have to make applications or meet the government officials, there is strength, both in being organsied as well as in numbers. Along with the Kishan Club, they have been pursuing the Block Development Officer (BDO) for old age pension and BPL cards.

This VEC is upbeat as they have been utilizing information, as provided by the SAKAR team, to raise their voices for services and rights. In the open meetings that are held, they feel empowered to talk to the officials on the basis of the information they have.

Another important stakeholder in the RTE is the education department. The village/block/district level tribunal held by SAKAR is of relevance even to the education department and was accepted by the education officials at the Block Resource Centre, Fatehpur. Mr. HemantTripathi and SarvMangal said that while the officials look at larger issues, the VECs bring to such tribunals, issues that are localized in nature and may not otherwise come to notice. The SAKAR platform, through the VECs and the awareness created amongst the community, activates officials to act as they have to provide solutions/answers to the community, during such tribunals.

The tribunals are open platform where the community and the personnel from the community come face to face. Issues regarding educations are raised by both, the teachers as well as by the community. In such meetings, some issues are resolved and many others are noted down for action. Also in such tribunals the teachers also raise concerns regarding student attendance, parental involvement as well as the concern that some parents enroll their children in government schools to get scholarship and school uniform but actually sent their children to private schools.  Hence this interface is a two way process where both sides raise issues regarding education. Community concerns are also met. Schools in Misramau and Budhiyapur in Fatehpur and in Allahabad did not have boundary walls around the school premise. This aspect was discussed at the tribunal and was resolved thereafter made. In Vilidpur primary school, the soap and towel provided by government to be used during the mid day meals was not being put to use. This issue was raised at the tribunal. Teacher attendance, locked toilets, broken taps, quality of mid day meals as well as toilets only being used by teachers were issues raised in tribunals in all partner areas. In Behrampur in Fatehpur, the handpump in the school was very low and children found it difficult to drink water. This issue was also resolved at the tribunal meeting. Such tribunals also give a feeling to the education department that their work is being ‘watched’ by the community.

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| Output 5 |
| 5.1Partners are sharing information and learning through project network and wider FYF partner network |

The coordination and communication between the project partners has been effective and in the second year there has been a greater level of sharing between Partners. The trainings conducted by Saksham India Trust in Lucknow or the VE done by the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (IED) in Lucknow gives partners a chance to interact closely with each other and share ideas. Any innovative ideas and strategies are exchanged during the FYF training/meetings. This is an important role of the network coordinator/partner SIT to ensure such a healthy interface between partners. Developing village action plans for VECs came up as one idea at a partner meeting and it was accepted and followed by all. Simultaneously teaching tailoring along with life skills and the viability of it as girls started to earn even while at the AECs was a learning

that was shared at the network platform. The partners too, when setting into action some new innovation, inform other partners and invite them to see its implementation (attending tribunals to learn from each other and the Fatehpurrathyatra are some examples). Yet it depends on the other partners whether they wish to physically be present for it. There has been a marked improvement in the coordination and communication between the implementing partners as well as IED, who is also a partner in this project. The initial phase was problem ridden between the partners and IED, especially after the village based VE training. After sharing information in this regard, a centralized training was started, which improved the relationship between them and IED has proved its capability and desire to deliver. The other aspect in which sharing between partners helped was when partners felt that IED was not following up the adolescents for bank linkages. On a monitoring visit, it was found that most of the capital need was petty for which bank loan was not required (most of the girls required a capital of Rs 200 or Rs. 500). Also IED held a district level meeting at each partner level to ensure that the various players who could help in providing loans or grants, came on a single platform. It became clear to the partners that IED could only bring the banks and officials to their door step and that it was not in their mandate to provide adolescents with loans from banks. The third cycle VE training that is ongoing has also met with the expectations of the partners, in terms of training, infrastructure facilities and attitude.

Yet all project directors feel that there should be a more formalized and structured mechanism in place so that sharing between partners is more effective. They feel that FYF should take steps to ensure more inter partner visits as otherwise the tight schedule of the SAKAR project and extremely limited time frame makes it difficult for them to accept invitations of the other partners.

The coordination and communication between SIT/FYF and partners has grown to a level of maturity in the second year. From the initial phase where the partners would wait to be given directions on each activity and input, the partners, though now seek guidance from SIT whenever required, do not wait for directions to move ahead. The mandate of SIT after the initial phase was to allow the partners capacity to build by taking decisions independently for the progress of the SAKAR project. Hence though the partners and SIT are in close coordination regarding the progress of the project, confidence has been instilled in the partners to try out innovative ideas that go beyond the planned activities of the project proposal. In the second year what is emerging is

that the philosophy of the project is being better understood and an attempt is being made to translate it into the working of the project. There is a good communication level between FYF/SIT and partners. Healthy and open communication has lead to additions into the project, like the centralized training and the intensive training on advocacy issues.

As part of this networking only the project network collaborated with National Coalition of Education, an institution leading for policy level advocacy towards effective implementation of RTE nationwide.

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| * 1. **Exit strategy developed and reviewed annually**
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A final exit strategy is still in the nascent stage. Partners are in the process of implementing the strategies developed by them. There is a growing realization that the project is unique as it has seven cycles of six months each and it exits from one beneficiary base every six months. The exit strategy looks at the project in a holistic manner, where as distinct follow up plans needed to be developed and implemented for all cycles. This project requires that there be a robust follow up plan for all cycles & one exit strategy for the project as a whole. Currently partners are in the process ofimplementing individual follow up plans and collective exit strategy is being collated through it.

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| * 1. **Partners are sharing information and learning with external stakeholders**
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There are regular quarterly and monthly meetings among the partners to promote sharing and learning. The partner undertakes regular sharing with the media and other likeminded civil society organisations about the key achievements and challenges in the project areas.

The main external stakeholders are the frontline service providers, the PRI members, the education department, government schools, and medical department, block and district officials. Partners are sharing information about the project with all these stakeholders. Strong liaison with government officials is beneficial to the project. Government officials’ rapport with project staff in all partner areas is noticeable. The utilisation of the SAKAR health and awareness melas to publicise government health schemes, giving details of payment structure as related to work for MNREGA, talking about government welfare schemes at village meetings as organised by the SAKAR team, attending RTE tribunals organised by SAKAR- are all examples of a

strengthening relationship with government officials.[[13]](#footnote-13) There is a feeling of trust in the program when asked about the SAKAR within the government officials, largely. The medical officers in the health department talk of the health melas as a good example of public-private partnership. The education department has also utilised the information on RTE in the SAKAR staff to train their own teachers.[[14]](#footnote-14) School teachers in Raebarielly used the platform of the SAKAR health mela to fulfill the mandate of school health check up. The Block Development Officers in Raebarielly said that they used the SAKAR platform to disseminate information on government programs. The SAKAR team has also taken adolescents to the Block development office, the Bank and the police station to make them aware of various structures that exist for their benefit and

redressal. It can also be looked upon as an attempt to mainstream marginalised communities by this process.

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| **Empowered target groups** |

There are numerous evidences that have emerged significantly that the target groups have been empowered in the project areas. This has happened with the awareness and capacity building support provided through various project activities including the awareness generation and monthly meeting of the community and VEC in the project villages. The VEC formed in the project villages has become an empowered community organisation after having received crucial capacity building inputs and constant discussions on the rights based issues in regular monthly meetings.

The direct beneficiaries are the adolescents from the backward and marginalised community in the project area, as identified by the partners – SABLA, SDF and PEPUS.

They are in the age group of 14 – 19 years and are school drop outs. The number has reached 918 by the end of the March 2013.

The indirect target beneficiaries are the families of these adolescents. There are 5967 indirect beneficiaries.

The project has been reaching the target population. The Partners identified the target population, initially. During community meetings in the early phase of the program, it was clearly stated that the SAKAR project was aimed for the most backward and marginalised communities – the dalits, the backward and the OBCs (other backward classes). In a village community, once this is known, people are prompt to report if adolescents from other communities enroll. That the project has been reaching the intended target community was verified by the records of the Partners, as well. In the field, some PRI members were asked if the project was reaching the most marginalised communities – the dalits and the OBCs. Since all PRI members know members of their development area, they replied that the SAKAR project was reaching the intended group.[[15]](#footnote-15) Meeting with adolescents during the MTE, visiting their homes, talking to the families informally, brought out the fact during the discussions that they belonged to the backward community and that the project was helpful to the adolescents, in many ways. During the MTE household survey 39 community consultations were held with the target

families. The VEC members gave an interesting analysis of the perception of the intended target community before the onset of the program.

There are numerous evidences that the project is reaching the intended target groups. During the MTE, there are about 38 community consultations that have been undertaken with the target families. In all the consultations, the common finding has been the tremendous changes brought in the level of awareness of the target families as compared to the pre-project situation.

To understand how the project has transformed the target communities and their lives, the MTE gathered theopinions of the households that have been interviewed with

regard to the improvement experienced at village, community and family after the start of the project**.** The key observations are given as under:

* There are 212 households that have shared about the improvement at different levels after the start of project.
* There are 5 households that could not give any response on this aspect.
* There are 127 households (75 are women respondents and 52 are men respondents) that have shared that there is an improvement in number of children attending school.
* There are two male respondents and a female respondent that shared about the Teaching and teacher’s attendance in school being regular.
* Four women and men respondents shared about an increase in the Community solidarity in problem solving.

Situation of the villages prior to the project- VECs perspective

It has been found during the MTE that the situation prior to the project in the project villages was very deplorable with the widespread misnomers on the girl child education, immunization and exploitation of girl child in the name of traditions. There are various responses pertaining to situations described have been captured in following manner:

1. Ignorance and lack of awareness on importance of education
2. Social backwardness characterized by reluctance/ negligence of girls education
3. Misnomers on immunization and consumption of Iron folic acid tablets.
4. Out of school children are engaged in unproductive activities
5. Mismanagement in school and low quality of school education

There are 17 VEC (55% of the VEC interviewed) that have indicated all the above five situations prevalent in the villages before the start of the project. There are 6 VEC representatives that have indicated three situations (Ignorance and lack of awareness on importance of education, Social backwardness characterized by reluctance/ negligence of girls education & Misnomers on immunization and consumption of Iron folic acid tablets) prevalent extensively in the villages before the project started. There are four VECs that have indicated four situations (excluding C- Misnomers on immunization and consumption of Iron folic acid tablets) in their villages before the start of the project. The remaining 4 VECs (each one giving the different combination four situations) have indicated mix of the four situations described in their villages prior to the start of the project.

The general interactions with the village representatives/ community consultation validate the responses and it has emerged that all the five situations were prevalent in the project villages with variation in the magnitude of the level of ignorance, backwardness and orthodox practices. In about 45% villages, the community consultation indicated the practices of early child marriage, intensive discrimination of girl child, a complete ignorance on the importance of education and discrimination of marginalized in the implementation of government schemes and services including MNREGS, health and pension schemes.

* There are three women respondents and a men respondent that have shared about an improvement in access to Social security schemes/ services.
* There are 33 women respondents and 26 men respondents from the households
* interviewed that have mentioned two improvements been observed in the village
* after the start of the project. There are 6 women respondents and 5 men respondents from the total households interviewed that have mentioned three improvements been observed in the village after the start of the project.

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| c)Value for money (VFM) |

Assess whether the project is providing good value for money. In making this assessment, the evaluator(s) should consider the following questions:

* **Do the project impact/outcome remain relevant, in light of any changes in context?**

Yes, there are numerous evidences and hints that found during MTE that indicated that the project impact/ outcomes would remain relevant in view of the current progress. The log-frame, revised after Baseline, is quite relevant in the light of overall focus of the

project and it is strongly validated that the impact/ outcomes set for the project are achievable.

* **Calculate the project’s inputs/results ratio (i.e. total project budget from DFID divided by the number of direct beneficiaries).**

Total project budget from DFID 2, 68, 80,243 INR and the total direct beneficiaries’ 2100 adolescent hence project input result ratio stand as 12800:1

* **How are project partners delivering value for money (e.g. are unit costs kept down, are resources shared, etc.)?**

Yes, the partners are getting the quotations prior to the purchases and most efficiently using the fund in the project.

* **Is the project being implemented within the expected budget?**

No, as there are evidence of fund leveraging from SIT for the Vocational training for adolescents.

* **Is the project being implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?**

As compared to the experiences of other skill development & Income generation project implemented in other Indian states, the project is being implemented on the lowest cost and most efficient way.

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| **d) Innovation**  |

Examples of innovation may be: an approach applied for the first time in India; new ways of applying/adapting/developing an existing technique or initiative; experimentation, with the risk of failure (as long as lessons are clearly learned and the implications of failure are appropriately considered); an inspirational activity that has dealt with an entrenched problem with fresh eyes; genuine participation of people most affected by a problem to release more energy for ideas; and use of appropriate partnership model.

It is difficult to say whether the innovative aspects seen in this project have been applied for the first time in India. Most of the practices that are termed ‘innovative’ imply that they have been used beyond stated project activities and have had a meaningful impact on the project.

* Adolescents from older cycles of AECs holding street plays as well as attending the inauguration of the new AECs in villages to inform the community about the SAKAR project and its benefits on their lives.
* Adolescents who have started IGAs talk about their success story on a village platform when the project holds inaugurations of new AECs and during awareness raising campaigns, to inspire other adolescents.
* Strong liaison with government. Both the government as well as the project utilizing each other’s platforms to benefit their official mandate. A good example of public – private partnership was viewed in all partner areas when the government health team utilized the health awareness platforms of the SAKAR project to publicize the ambulance services. After the National Rural Health Mission scam, two years ago, the government of Uttar Pradesh has stopped allocating funds for publicizing health programs. The medical officer, Fatehpur, Raebareilly and Allahabad, Drs. Vinod, Baan and Ravi were of the opinion that such platforms were beneficial to both, the community, the project as well as the government health department.
* Creating women’s groups, adolescent girls group (in school) as well as young children’s groups in Fatehpur is an innovative approach to strengthen the projects base as well as acceptability of the project. Women’s group discuss
* health and access to service related issues, in school adolescent girls discuss reproductive health issues and young children are involved in games.
* The main focus of the Rathyatra was to create awareness about the Right to Education Act, the SAKAR project as well as village issues related to schools, amongst the community. The Rathyatra covered 20 villages and approximately reached out to 6000 villagers. It travelled around a 150 kms in 5 days.
* The rathyatra (jeep rally) moved from one target village along with the VEC members of that village to the next target village. Enroute, a microphone continuously propagated the various aspects of the RTE. This information was relevant as it made people aware of this right, as enacted by the Constitution of

the country. The jeep travelled through villages that did not fall within the target area but continued to give information regarding this act. At the next target village, the VEC members from the previous target village met with the VEC members of the next village and interacted regarding their work in the SAKAR project. The jeep in the mean while would travel into the village and create awareness regarding the RTE, as well as the SAKAR project, through its announcements.  It would also announce that there would be a community meeting that same day. In this community meeting the VEC members, with the support of the SAKAR team, would speak about their work as well as the RTE Act. This community meeting also involved the teachers, head teachers as well as other government functionaries. Some functionaries of the Panchyat Resource Centre were also invited to talk about the RTE Act.  Issues regarding the state of education at the village level were also discussed on this platform and some resolved as well. The education department functionaries were aware of the rathyatra as the SDF SAKAR team had formally got the rathyatra inaugurated by the Assistant Basic Education Officer, in Fatehpur. Once the community meeting was over, the jeep along with some VEC members would move to the next target village.

* Benefits of the rathyatra were manifold. It created an awareness regarding RTE amongst a large number of people. The SAKAR team used this platform to talk about the project and its various other interventions. The VEC members gained community recognition. This led to confidence building in them. They also got an opportunity to address the community from a formal platform, in the presence of the SAKAR team, the community as well as government functionaries. The community realized that there is a constitutional act which provides legal rights in the field of education to all the citizens. The government functionaries from the education department also recognized the SAKAR efforts in dispersing information about the RTE. The involvement of the government functions at this platform also created a sense of trust, both within the community and the department regarding the importance of awareness building about the RTE. It also sent a message to the teachers and head teachers in the villages that the community was keeping an eye on their functioning. The VECs role as a positive pressure group will evolve from such activities.
* Building on information and knowledge on RTE has led the government education department to value such information base in the project staff. Fatehpur SAKAR team offered to train the school teachers on RTE and this was accepted and utilized by the block resource centre for education in Fatehpur.
* The centralized training for VE can be viewed as innovation as it was not a part of the initial project activity.
* During the VidhanSabha elections of Uttar Pradesh,in 2011, some adolescents from the AEC met with candidates who came to ask for votes and asked them to meet the needs of their village, in lieu of votes. This activity impressed many candidates as they were impressed by the awareness levels in the adolescents about the issues that afflict their community.
* Associating with the department for legal education to provide information on legal provisions to the community, at large.
* Developing village plan along with the community and identifying issues that needed to be put forth to various departments. This helped the community as well as the VEC members to raise relevant issues during the tribunals.
* Sensitization of government and private school children on various important issues by AEC adolescents as well as the children from the private schools, by making a presentation on national days (Republic and Independence Day).

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| **e) Sustainability**  |

This project is unique in the sense that it completes one cycle every six months and moves on to a new cycle with the same set of interventions and activities but for a new beneficiary base. In such a scenario, the question of sustainability arises every six months. In the current scenario, the Counsellor, together with their interventions that are required in the new cycle, follows up the adolescents as well as the VECs of the older cycles. This raises many questions. Are we looking at the sustainability of the objectives of the project or are we talking about the sustainability of the project activities and its impact? If sustainability is about the project objectives, then the project intervention has

no structures that ensure sustainability after the project phases out. If sustainability is about project activities, i.e., continuing of the AECs and VECs, then the past three cycles do not show substantial support mechanism to support sustainability. The Counsellors follow up on the past cycles, meet with adolescents who are engaged in IGAs, VEC members as well as members of the community but with the increasing number of cycles, this effort will become very marginal. Also a six month cycle is too small to ensure that sustainability mechanism will be put in place or capacities built to that extent that the project will be able to continue even after the partners withdraw. The VEC members will require continued handholding and the adolescents will require support to set up and sustain IGAs. The Counsellors also provide health related information and act as an emotional support to the adolescents.

Yet certain efforts to ensure sustainability were seen on the field.

* Developing AECs as information centers. Information regarding various government schemes related to welfare and health, MNREGA and other activities are being provided at the AECs.
* Sewing machines were kept at an old AEC which ensured that the girls came together to stitch clothes as well as to discuss some important issues of the informal education module and socialize. Yet will it be possible to ensure machines in each village to act as a mechanism to draw adolescents together? Also how long can this mechanism sustain? In the long run is there a need for this?
* Developing women, in school adolescents and children groups ensures understanding of the project as well as a percolation of the project activities and objectives, in the larger community. This is an innovative practice but it is dependent on the inputs and constant presence of the Counsellor. What happens in their absence? Who takes over their role?
* Ensuring regular community meetings to make them aware of various government services and entitlements as well as create awareness about the roles and responsibilities of the front line service providers. The capacity of the community will have to be built so that they are able to demand their rights, independently.
* The capacity of the few highly motivated VEC members is being developed, based on their requirements of information on RTE as well as advocacy. Need based trainings are being conducted through the project to enhance the capabilities, self esteem as well as recognition of the members.

The intensive focus of resources on an area for a limited period of time is expected to catalyze self-sustaining development but the reality is that there are no quick fixes. Development is a continuing process and it's important to maintain that continuity. For a project with a six month cycle, sustainability will prove to be a challenge as the time period in one cycle is extremely limited and barely enough to complete life skill education and VE. Also, currently all efforts is Counsellor dependent. With the increase in the number of cycles, follow up will become increasingly difficult and will affect integration. This integration is essential, for sustainability. If benefits realized by the project are to be maintained and continued, then sustainability will have to be thought about after each cycle. The project design is such that the issue of sustainability arose during the first cycle itself and will be a dimension in all the following cycles.

There are three crucial elements of the project viz. informal education (including the life skill education) & Vocation skill training, promotion of livelihoods among adolescents to improve their family income and rights based advocacy (including right to education) through the VEC.

It would be noteworthy to work out the steps under these crucial elements that would be useful in order to ensure the sustainability of the project interventions after the project comes to an end:

1. Corpus fund for promoting the sustainable IGAs
2. Informal education (including the life skill education) & Vocational skill training: It is pertinent to note that the informal education at AEC is a fundamental measure through which the adolescents are brought in the mainstream. A mechanism of the regular functioning of the AEC with the community support is a challenging but attainable task. The project needs to identify some potential adolescents that can take the responsibilities of managing the AEC with the initial capacity building support from the project in the withdrawal phase. Similarly the adolescents that have shown interest in promoting the skill transfer by mentoring the slow learners in post-training phase and started their IGAs after skill training could be important resource persons/ master trainers for the skill trainings’ to other adolescents in post-

withdrawal phase. It is assumed that the project would facilitate them with adequate capacity building efforts to keep them behest with the upcoming/ state of the art technological development in selected trade. Some kind of consortium of the skill trainers from different areas could be used for need based skill enhancement.

1. The promotion of livelihoods among the adolescents involve a gamut of activities such as identification of the resource person or the resource agency that could successfully provide incubation support, enterprise establishment and hand holding support during the enterprise management for at least six to eight months. Subsequently the agency would be providing the skill up gradation training along with the organizing the workshop for the adolescents that are managing their enterprises to promote peer learnings. A common facility workshop would be established/ used with local/ resource support for handling the problem issues and demonstrating the problem solving.
2. The critical aspect in promoting the rights based education and advocacy for rights and entitlements is the information about the modifications/ amendments taking place with regard to various rights and entitlements. It would be useful to establish a project level information sharing centre to block level information centers in the project areas in the post withdrawal phase. As constant updating on the current circulars/ Government orders would be essential to undertake strategic efforts to carry out advocacy collectively. The VEC or the network of different VECs at various levels needs to be regularly strengthened by refresher support so that maintain a

common understanding on the decisive issues. It would be a preparatory effort to facilitate the partners to establish an information centre managed by a village level facilitator. In the context of the relevance of the information sharing centre and its role, a consultation workshop at the project level could be facilitated to gather common views on the information centre to ensure the ownership towards the concept. The representatives of the various CBOs having such information centre to facilitate sharing of information and knowledge products related to rights and entitlements in their villages could be invited to share their experiences in the matter. Subsequently need based establishment of the information could be encouraged with community support after working out a common framework and the operational guidelines for the information centre.

1. A set of booklets and procedural guidelines with regard to certain acts could be developed at the project level with the support of experiences of project team and to be shared at village level for use at the information center.
2. In order to foster the constant expansion of the basis to support the network of all three elements that would ensure sustainability, a proper knowledge management system in place would be an asset for sharing the learning and knowledge products with other upcoming similar thematic projects.

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| **f) Lesson learning** |

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| * **Approaches to empowerment and advocacy**
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The mechanisms adopted to bring the adolescents to the AEC by mobilizing their parents through peer pressure and motivation from the VEC has been a great example of empowerment of the target community.

The life skills education and Interpersonal communication skills developed among the adolescents have been quite a landmark achievement towards facilitating empowerment among the adolescents. The adolescents especially the girls are now able to face the world with greater self confidence and this is also indicated by the higher number of girls attending VE and subsequently starting the IGAs.

It has been realized that in order to facilitate the community to undertake systematic and comprehensive advocacy campaign for the entitlements realizations, a proper handholding coupled with exposure visit to the CBOs already engaged in carrying out

rights based advocacy is required at this stage of the project. This would not only strengthen the VEC but also bring the latent leadership to the fore for triggering the rights based advocacy initiatives.

The awareness generation and community meetings have been quite useful in upgrading the knowledge about the entitlements under Government schemes and services. This increased knowledge has improved the confidence level of the community to seek rightful benefits under schemes and services. The community has now learnt to value their dignity as labour and making an informed choice of taking the wage labour. There has been an improvement in the Job cards number with the target communities (earlier the Gram Pradhan use to keep the Job cards with them and do not give proper wage days to the uninformed community members).

It was envisaged that the VEC should undertake the advocacy on bigger issues like implementation of Government schemes and services, MNREGS but later the VEC themselves realized that the requirement of taking smaller initiatives to test their abilities before going over on the bigger issues. There has been cases of success in their initiatives that has given boost the morale of the community (Nothing succeeds like success).

The various motivational and IEC activities carried out in the project has led to the improvement in the understanding of the importance of education of community. Also the prevailing situation of girl child discrimination has found to have improved considerably. The small but crucial aspects contributing towards empowerment of the general community has been found useful in bringing a remarkable change in the overall perspective of the target community.

The VEC has been strengthened by numerous trainings and workshop followed by the monthly meetings. With such clarity on their roles, the VEC has raised diverse issues such as issues related to RTE, wage labour and Job cards under MNREGS, streamlined the functioning of ANM and ASHA thus ensuring regular routine immunization and distribution of Iron tablets and TT vaccination for adolescents. These target communities have experienced considerable transformation in their lives on these aspects such as the community members getting their job cards after VEC initiatives. With the growing awareness and inputs on rights based advocacy, some VECs have

increased their efforts of raising collective voices for their school facilities, wage labour under MNREGS and filed RTI applications with respects to the use of the development fund of their respective Gram Panchayat.

The project has enabled the adolescents to experience a total metamorphosis in their world view and the girls that were shy and scared of the outsiders are now confidently explaining the various aspects including what they learnt in AEC. An important aspect of empowerment has been observed among the illiterate women of the target communities is their knowledge about the rights as Indian citizens, monitoring the quality of teaching and facilities at the schools and the provision of the stipulated supplementary nutrition at Anganwadi.

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| * **Equity (engaging marginalized and excluded groups)**
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The project has made a significant impression on the equity consideration of the target communities in the project villages. The marginalized communities prior to the project

have never raised any grievances on the implementation of social security schemes and services, quality of school education and the facilities and wage for their labour because of their ignorance and the fear. Now the project has provided a complete set of understanding on their rights and their entitlements as the Indian citizens. With the growing awareness and knowledge of their dignity and right to life, these marginalized communities have now started asking for their entitlements, initially individually and later collectively.

The access of the adolescents that were drop outs and out of school for a long time to the AEC has raised their self esteem and the self confidence. In most of the project villages, the VEC are closely supported by the adolescents in terms of developing understanding on the procedural aspects for filing applications and clarity to improve access to the rightful dues under various Government schemes and services. There are diverse methods through which the transfer of learning of the adolescents attended AEC has permeated to the family and from family to the community.

The critical examples of the improvement in the equity consideration could be very well perceived from the cases of increased number of adolescents girls attending AEC & VE and have started IGAs, increased number of enrolment & retention of out of school girls, increase in the number of work days under MNREGS, increased average monthly household income and most importantly equal wages for the member of marginalized

communities in the project villages. The equity aspects are systematically communicated through the awareness activities, AEC training and subsequently community meetings and there is a subtle resolution getting imprinted in the target community to prevent all kinds of discrimination against them. The adolescents involved in the project have learnt the various dimensions of how the discrimination has prevented their access to knowledge and information necessary for their development. The adolescents are strong agents of transforming the equity aspects by breaking the barriers regarding the knowledge and now facilitating the access to the rights and entitlements of the community through VECs.

The deprivation of economic and other resources among marginalized communities is being transformed by the project’s inputs and now the target community is slowing making headway to their rights and entitlements. Some support on the rights based advocacy and governance issues would enable them to change the scenario radically in due course.

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| * **Capacity building (of communities or partners)**
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Initially the target community posed a great amount of resistance to the change proposed by the project then subsequently, through the repeated motivational events and consultations at the community level, there was the confidence on the non-threatening aspects of the project involved the community’s attention. The project has carried out numerous capacity building events/ activities for the community, VEC and the peoples’ representatives in the target villages.

The partners meeting, team workshop and issue based trainings imparted in the project facilitated the project staff to undertake the challenging tasks assigned in the project. The various trainings imparted to the VEC have also been useful to a great extent and now the VEC is able to raise the issues collectively on right based issues. There is a need felt during the MTE that the VEC require capacity support on the institutional and leadership development aspects too so that they could evolve as strong CBOs in due course.

The capacity building, though, undertaken on various rights and issues for the staff at the various intervals in the project. It has emerged as a crucial learning that these capacity building events should be entwined with the thematic exposure visits so that

practical use of the theoretical aspects shared during the training eventscould also be experienced by the staff.

Though the partners posses a mixed experience of working with marginalized communities and livelihoods development, it seems important that they are given some exposure on the enterprise development among the adolescents and mechanisms adopted in facilitating enterprise development with handholding support.

The skills development through VE trainings for the adolescents has been found useful to start the IGAs by the adolescents. It was found critical to provide refresher trainings to ensure reinforcement of the key basic skills, problem solving in systematic transfer of learning and simplify the complexities in crucial processes of skills developed.

The project implementation team and VEC have given time to time instructions through Capacity building events to implement the activities in the project. Certain activities by

VEC are required to be undertaken uniformly across the project. It has emerged as learning that certain performance aids in the form of booklets/ manual are given on various thematic issues to support the accomplishment of the activities of expected quality with clear deliverables.

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| * **Monitoring and evaluation**
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The present system of monitoring of the project activities by the FYF and SIT teams, project partners and coordinators is largely able to deliver the expected results in the desired period. The involvement of community, VEC and the adolescents in monitoring the usefulness and appropriateness of the project activities has been observed to be not enough in such kind of community based focus of the project. It is a major learning that the indicators of monitoring are very much required to be developed with the key stakeholders in order to assign specific roles in the project implementation. A periodic monitoring and subsequently sharing of the learnings needed to be initially shared at the cluster, partner and then at the project levels.

At the field level the project officers evaluate the work of the Counsellors according to the activities as well as its intended impacted as seen on the field, through direct evidences. Meeting adolescents, assessing their knowledge levels as well as raised sense of confidence, meeting with VEC members and the community gives a fair impression about the program. All budgeted activities and non budgeted activities are evaluated according to intended impacts. Innovations are also tracked. At the next level,

all reports as sent to the project director of the partner organizations are analysed and the growth as mentioned in the report are evaluated at the field level, randomly, by the directors. Any issue that requires attention is discussed and changes suggested. In Allahabad, when the boys AEC was facing difficulty due to poor attendance and repeated efforts were not showing results, the Director of PEPUS decided to change the location of the AEC.

M&E by the SIT staff is also evident. All reports as sent to SIT are verified through various evidences on the field or through documents on site as well as documents as sent to the various government offices. Government officers, PRI members as well as front line service providers are met with to assess their awareness of the SAKAR project. Sometimes pointed questions are asked to determine various impacts.

Adolescents are met to assess progress in terms of knowledge levels as well as to ascertain if IGAs are running as stated in reports. Meeting the community at large also gives a better understanding of the awareness that the project has created. Meeting with partners, assessing issues and resolving them are a process of M & E. The centralized training for VE is an outcome of close M & E by the SIT.  A system of continuous evaluation is also being formalized to be able to track the behavioral growth as well as IGA growth of a few adolescents from past cycles.

FYF also makes field visits to assess the progress of the project. FYFs role is that of supportive supervision of the project.

At the AEC, the documents found were files regarding the enrolled adolescents – their profile as well as knowledge as well as behavioural level at entry point. An attendance record is maintained. The counselors maintain a daily diary of sessions held on each day. Documents to track behavioural changes in the life of the cycle were found in a few AECs in Allahabad but the information was not cohesive. This activity will be formalized in all partner areas in the forth cycle.

At the VEC level, a detailed record was found at most villages with mention of meeting dates, attendance as well as minutes of meetings. Copies of letters sent to various departments were seen at only some centres.

A system of knowledge management with a congregation of various crucial stages and the possibilities of being confronted and handling the diverse options posed in the project implementation is very much required. This system of learning also should incorporate the cases and knowledge products of similar livelihoods promotion projects.

In view of the kind of responsibilities and the schedule of the counselors’, it has emerged as learning that a team of selected counselors supported by an additional personnel supports the monitoring and learning system in the project at the partner level. This would be enabling the project team to share the learnings and timely incorporating/ using them in the project implementation. A periodic sharing of the learnings and knowledge products among the peers would be useful at the project level.

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| **g) Recommendations** |

* The module for 4 months AEC training is being implemented effectively but need to be revisited in the light of recent social issues and ensure the contemporariness of the issues existing by revising/ adding cases/ examples for improving its effectiveness. Certain handouts/ flash cards supported by the audio- visual materials would be useful to transfer learning on critical and complex issues. Also some kind

of repertory/ performance aids would be useful for the slow learners’ or/ and adolescents with slightly diverse entry behaviour.

* In all the VEC interviewed in 31 project villages, it was found that there were some members that are active and taking initiatives in raising issues with Gram Panchayat. In the prevailing situation, it is strongly recommended to identify those active members and give them recognition as office bearers. This would enable leadership development processes and give motivation to the VEC representatives in the project.
* It is also recommended that a refresher/ followup of skill development/ VE training be planned with some hand holding support to slow performers.
* In view of the growing interest of the community and the VEC to raise voices for the entitlements, it would be useful to develop thematic booklets for rights based advocacy followed by the periodic workshop on the contemporary trends in rights based advocacy with the participation of the rights based organization and facilitators/ activists.
* The capacity building activities for the project staff, VEC and the change agents including the opinion leaders/ adolescents etc. should include the thematic exposure

visits to the organizations engaged in such activities with CBOs and systematic module for learning outcomes are designed to optimize the effectiveness.

* It has been realized that the contact with the Gram Panchayats is slightly strengthen in the project villages. In the light of the growing thrust to make the local self governance more accountable and effective, it would be useful to provide support to the community and the VEC to understand the issues and procedural aspects pertaining to the same.
* The peer review and sharing workshop between partners and the project is going well in every quarter therefore it is recommended to invite delegates from the government to increase the visibility and generate sufficient support from the policy makers. It will give necessary audience to the crucial issues posed to them. Similar kind of strategy to ensure involvement of civil society organizations especially media to strengthen the advocacy initiatives at the policy level.
1. To change a deep rooted tradition through persuasion requires skills. Bringing about behavioral changes that are a part of religious tradition is a long process and though Salma, a muslim girl from Bahkandha, Fatehpur (SDF), says that being allowed to go to the AEC without wearing a burqa is a small step, it demonstrates that her persuasion skills accelerated that process. Sangeeta of MisraMau, in Fatehpur, refused to a marriage proposal as the boys family was asking for dowry. Later the boy’s side accepted her point of view and she has been engaged to be married. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The reason why most girls in all partner areas, want to learn a skill is so that they can be financially independent in their life. All examples of IGAs, both for girls and boys involve intense discussions, acceptance and support from parents, who now listen to and respect their children’s decisions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Dharma and Geeta of the Kotwa village, Allahabad (PEPUS), cycle 3, along with other adolescents were vocal in saying this. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Adolescents in all partner areas said that though this information was relevant to their lives, their mothers never discussed it with them. Similarly information on menstrual health and reproductive health was considered to be a taboo. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kalpana of cycle 2 from Narayanpur, Fatehpur (SDF) says that now her community can’t be fooled about being charged money in government schools. They are aware of their entitlements and demand for it, thanks to the information she received through the AEC. Girls at the Dubeypur AEC in Allahabad (PEPUS) said that they discussed the issue of excessive vaginal discharge at home after being told about it at the AEC and soon their mothers were talking about it to the Counsellor and the village ANM. Girls at the AEC Kotwa, Allahabad (PEPUS) discussed the sensitive issue of the Nirbhaya rape case as they felt that the AEC was a safe place to talk and seek answers about women’s safety issues, crime against women as well as the laws of the country related to rape. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Aarti from cycle 3 in Allahabad (PEPUS) repeatedly asked the ANM for iron and folic tablets. She even raised this issue at the health awareness fair, held at the block level in the presence of health officials and community members. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Shiv Babu from Jaisawa(PEPUS) asked the nurse to open the syringe in his presence when a family member was unwell. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Aarti (SABLA) run a small tailoring unit, Soniya (PEPUS) sells ready mix food, Anju runs her beauty care unit, Akhilesh (SABLA) repairs mobile phones, Chandni(SDF) stitches bags, Rohit(SDF) repairs electrical instruments –these are a few examples of the adolescents running small IGAs at home. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Girls at the Salemabad AEC,Fatehpur(SDF) said that they now used clean cotton cloth or sanitary pads during menstruation as they were not aware of it earlier. Girls from the AECs in Allahabad said that they learnt how to make sanitary pads for personal use. SDF in Fatehpur keeps subsidized sanitary napkins for girls at AECs. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Shobha was not allowed to study after class 5 and was ill treated at home and it took much persuasion by the Counsellor to get her enrolled at the AEC, Behrampur, Fatehpur (SDF). Learning about the various aspects of life skills, she developed a vision for her future. She has rejoined school and is in class 7 now. She is 17 years old. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Asstated in the MTE household survey. Female= 37.6% (47 out of 125) Male= 52.2% (48 out of 92) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The recent example of SDF Fatehpur of organizing a jeep rally (rathyatra) to raise awareness about the RTE is an interesting example of this. It not only brought to the fore the benefits of the Act for the community at large, it also gave the VEC members a recognition within the community as well as culminated in a village meeting that was attended by members of the education department. This brought the cosmmunity, the VEC members and the education officials on the same platform. Such initiatives give a social status to the VEC with the community as well as for the teachers, head teachers and other members of the education department. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The medical officer in charge, Fatehpur district, Dr.Vinod met with this evaluator and commented that his department utilized the SAKAR platform to publicise the free ambulance service as provided by the government, to all the villagers who gathered at the health awareness fairs held. After the budget of the government for building awareness about various government schemes was scrapped by the government due to the National Rural Health Mission scam, he found the SAKAR platform a good way to reach people.

The officials at the block development office and the medical officaisl in Raeberielly, stated that they attended all programs of SAKAR, when needed. They said they trusted the credibility of the NGO amongst the community, which helped them too. The block development officials said that they used the SAKAR platform to disseminate information about why different payments were paid for different kinds of work, depending upon the intensity of labour required. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. HemantTripath and SarvMangal, officials of the Block Resource Centre, at Fatehpur district said that theyinvite the SDF team to impart knowledge on RTE to the teachers, in the region. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Sanjay Tiwari, PRI member, Malakbau, Allahabad. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)