

Schools in Development

a life skills approach

Field Note

Maharashtra

The Schools in Development Project in Aurangabad is recognised for its approach towards the issue of sanitation and environment. The project aims to change not only the attitude of the community but also the mindset of the government and NGO functionaries, so that they may look upon themselves as facilitators, rather than providers.

The objective of the project is to improve the environment in rural areas and help the community acquire basic life skills by making children aware of health and hygiene issues. The project aims to involve children in the development of their community. The idea is to develop an understanding of hygiene, sanitation and environmental issues among children at an early age so that they play a role in improving the school environment and also enthuse their families and the community to adopt practices conducive to better health. The demonstration project has been implemented with UNICEF support.

This field note outlines the achievements of the Schools in the Development Project in Aurangabad.



Coverage

Two blocks – Aurangabad and Gangapur of Aurangabad district, covering 800 schools

Project duration

1999-2002

Implemented by

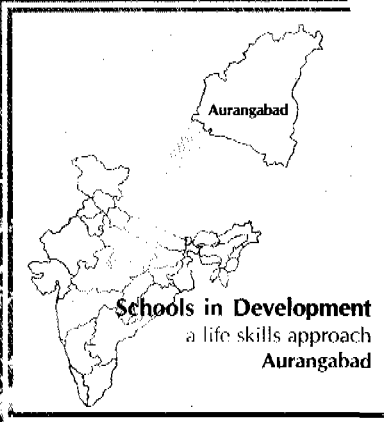
Zilla parishad and NGOs



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Background

Aurangabad district, in the heart of Maharashtra state, has eight talukas (blocks) and a population of over 2.2 million. The Schools in Development (school health and sanitation) demonstration project, sponsored jointly by the Maharashtra Government and UNICEF, is being implemented in two selected talukas of the district—Gangapur and Aurangabad. The experience gained through the project will guide upscaling of the School Sanitation Project in the district and the state.

The project, which targets primary, middle and high schools, is being implemented by the zilla parishad, with the help of NGOs, community-level organisations, parents, teachers and children. Inter-school linkage is an important part of the project and each high/middle school is associated with two or three primary schools and is responsible for working with them in project interventions.

Objectives

- To provide children with a basic understanding of healthy living practices and to develop in them the life skills necessary to cope with their environment.
- To reach out to families and the community through children and thus bring about a change in attitudes and practices associated with the disposal of waste and to spread awareness regarding health, hygiene and a safe environment.
- To help schools in involving

Glossary of local terms

Chappals—Slippers; *Dai*—Midwife; *Gram panchayat*—Village local self-governing body; *Gram sevak*—Village social worker; *Prabhat pheris*—Torchlight processions; *Shauch khadda*—Pit for defecation; *Zilla parishad*—District council.

Good citizens! Children clean the main road in Pulshi village

children in developmental activities, to inculcate in them positive values and motivate them to contribute towards community welfare.

- To develop a close link between teachers and parents and to encourage the community to participate in school activities.
- To help schools form links with each other and support each other in all activities.
- To encourage inter-sectoral cooperation in developmental activities, using schools as the focal point.

Institutional-Level Partners

The zilla parishad is the nodal agency for the project. It is involved in planning and monitoring, as well as in extending support to the other agencies involved. It helps with training programmes and acts as a catalyst in bringing together various government and non-government agencies. Also, the zilla parishad identified the local NGOs that should be involved in the project.

The District Health and Family Welfare Training Centre (HFWTC), Aurangabad, was responsible for developing training modules for school children and village-level workers. The District Training Team (DTT), assisted the HFWTC in training school children.

Community-Level Partners

The NGOs, 'Dilasa Jan Vikas Pratisthan' and 'SACRED' aided in training teachers and students, mobilising the community and in installing WATSAN facilities.

Learn as you do – a children's camp module

- Day 1 Discussion on objectives of camp
Group discussion on personal hygiene
Demonstration and discussion on toilet models
- Day 2 Group discussion on disposal of waste water, drainage, soak pits, kitchen garden, disposal of waste materials, cow dung and compost pits
Demonstration of models
- Day 3 Plenary sessions on water-borne diseases, water pollution and its prevention, contamination and purification of water, diarrhoea and the use of Home Available Fluids (HAFs) and Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS)
Demonstration of preparation of ORS
Demonstration and practice of preparation of soak pit and kitchen garden
- Day 4 Field visit and village survey, teams of two students covering five households each
Collation and analysis of data collected
Visits to gram panchayat to understand water purification
Visit to health sub-centre
Demonstration of vermipits (the vermi-composting technique is the composting of agro-waste using earthworms)
- Day 5 Sharing sessions with parents and villagers—presentation of village survey by children
Discussion between parents and teachers
Tree plantation by students



Lal Chand of *Dilasa* demonstrates the making of a vermipit—Dhaulapuri village

Module for training service team

Introductory Session

Plenary:

Issues concerning women and children

Sharing of data relating to women and children

Needs of the child, family and community

Diseases:

Causes

Adoption of WATSAN practices

Behavioural changes

Creation of facilities

Sanitary Latrines:

Myths and misconceptions-

A role play

Discussion:

Resistance to change

Discussion:

Women and sanitation

Service team or grassroots functionaries

- Health workers—one male, one female
- Health supervisors—one male, one female
- Primary school teachers
- Anganwadi workers
- Waterman
- Gram Sevak
- Trained dai

and the role of teachers were discussed in these camps.

Six-day training camps were held for service teams or village-level workers. Twenty-five such camps were organised.

Several camps for children were held between December 1999 and March 2000. Children from 4,359 schools participated in these camps, which focused on (a) personal hygiene, (b) handling of drinking water, (c) home sanitation and food hygiene, (d) disposal of waste water, (e) disposal of garbage and cattle dung, and (f) disposal of human excreta. These camps were held in schools with the cooperation of teachers. The participatory mode was used, with demonstrations and practical sessions. The participants were able to put into immediate practice what they had learnt about soak pits, vermipits, etc. Some camps included *prabhat pheris* (torchlight processions) to arouse the curiosity of the community.

School children conducted household surveys to evaluate community awareness level. The survey formats used for the purpose contained easy-to-understand pictorial depictions on sanitary and hygiene practices. Schools had these parameters painted on their walls to inform people of the sanitation status of villages.

Construction of soak pits and water storage pots

NGOs set up a revolving fund, with UNICEF assistance, to enable

Project Phasing

Planning phase

Under the project, 40 students, who had been selected as development scouts, took part in a five-day workshop for generating awareness on environmental cleanliness and personal hygiene. These development scouts were also encouraged to motivate their elders to join in cleanliness programmes.

The five-day workshop was preceded by a training session for those conducting the workshop.

The nodal agency adopted a team approach to project implementation and sought to build a team of government and non-government agencies. The zilla parishad oriented the participating NGOs to the project. Subsequently, each partner of the

implementing team was allotted its project area. The DTT, zilla parishad, Aurangabad, and Dilasa Jan Vikas Pratisthan were allotted Aurangabad, while SACRED was allotted Gangapur.

The camp module for children was developed with inputs from NGOs, teachers and the training team from HFWTC. The module on CDD-WATSAN was developed by HFWTC.

Implementation

Orientation camps

One-day camps were held for headmasters of middle and high schools, in batches of 30, focusing on the role of headmasters in school sanitation.

Three-day camps were held for teachers, again, in batches of 30. The objectives of the programme

the community to undertake construction of soak pits and vermipits. NGOs promoted taps at public water points.

Other households were provided with seed money or assistance in kind, such as wastewater disposal pipes. Thus assisted, the participating households dug and filled the pits according to specifications.

Households were also provided with technical assistance to dig their own pits and construct them using locally available material, such as cycle tubes or old pipes.

Vermipits

Vermi-composting is a technique of composting agricultural waste, using earthworms. Deep and wide pits called vermipits are dug to collect the compost.

The concept of vermipits has been accepted and adopted by many in the community. School children have helped the village people construct vermipits and, in some cases, have auctioned vermi-fertiliser from their school vermipits.

Achievements

- The project has been an enriching experience for all the actors. The children have become ambassadors of good health practices, carrying hygiene and sanitation messages to their families and the community. They have become more self-assured and feel that they can actually bring about a change in their environment.



School students dig a *shauch khadda* (trench pit toilet) at Dahegaon village

Can you fill this up, please?

Fourteen questions were posed in the form for the Village Household Survey, in a most innovative and user-friendly format, through the use of easy pictorial depictions. For example,

Picture—Foot, hand and nail cutter

Question—Do you cut your nails regularly?

Other questions (accompanied by illustrations):

- Do you wash your hands before cooking and before taking your meals?
- Do you wash your hands with soap or ash after defecation?
- Do you use a garbage pit for your household wastes?
- Do you have a pit and a kitchen garden?
- Do you have your own household latrine?
- Do you and your family members use the latrine?
- Do you put on chappals when you go for defecation?
- Where do you get your drinking water from:
 - a. Tap supply () Hand pump () Well ()
- Do you keep the drinking water pot covered and at a higher level from the floor?
- Do you have a tap attached to the drinking water storage pot?
- Do you keep cooked food covered?
- How much have you spent on medical treatment?
- How do you treat diarrhoea-affected children at home?
 - a. HAF () ORS ()
- The same survey form is painted on the school walls. The Wall Survey Format is a village survey.



A household toilet at Patcni village—Aurangabad

An expression of thanks

The headmaster of Zilla Parishad Primary School at Dahegaon village in Gangapur taluka writes to the NGO 'SACRED', to express his thanks for organising a training camp in his school. He says, "Due to this programme, a feeling of cooperation and awareness regarding sanitation issues has developed among the villagers. Now they are beginning to think of preventive measures for good health. With the construction of a number of soak pits, the waste water is not allowed to flow. The children too, have developed an appreciation for hygiene." Further, he requests the NGO's help in providing a drinking water storage facility in the school.

Even though the programme had initially planned to train 40 children per school, it was seen that there was a great difference between the children who participated in the camp and those who did not. It was finally decided that all children in schools should have an opportunity to participate in camps.

Children demand sanitary latrines

When the women of Kachheghati village were provided a community latrine, the children were not far behind in demanding one for themselves. Dilasa initiated a series of trench latrines. The next thing the children are looking forward to is a fence around the area, so that they are able to have a little privacy!

This little boy can wield a spade!

Little Prahalad dug a hole for a soak pit behind his house. With painstaking effort, he was at the site every afternoon, digging away and then resting awhile and then digging again. Finally he was through and shyly informed his teacher that he, single-handedly, had dug a soak pit.

All the children hailed Prahalad's efforts and many of them volunteered to help him fill the pit with brick battings and stones.

- Children who had participated in the camps have helped construct soak pits in their villages. They have become motivators in their homes for water storage pots.
- Children have gained self-confidence. They take pride in the soak pits and vermipits constructed in their villages and narrate their experiences to friends. Often, others get motivated to participate in the camps.
- Some children are acting as mini-ORS depot holders.

Lessons Learnt

- School children are a valuable resource. Given the necessary training and skills, they are capable of transforming communities. They can build soak pits and ensure clean villages.
- School children are also very effective communicators. The project has demonstrated how school children have 'sold' vermi-compost to members of the community. They have helped communities adapt the technology and use it effectively.
- Intensive training camps with participatory exercises, demonstrations and 'hands-on' learning are effective in generating commitment towards a particular project.
- Inter-school linkages can foster better coordination and delivery. The project associated high and middle school students with primary school students. This linkage helped in achieving project goals by making the teams of students more effective.