



Strengthening Livelihoods of Trafficking Prone Communities

Action Research to Develop a Proof of Concept



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Development Alternatives

For twenty years, Development Alternatives has worked to build an India that is sustainable, with a society that is fair and just, an environment that is healthy and an economy that is efficient. It has done this by creating the means to generate sustainable livelihoods in large numbers because it believes; livelihoods are the key to addressing development issues.

Development Alternatives has established a reputation worldwide for its capacity to deliver innovative solutions to address the problems of poverty and environmental degradation. It is one of the premier organisations working from the eighties, on natural resource management, technological, institutional and other systems issues of sustainable development. As one of the world's first social enterprises, it has pioneered the concept of making development a good business-by creating sustainable livelihoods through sustainable enterprises.

The organization field tests most of its innovations in Bundelkhand - Central India, one of the most backward and degraded regions of the country. Development Alternatives today has a national footprint essentially through partnerships and alliances that are very carefully established and nurtured. While partnerships with civil society organizations provide extensive reach to the poor, business networks facilitate social entrepreneurship. Policy alliances have enabled the concepts, methods, tools and techniques to reach a wider audience nationally and globally.

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Foreword

Social afflictions like trafficking have been with us for ages, taking on particularly virulent forms in communities that are vulnerable. And unfortunately, the vulnerability of many communities today is growing, one of the side impacts of the processes of globalization and growing aspirations.

Development Alternatives (DA), with its focus on sustainable livelihood solutions for marginalized communities has been providing innovative responses to such issues for more than two decades. Over the last three years, DA is proactively engaged in prevention of trafficking through its Livelihood Approach and has initiated several interventions to build up the capacities of women and adolescent girls of trafficking prone communities.

One such initiative emerged from a multi-stakeholder workshop organized by DA for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at Surajkund in July 2005, which included stakeholders from civil society organizations, communities and other like-minded individuals. The livelihood approach to prevent trafficking was discussed in depth and yielded several interesting ideas for action.

An important contribution of the workshop was to identify the urgent need for better understanding of who were the vulnerable groups and what kinds of livelihoods would help strengthen their position in society. UP and Uttarakhand were chosen for the first studies.

The field study led to the formulation of a conceptual framework for understanding the ramifications of vulnerability; and from this framework were derived action-oriented plans to create Livelihood Nuclei and Integrated Resource Centres. The IRC is a multi-service facility involving active participation from the local community and is to be run as a business unit. The purpose of such centres is to build up the skills of women and adolescent girls and introduce them to livelihood activities, and thus to create meaningful income generating opportunities.

The recommendations in the study report were found to be of value by the stakeholders and it was suggested that a proof of concept be developed. USAID agreed to support an Action Research project aimed at proving this concept.

The Action Research was conducted in Tanakpur area in Uttarakhand; Banbassa, a small township was chosen for setting up an Integrated Resource Centre (IRC). The centre houses activities such as Textile Production, Food Processing and Computer Learning designed specifically for the needs of women and adolescent girls. Training was imparted at the IRC for the identified activities and now efforts are on to take it forward as a business unit. The IRC has quickly become the source of hope to all its members and their families and serves as a centre of learning, to increase their earnings and to help them secure their livelihoods.

This document details the concept, strategy, methodology and impact of the initiative. I believe that practitioners in civil society and anti-trafficking workers will find this report very useful and will involve all stakeholders for further replication and multiplication of the approach in prevention of trafficking by providing holistic livelihood enhancement solutions.

Dr. Ashok Khosla
Development Alternatives



Acronyms

FPU	Food Processing Unit
IRC	Integrated Resource Centre
LN	Livelihood Nuclei
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PARAAJ	Participatory Action Research for Advancement and Justice
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
UP	Uttar Pradesh
DA	Development Alternatives



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present a thorough account of the inception and progression with suggestions for scaling up of the action research conducted in Tanakpur, Uttarakhand. The action research was based on a preliminary field study¹, which provided detailed information about the varied factors associated/implicated with/in trafficking, as well as a project framework for a livelihood approach to prevent trafficking. The framework developed from this preliminary study provided the basis for the intervention in Tanakpur.

In October 2006, the first Integrated Resource Centre (IRC) was initiated in Banbassa, Uttarakhand. The small town of Banbassa was chosen due to its location between Tanakpur and Belbandkot. The latter is a non-permanent settlement on the Indian side of the Indo-Nepal border and because of its proximity to the porous border; this settlement is highly prone to trafficking. The IRC initially opened as a training centre with three units: textile, food processing and computer literacy. The training in the first two units were given free of charge for three months, while in the computer centre there was a minimal monthly charge. The women who attended the training courses in the textile (zardozi embroidery and tailoring) and food processing units came mostly from Belbandkot, but some also came from Nepal and remote villages in Uttarakhand. The intervention was to target around 70 beneficiaries, but due to the enthusiastic community response the number increased to 140 women.

The IRC was not solely designed as a training centre, but was to evolve into a self sustaining business venture, operated and managed by the community, in partnership with the local NGO, PARAAJ. Initially there were doubts that women with no previous experience could learn the skills adequately to enter the marketplace in a span of three months. However, the learning of skills was completed within the time frame and by December 2006, the food processing unit was already selling its products and some products from the textile unit were ready to be sold in the market.

1. "Strengthening Livelihoods of Trafficking Prone Communities: A Project Framework for a Livelihood Approach to Prevent Trafficking". A preliminary study supported by USAID and conducted by Development Alternatives, 2006.

In addition to the local trainers, Development Alternatives (DA) organized experts in the textile and food processing fields to teach the trainees about important issues such as standardization and widen their scope for product development by introducing new products and marketing strategies. Other than training, emphasis was placed on building a sense of entrepreneurship amongst the beneficiaries. Workshops were held to introduce the trainers and the trainees to various business related concepts, such as the importance of brand creation, costing procedures, business and sales promotion, advertising and marketing and establishing market linkages and channels. Advocacy was recognized as an important activity at the IRC and members from the local community make regular visits to speak to the women about trafficking and women's rights issues.

There were many challenges faced along the way, ranging from lack of material inputs such as sewing machines and other equipment, to changing women's attitudes towards their work. The latter became a very tough challenge because initially women came to the IRC with the expectation of only receiving training. The task of explaining that the IRC was not only a one-off training scheme, but a comprehensive framework for business

development was not simple. However, by the end of three months, the women developed a sense that the IRC was in fact their company and that it was in their own interest to ensure that the business succeeded.

Although many constraints still exist and continue to crop up on a day-to-day basis, the Integrated Resource Centre has proved to be a successful proof of concept - creating a holistic framework for generating livelihood options to battle trafficking and other social ills. The immediate way forward for this intervention is scaling up to ensure long term sustainability. To have a real impact against trafficking, this model requires replication in other trafficking prone areas. In addition to tackling trafficking, the model can also be implemented to remedy other social ills affecting vulnerable groups.





1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Inception of Project

A multi-stakeholder meeting on anti-trafficking, organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and facilitated by Development Alternatives (DA) was held in July 2005 at Surajkund, near Delhi. The key issues which surfaced at this workshop included:

- Recognition that trafficking and livelihoods are interlinked.
- Acknowledgement of the lack of understanding at community and NGO levels about the link between the prevalence of trafficking and scarcity of livelihood options.
- Lack of long-term vision in both community and NGO interventions aimed at preventing trafficking thus far.

Upon primary interaction with the communities and local NGOs, an attempt was made by Development Alternatives to link livelihood initiatives as a part of trafficking prevention activities.

A decision was therefore taken at the workshop to conduct a field study in the states of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Uttarakhand. There were a number of reasons identified for choosing UP and Uttarakhand as sites for potential interventions. Both of these states have international borders that are largely porous, thus allowing entry and exit to/from India without any restrictions. The ongoing anti-trafficking initiatives have been limited to

rehabilitation and rescue efforts, while the concept of a livelihood approach to prevent trafficking has been totally non-existent in both states. The socio-economic development indicators in both states were found to be extremely poor. In addition to the above, another reason for choosing UP and Uttarakhand was because of the diversity in topography of the two areas. UP is largely a flat plain state while Uttarakhand is primarily hilly. This would provide an opportunity to explore how the nature of trafficking differs across topographical regions.

1.2 Field Study and Needs Assessment

Bearing in mind the above reasons, USAID became interested in supporting a field study in the two areas and commissioned Development Alternatives for this purpose.

The main purpose of the field study was to analyze the on-site situation and current livelihood engagements of the trafficking prone communities. The field study was conducted by following an objective, solution focused, participatory and conclusive methodology.



The study was called "Strengthening Livelihoods of Trafficking Prone Communities"² and was conducted by Development Alternatives over a period of three months from July 2006. The key findings suggested that trafficking was a common phenomenon in UP and Uttarakhand, especially along the border areas. Various factors contributed to the prevalence of trafficking:

Push Factors:

- Loss of livelihood
- Lack of livelihood options
- Ignorance due to poor information base and lack of exposure
- Aspirations towards better economic and social status
- Gender discrimination and domestic violence

Pull Factors:

- Active trafficking networks
- Inadequate institutional and infrastructural support resulting in poor social safety nets

At the time of the field study, the livelihood situation of the communities was found to be limited to forest-based activities and agriculture, with negligible existence of other livelihood options. Professional skills were almost non-existent among the people. The combination of these adverse factors leads to trafficking, especially of girls and women. While many trafficked victims end up in prostitution and sex work, a large number are forced into the domestic help sector and trafficked women are often sold as brides. The NGOs and NGO networks present in the areas are engaged in operations limited to rescue of trafficked people and advocacy; NGO partners were not able to link the patterns of trafficking and migration to interventions based on livelihood generation.

From the said study, an opportunity and challenge emerged to provide sustainable livelihood solutions by utilizing local skills and resources and converting the critical mass into a skilled work force. The long term objective was to create livelihood models that could be replicated in other areas with vulnerable communities.

Upon conclusion of the field study, a final document was prepared called "Strengthening Livelihoods of Trafficking Prone Communities: A Project Framework for a Livelihood Approach to Prevent Trafficking". The results of the field study were encouraging enough to test the suggested sustainable livelihoods approach on the ground. A holistic framework was suggested to USAID that could effectively tackle the issue of trafficking in UP and Uttarakhand.

Once all the documentation was compiled from the field study and submitted to USAID, the next stage was to follow through with a proof of concept. This was to be in the form of a small intervention within a limited budget and time frame. A decision was made by USAID and DA, in consultation with local NGO partners, to carry out the intervention in one district of Uttarakhand in order to develop the proof of concept.



2. "Strengthening Livelihoods of Trafficking Prone Communities: A Project Framework for a Livelihood Approach to Prevent Trafficking". A preliminary study supported by USAID and conducted by Development Alternatives, 2006.



1.3 Pre-Project Analysis

From extensive field research and literature surveys, it was determined that the incidence of trafficking in women and girls in the areas of UP and Uttaranchal is very high. Thus, the primary stated purpose of the project was to prevent trafficking of women and girls by reducing the vulnerability of households and communities. During the course of the preliminary field study, as described in the previous section, it became apparent that there is a need to not only strengthen existing anti-trafficking interventions, but also introduce innovative approaches to prevent trafficking in the region through interventions for capacity building, increasing awareness and providing direct assistance in the identified border areas. The innovative approach of livelihood generation was to develop a proof of concept and the target area that was chosen for this action research was in and around Tanakpur, Uttarakhand.

Tanakpur is a border town located on the Sarda River or Kali as the Nepalese call it. As such the border can be approached travelling a short distance southwards from Tanakpur to Banbassa (see map - Annexure 1) where a barrage over the river forms the passage of transit. Geographically Tanakpur is situated in Champawat district of Uttarakhand with males constituting 53% and females 47% of the population. The traditional livelihoods are agriculture, stone quarrying and other small trading activities.

The area around Tanakpur was visited for a pre-project analysis (Annexure II) to determine the conditions of the target communities, as well as their specific needs and concerns. This area was prioritized as a site for intervention because of its proximity to the porous Indo-Nepal border and the alarmingly high incidences of trafficking along this border area. In particular, the non-permanent settlement of Belbandkot was identified as a potential target, source and nodal point for traffickers. On further interaction with the communities of this area, it was found that people are in desperate need for livelihood options, since there is a sheer lack of livelihood generating activities due to shortage of skills, infrastructure and education in the area. Alcoholism among men and a pattern of migration to other areas in search of work were also very common in the area. Often the consequences are that women and children who are left behind become vulnerable to the ill-intentions of traffickers.

In terms of livelihood generation, the first step was to determine what types of capacity building requirements would be most beneficial and fruitful, considering the socio-economic situation of the communities and the current market conditions. The initial survey collected information about the potential livelihood options towards which training could be focused.



Table 1: Determining Livelihood Options and Potential Interventions

Livelihood Options	Reason and Scope for Potential Intervention
Development of agriculture and/or horticulture due to demand in local market	■ Improving procurement and production methods
	■ Diversifying output
	■ Accessing wider markets
Dairy production	■ Widening market linkages
Improvements to food processing	■ Availability of local raw materials
	■ Widening market linkages
	■ Diversifying output
Zardozi embroidery	■ High demand for this work
	■ Availability of local trainers
Computer literacy	■ Expressed frustration about inadequacy of information, technology and communication resources in the area

Analysis of the collected information, along with constraints on available time and money, induced the adoption of a holistic framework that involved strengthening the existing livelihood options by optimizing current alternatives through improved technology, market linkages and value addition. In addition, exposure to information and computers would allow members of the communities to broaden their knowledge base. The main objective of the framework was to harness knowledge and understanding in order to promote action, a change in attitude and to build commitment at all levels.

1.4 Belbandkot: The Impetus for Change

Belbandkot is a non-permanent settlement, since the land is owned by the Forest Department, Government of India. All the homes constructed within the settlement are made of mud with thatched roofs, since any kind of permanent construction would be illegal. The residents, however, do pay some form of rent and they said that often they have to bribe the police when they threaten to displace them on account of their illegal status.

Although officially non-permanent and illegal, Belbandkot has been a settlement for over six generations, according to residents. Today, it is estimated that around 80 families (with an average of six members to a family) live in the settlement. The community consists of approximately 75% Hindus and 25% Muslims.

Belbandkot

The story behind the settlement of Belbandkot was recounted by the residents. First, the area is known for its abundance of "bel" fruit. Secondly, before the place was inhabited, shepherds used the land to graze their animals. The wooden stumps around which the animals were tied are called "kot". Thus the combination of these varying words gave the settlement its name.



Most employed residents work as day laborers, while a few work in the nearby border area.

As mentioned above, Belbandkot was visited during the pre-project analysis. A team consisting of DA and local NGO partners met with residents and the decision was made to set up the Integrated Resource Centre in Banbassa, which is accessible to people living in Belbandkot. There were a few reasons why Belbandkot became the chosen centre for developing the IRC in the area:

- The settlement is located very close to the porous Indo Nepal border, and therefore it is a community prone to traffickers
- Many of the residents are either not employed or work as laborers
- During visits to the settlement, many residents indicated an interest in learning new skills
- A few residents are skilled artisans who were willing to impart their knowledge upon establishment of the IRC
- The majority of beneficiaries come from Belbandkot



2. The Project Framework

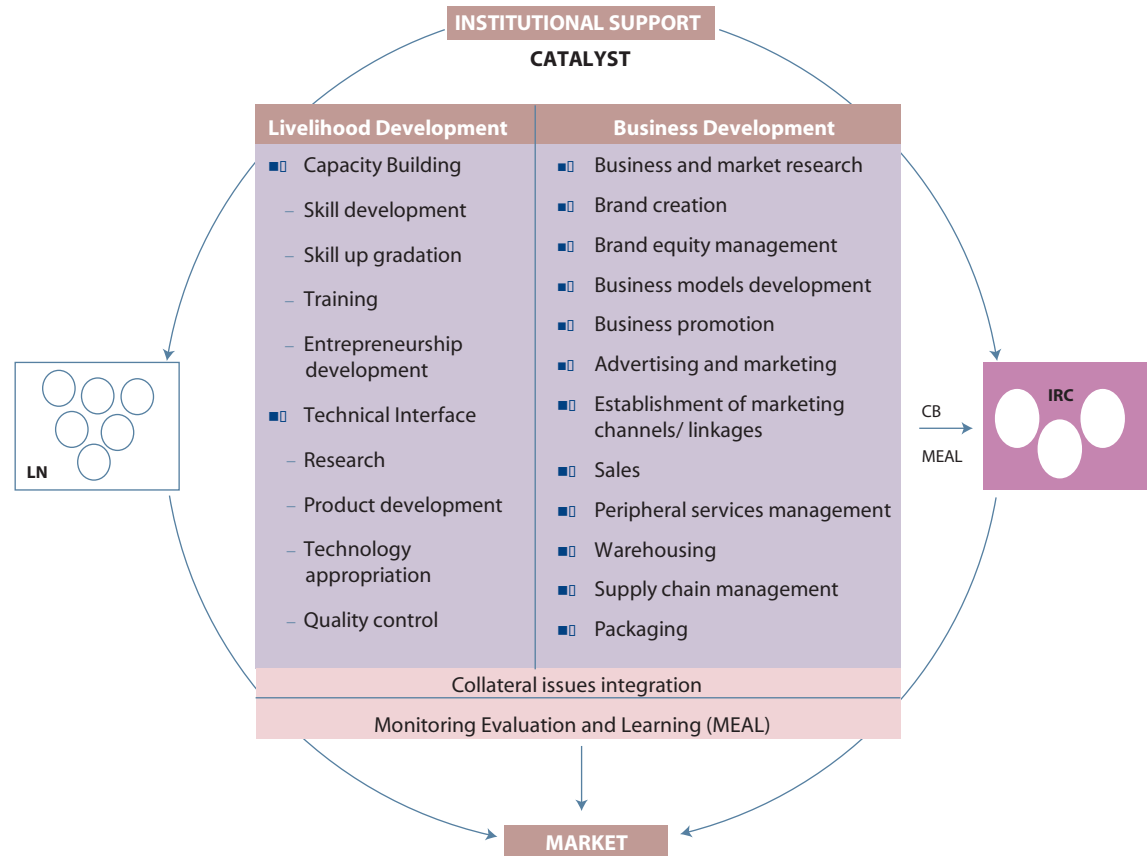
As previously mentioned, there is a need to adopt a holistic framework in order to effectively prevent trafficking and other threats to vulnerable communities. The need for such a framework arises from the current state of interventions in the project areas, which are limited to rescue and rehabilitation of trafficked victims, advocacy, and other stand-alone interventions. A comprehensive livelihood approach among vulnerable communities was much needed (see Diagram 1).

2.1 The Livelihood Approach

The project framework is based on the need to provide vulnerable communities with sustainable livelihood options. The rationale behind such an approach is that while existing interventions assist trafficked victims, it is only through livelihood generation that a sustainable, long-term alternative can impact vulnerability to trafficking. Hence, any kind of solution should be envisaged through integrated options for rehabilitation, counselling, capacity building, market development and employment instead of just providing rehabilitation centres/rescue homes. This type of approach will allow potentially vulnerable communities to become self-reliant, both economically and socially.

Although the holistic framework includes several components spread over village, district and national levels, one component, the Integrated Resource Centre (IRC), was developed in order to implement the livelihood approach.

Diagram 1: Project Framework: An Operational Blueprint



- CB - Capacity Building
- LN - Livelihood Nuclei
- IRC - Integrated Resource Centre
- MEAL - Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

2.2 Developing a Proof of Concept: The Integrated Resource Centre

The IRC was set up in the town of Banbassa due to its location between Tanakpur and Belbandkot. The IRC was developed as a proof of concept to capture the livelihood related activities that could be generated. The scope of these activities includes:

- Capacity building/vocational trainings
- Rehabilitation
- Information dissemination/advocacy
- Product development and marketing

A detailed account of the IRC's activities is given further on (see Section 4).

2.3 Evaluating the Concept on the Ground: Summary of Key Achievements

The action research conducted at the IRC began with the following parameters:

1. The intervention was to target around 70 beneficiaries.
2. The timeline for the project was three months: October, 2006 to December, 2006.

At the end of the three month period, some of the major results achieved by the IRC are as follow:

- Although the target number of beneficiaries was 70, due to the enthusiastic response from the community, the number increased to 140.
- Of these 140 beneficiaries about 70 were trained in textile production, with tailoring and zardozi taking in 35 trainees each. In addition, 35 women were given food processing training and another 35 received training in computer skills.
- Regular business orientation workshops were given to all beneficiaries in conjunction with training.
- Marked improvements in standardization of products and hygienic practices.
- The food processing unit was able to sell its products by the third month.
- The textile unit has made market linkages and is beginning to produce in larger quantities.
- A display counter was set up at the IRC to showcase the food and textile products.
- The drafting of a company constitution that outlines stakeholder shares and organizational structure was undertaken.

The next section gives an in-depth account of the project's progression.



3. Summary of Project Progression

The Integrated Resource Centre in Banbassa was opened as a proof of concept. A holistic framework was drafted focusing on prevention of trafficking in vulnerable communities. In the time frame of three months, the overall aim was to provide skill sets that could generate sustainable livelihoods to the targeted communities.

3.1 Capacity Building

The objectives of capacity building through the Integrated Resource Centre were multiple:

- Livelihood development through vocational trainings, upgrading skill sets, and building a sense of entrepreneurship among beneficiaries.
- Business development through brand creation, business promotion, advertising and marketing, developing business models, sales, establishing marketing channels/linkages and peripheral management services (warehousing, supply chain management, packaging, logistics).
- Gender sensitization programs and rights-based counselling.
- Comprehensive training packages for NGOs, NGO networks and government organizations.

A decision was made to identify three activities and focus on skill development and upgradation for the Integrated Resource Centre. The areas chosen were:

- Textile Unit
- Food Processing Unit
- Computer Literacy

These activities were chosen on the basis of an in-depth resource mapping exercise in the region (pre-project analysis). It was discovered that within the settlement of Belbandkot there was an inclination in residents to take up training in the proposed skills. Also, there were a few people trained in these trades who could be approached to become trainers at the IRC. The purpose of the IRC was not only capacity building through training, but also a channel for advocacy on various issues including trafficking and safe migration.



A Design
made by
the Zardozi unit



3.2 Reasons for Activities Chosen

What is zardozi?

Zardozi is an art that dates back to the pre Mughal period. Traditional motifs and patterns are worked on to fabric with gold and silver thread with mirrors, sequins and stones providing further enhancements. Zardozi is done on all kinds of fabric - silk, velvet, brocade and so on. The actual embroidery is done by tightly pulling a piece of cloth over a large wooden frame. Depending of the size of the frame, up to 10 people can work on one piece at the same time.

Initially, it was thought that tailoring would be the only textile-based activity to be taught at the IRC, due to its high sale potential. However, it was recognized that tailoring skills alone would not be able to create a dynamic textile unit. Therefore, zardozi training was added to tailoring so that together they would form a cohesive textile unit. Zardozi also added value to the final product.

Zardozi and tailoring were also chosen because of the availability of local trainers from Belbandkot and other nearby places. It was recognized that if local trainers were used at the IRC, then there would be higher community participation and better responses to the programme. The benefit of having local trainers is that he/she empathises with the local community conditions and can develop a level of trust and confidence among the trainees. The skill could be transferred in a relatively straightforward manner, since the zardozi trainer had already transferred it to his family. Once the basics of the craft are learnt, then scaling up the quality and diversity of products is possible with appropriate design and production inputs. With the demand for zardozi work being high, there is more ease in finding markets and developing market linkages.

Food processing was chosen because there was no such existing unit nearby. Thus, developing a structured food processing unit within the IRC would allow entry into a comparatively untapped market. Providing training in food processing is also logistically feasible because all raw materials are locally available, mainly due to nearby forest land. As in the

case of zardozi, with the right amount of training and access to information, food processing activities can be scaled-up efficiently and yield quick returns.

From a business perspective, an incentive for choosing zardozi, tailoring, and food processing is that these skills can be used for both individual gain as well as collective benefit. A woman who learns any of these skills will always have the option to be independent and generate her own income. Alternatively, all of these skill bases are amenable to a collective production environment and can be up scaled for wider production. Also in this region, especially in Belbandkot, there is the constant insecurity of living conditions and propensity for migration. Acquiring certain skills, however, can secure safe migration.

In addition to the textile unit and food processing, computer training was chosen because one major shortcoming expressed in the difficult geographic area was the lack of technology-based training programmes and internet access. A large number of students expressed an eagerness to learn computer skills and engage in knowledge sharing through the internet.





3.3 Commitment of the Community

The four activities described above have been running concurrently at the Integrated Resource Centre for the past three months. For six days a week, both trainers and trainees arrive at the centre at 9 am and engage with their particular activity for the whole day.

The women have been coming mostly from Belbandkot, Tanakpur and other villages in the area, but a fair number travel a few hours to come to the centre from Nepal and remote villages within Uttarakhand. The number of women who have joined the IRC has been steadily increasing so much so that at the end of the three months each of the three units is finding it difficult to accept new trainees.

Progress of the project is measured not only by the number of women attending the training courses, but also by the improvement of skill bases and knowledge about other aspects of the craft or trade. The objective of the IRC has been to provide a holistic intervention, where women coming from vulnerable communities learn not just a livelihood skill, but also become aware of the business and marketing aspects of their vocation. In addition to understanding the practicalities and logistics of producing goods and following them through to the marketplace, the IRC has become a forum for advocacy and discussions on gender issues, the importance of education and women's rights.

The opening of the Integrated Resource Centre in October 2006 as a model for up-scaling, replication and multiplication, has proven to be a conceptually successful endeavour. Many of the objectives have been met in the short span of setting up the IRC and many ideas have been generated for further up-scaling and improvement of the centre.



4. IRC Activities: Detailed Account

As described earlier, the four activities pursued at the IRC were chosen on the basis of many factors. The availability of local trainers proved to be a deciding factor. Also, the preferences expressed by local community members for learning a particular skill were taken into account. The initial efforts taken to engage with people from target communities and carry out resource mapping exercises proved to be key factors in developing training programmes with relevance and meaning to the local community.

For capacity building on various activities, specific training courses/workshops were designed and customized. The packages were designed keeping in mind the skill of the people and their capacity to understand and absorb the new content and context.

In addition to training, workshops were conducted on various aspects of business development to give the trainees some orientation about managing a small business unit. More focused business development training are now needed to take the initiative to the next level.

4.1 Textile Unit: Zardozi and Tailoring

The textile unit has been training a total of 70 women, with approximately 35 women each in zardozi and tailoring. These women can now produce a wide range of products, like cushions, stoles, hand bags and items of Indian clothing. Zardozi work is most sought after, particularly during the wedding season. Accessories made with zardozi are also sold at very competitive rates all over the country and abroad.

The three month training period proved to be effective and women acquired the skills quickly, credit for which is also due to the trainers. The zardozi trainer came from Belbandkot and has been practicing the craft his entire life. Now his whole family, wife and children, are also engaged in the craft. In the case of the tailoring unit, the trainers were women who were into informal sewing from their homes or owned small tailoring shops in Tanakpur. They had the basic skills which needed upgrading. Development Alternatives arranged a workshop in Delhi for these women, and trainers from USHA in affiliation with TARAhaat showed them new techniques and designs. As part of this arrangement with TARAhaat, the sewing machines were also procured from USHA at discounted rates. The women went back to the IRC and passed on these new skills to the trainees. Now the trainees

have become experts in making a range of diverse products. The emphasis has repeatedly been on finishing and neatness. After just three months, the trainees are already in a position to sell their products not just in the local market but also in big cities like Delhi and Bombay.

To complement the training, a textile designer from the National Institute of Design (NID) was appointed for product development. The inputs she provided proved to be extremely useful:

- She exposed trainers and trainees to contemporary designs and trends in the national and international markets;
- She taught trainers and trainees the fundamentals of procuring appropriate raw materials, proper finishing techniques and how to carry out activities more professionally in a business mode;
- While keeping intact traditional skills, she explained the importance of combining contemporary designs with their conventional expertise, with the help of modern tools and technologies;
- She has been a valuable resource in creating market linkages beyond Tanakpur.

The skill base in both zardozi and tailoring has increased due to good attendance by trainees, upgrading of trainers' skills and the introduction of different design schemes by experts in the textile field. Although the zardozi and tailoring units consist of separate training programmes, both units work together to produce the final product. Generally, when work is done by individuals at home, it is mostly piecework; the woman sewing a shirt will not have seen the woman who does the embroidery. Therefore, the production is not viewed as a coherent process, whereas the women in the IRC are exposed to all the work done, from the incoming raw materials to the last stitch. An understanding of all parts of the production process and how each woman's role is interdependent not only creates a greater sense of community, but also a sense of ownership and empowerment over the final product.

A textile business orientation workshop was also conducted by the resource person to acclimatise the communities towards eventually taking the textile unit forward as a business.



4.2 Food Processing

In the food processing unit, the women initially were to receive training from a small entrepreneur. However, amidst fears of competition, the trainer withdrew from the IRC and was replaced by a local member of the community, who had been involved with food processing in an informal capacity. Although he was able to conduct the training, the quality of the training as well as the final products could not match up to industry standards. The women had acquired the skill to make different kinds of processed foods like pickles and jams. The crucial missing components were knowledge of standard hygienic practices and proper organization of the unit. In order to operate as a business enterprise, proper coordination and division of labour among the women was essential.

For this, Development Alternatives engaged a food technologist to organize the training courses. The women were informed of standard hygienic practices and usage of quality ingredients and equipment. Since the training was undertaken, the women are better aware of standards and admit the quality of the products has substantially improved. There was also a workshop conducted by DA managers on business development which involved developing their knowledge on costing, branding, packaging, etc. The trainees were taught the importance of standardizing their products and maintaining consistency in taste and quality.

The food processing unit has already started yielding returns. Products like pickles, jams, squash, malta, tomato sauce, etc are being sold in the market, with attractive packaging. They are being made of locally available fruits and vegetables. The women started selling their foods initially in small quantities in their neighbourhood. They have also set up a small sales counter at the training centre. Trainees now have a better sense of health and hygiene and also of standardization of the products. There is a clear improvement in their enthusiasm and participation. They have already started referring to the unit as their "company" and have high expectations that one day they will be able to sell their products not only in and around Tanakpur, but also in other states and this unit will help them practice a sustainable livelihood.



4.3. Computer Learning Centre

The computer literacy program functions both as a training centre and as an internet café. This unit of the IRC is open to anyone who wants to learn Microsoft Office programs like Word and Excel. Students pay a monthly fee of Rs 200 and learn these programmes (this is the only unit in the IRC that provides fee-based training). For those who do not speak or read English, the modules have been customised in Hindi to match their needs. Otherwise, the majority of training courses continue in English. Once the daily training is over, the facility is open to the public for internet services.

There are children of all age groups, from 10-18 years who come to learn more about computers. This will be helpful to them on a long term basis no matter what profession they pursue. In all there are 35 regular students who get trained six days a week in different batches.

Although the computer training is not yet integrated with the other units of the IRC, many women have expressed an interest in learning computer skills. Also, it has been suggested that as a part of the zardozi and tailoring units, designs should be printed using the computer, so as to phase out the time consuming task of drawing designs on paper. Another suggestion to integrate the computer unit with the rest of the IRC is for some of the women trainees to learn to use the computer and internet. This would help women acquire new ideas and gather more information about designs and fashion trends prevalent across the country and rest of the world. This would also help them communicate with clients and designers outside Tanakpur.

The overall objective of having computer training along with other trainings was to provide easy access to information that was not hitherto available. Also, the fee-based training allows the IRC to earn some money which can be used to support other activities. Efforts are being made to further integrate it with the textile unit, to facilitate further interaction with clients outside the vicinity.

4.4 Gender Sensitization and Advocacy on Anti-trafficking

In addition to the training in the three units, gender sensitization has been a core area of concern and continuous efforts have been made to incorporate regular counselling and informal discussions into the main process of the IRC. The implementing agency, PARAAJ, has also roped in volunteers like Lalita who is from Nepal and has been working on cross border anti- trafficking for a few years. She makes women aware of the ongoing trafficking situation and the efforts that are



being made to prevent it. Steps are also being taken to utilize the services of the computer centre in the IRC to disseminate information on trafficking and women's rights issues through various audio visual tools.

4.5 Current Status and Project Highlights

Initially the IRC was perceived as a mechanism to provide capacity building training resulting in a small business venture, thus providing livelihoods to approximately 70 women. However, the response and enthusiasm of all stakeholders has converted the IRC into a model to be scaled up as a large intervention and it has become a focal point in providing livelihood solutions in and around Tanakpur.

The capacity building activities at IRC under the USAID intervention were concluded on schedule with qualitative output. After just three months of capacity building and resource management, the IRC has acquired a sense of business and has already been selling its products locally and is currently trying to extend markets linkages to other areas. However the mechanisms and systems are not completely satisfactory to run the IRC independently on a long term basis. Keeping this in mind, some more hand holding and support should be given to the IRC to make it a long term sustainable and replicable model.



In conclusion of this section on Detailed Account, herewith a summary of the main highlights in each of the IRC's activities.

Textile Unit

- Due to the high level skills of trainers, the beneficiaries learned very quickly.
- Trainees are already in a position to sell the products in local markets and large cities (i.e. Delhi and Bombay).
- Visits by textile experts have given trainers and trainees valuable insights into designs and colours.
- Trainees have used their acquired skills to make varied products, like cushions, stoles, hand bags and clothing items.

Food Processing Unit

- Vast improvements in hygiene practices due to comprehensive training sessions.
- There is increased awareness among trainees about standardization of products.
- Regular workshops are conducted to teach trainees about costing, branding, packaging, etc.
- The FPU was the first to sell its products, which has resulted in more enthusiasm and ownership over the products and the company.
- A display window has been set up at the IRC where products from both FPU and the textile unit are displayed for sale.

Computer Centre

- The centre provides some income for the IRC through its fee-based training and internet café.
- It is the first internet café in the area and it provides students with comprehensive training.
- There is an interest from the trainees in the other two units to learn computer skills.
- There are suggestions that the computer could be used to make the textile unit more efficient - i.e. printing out designs and learning about fashions and trends.

Advocacy

- Gender sensitization is a core element of the IRC.
- Regular counselling and informal discussions are conducted with the women.
- Activists, like Lalita, come to the IRC to talk to the women about trafficking.
- Computers and other audio/visual tools are used to educate women about trafficking and women's rights.





5. Community Responses

The various stakeholders in the community have played an active role in securing the forward momentum of the Integrated Resource Centre. Much of the positive response from the community is due to its holistic framework for sustainable livelihood generation, as opposed to a short-term, one-off training scheme. Advocacy is also a large part of the activities in the IRC, and often members from the local community come to the centre to talk about a wide range of issues affecting them.

5.1 In Need of Alternatives

Although agriculture is the mainstay for most communities on both sides of the border, the general consensus is that agriculture has become unsustainable for many people, due to lack of water and frequent attacks on crops by wild animals. Because there is no alternate livelihood option available, many of these communities become vulnerable to the machinations of traffickers. The research conducted prior to the establishment of the IRC found other factors that contributed to the vulnerability of communities:

- Eroded natural capital base
- Inadequate cash flows due to low incomes
- Low level of skills
- Low access to credit
- Weak infrastructure
- Insignificant support from law enforcement agencies
- Negligible social support networks
- Substandard health and education services
- Existence of class and caste based differences within communities

- Inadequate institutional support for livelihood enhancement
- Poor knowledge of developing Small and Medium Enterprises

In addition to these factors, there is also a sense of frustration among educated young people because of the lack of opportunities in the region. Most of the men migrate to cities. This again contributes substantially to women becoming easy prey for traffickers.

5.2 Beneficiary Responses

In the context of waning opportunities and increasing vulnerability, most of the women who have been attending the training courses at the IRC are able to come with the consent and support of their families. Many women have begun to realize that the skills and knowledge they are acquiring could help them generate a sustainable livelihood.

Some women, whose husbands have gone to cities in search of work, look at the IRC and hope they will be able to acquire skills to work and sustain their families and send their children to school. The overall community response to the IRC has been positive. Trainers in all units recount that they have noticed marked changes in the behavior and attitude of the women. Many women themselves say they have acquired a long term skill to be used for business enterprise.





In Focus: Shaheen Begum

On a field visit to the IRC at Banbassa, a team from DA made a trip to Belbandkot to visit the zardozi trainers. One of the trainers, Guddi, introduced the team to Shaheen Begum, who also lives in Belbandkot. Shaheen Begum, though skilled in zardozi, was not coming to the IRC. When asked why, especially since most of the women attending the IRC are from Belbandkot, she said that her husband would not let her attend. Some members of the team tried to convince her to attend. The next day, Shaheen Begum turned up at the IRC and said that her husband had gone away for a while and during his absence she could come to the centre. However, when her husband returned, Shaheen Begum stopped coming to the IRC. When DA followed up with another visit to the IRC and Belbandkot a month later, the team, along with Guddi, went to visit Shaheen Begum and her husband. After much convincing and reasoning, the husband gave in and let her go to the IRC. Now, both husband and wife come to the IRC and teach women zardozi skills.

Many of the women in the food processing unit recounted that before joining the IRC's training scheme they had completed one month training in durrie (rug) making, provided by a local NGO. However, they realized the training was not effective because there was no follow-through, in terms of providing backward and forward linkages to market their new skills. One woman said she was just sent back home and told to find her own work. The women in the group said they were happy with the training they received at the IRC, but they now realize there is a need for more marketing knowledge. The women here have an entrepreneurial spirit. Since achaar (pickles) and jams are commonly required items, they are buying these from the centre and then selling them within their communities for a small profit.

5.3 Local NGO Responses

In addition to women benefiting from the IRC, local NGOs and NGO partners have also responded positively to the project. It was a completely new experience for them, since to-date no similar intervention has taken place in the area. Previously, local NGOs had been involved in anti-trafficking projects focused on rescue, rehabilitation and counselling of trafficked people as well as advocacy. A few training schemes were started by NGOs and other agencies, but these were short term programmes and none had the concept of linking anti-trafficking to livelihood generation.

Now through affiliation with the IRC, local NGOs have learned about the holistic process of livelihood generation, which involves knowledge about markets, basic business and organization principles, and a lot of empathy with the needs of beneficiaries.

5.4 Responses to the Project

Beneficiaries

- Majority come to IRC with consent and support from their families.
- They have begun to realize that skills and knowledge will ensure a better livelihood.
- They feel that the skills they have learnt can lead to a profitable business enterprise.
- They feel a great sense of ownership in their work and in the business that is developing.
- They realize the need for marketing knowledge.
- They have gained a better understanding of the process of making products from scratch to finish.

Local NGOs

- They recognize that the project framework, including the IRC and the follow-up business venture, is a completely new endeavour.
- They have learned that holistic livelihood generation can have a major impact against trafficking.
- They have gained knowledge about business principles and have learned to see the beneficiaries as partners in the venture.



A Design made by the Zardozi unit

6. Challenges Faced

Challenges encountered during the process of running the IRC were on multiple levels: community, operational, and resource. The most difficult challenges were faced at the community level.

6.1 Community-Level Challenges

At the community level, the biggest challenge to overcome was the rigid mindsets and attitudes of the main stakeholders. This involved instilling a sense of community, cooperation and ownership with regard to the work being done and the enterprise being set up.

Initially, the perception was that this was yet another "capacity building" exercise, which would train women in some craft/vocation, give them a certificate upon completion and then send them back home to use their new skill as best they could. This kind of intervention had been the norm all this while. After the first couple of weeks of skill building at the IRC, many women said they will now produce from home. Instead of having a

vision and orientation towards a sustainable enterprise, women saw the programme as a charitable training scheme. It was not only the women trainees who thought this way, but even those recruited as trainers started with the impression that they were doing social work in their communities, as opposed to being a part of an entrepreneurial endeavour.

Also, because of this lack of vision and aspiration, initially the women thought the training to be a kind of manual labour. There was little value placed on the products they were learning to make and there was no sense of ownership in their work. They thought that the implementing agency will abandon them and leave once the project tenure was over, leaving them in isolation with no backward or forward linkages. They had little faith in the intervention and were very apprehensive of the intentions of the implementers. Apprehensions also came from trainers. In the textile unit, some of the trainers could not believe that the women could effectively learn skills in three months. Trainers were also reluctant to accept changes in techniques and design inputs from experts in the field. However, over the time, the trainers saw the benefit of changing some of their practices for the collective gain of the IRC.

Thus it was vital to overcome existing attitudes and mindsets, at the same time create a vision towards which these women could aspire. The implementers were successful in this endeavour and now the trained women are willing to come on their own to the centre despite the lack of transportation facilities and show everyone that they are on their way to becoming independent.



6.2. Operational Challenges

When the IRC opened, it was very difficult to convince the women to take part in the programme. Initially the centre started off with just 10 to 15 participants. The maximum number of women attending the training came from the Belbundkot, which is 7 kilometres from the training centre in Banbassa. The settlement is poorly connected and whatever transportation is available is limited and expensive.

Initially women in Belbandkot were apprehensive and not willing to spend any money on daily transport. Thus the initial number of beneficiaries for the trainings remained low.

Since the cost of transportation was a major factor, the implementing agents decided to provide this facility for the duration of the training. As a result,

the number of women attending the training gradually increased to 150. Now the situation is such that there are more women willing to enroll for the training, but they are being refused because of lack of infrastructure and time availability.

6.3 Resource Challenges

During the design and implementation of the project, the most limited resource was time. The implementers at all levels, from Development Alternatives to local NGOs, had a time frame of just three months to build skill bases. Many of the trainers themselves were sceptical about teaching skills that normally take at least six months to learn. However, in the short span of time, the beneficiaries were able to pick up the necessary skills.



7. Key Findings

After successfully overcoming many challenges, the IRC, as a conceptual model, has proved to be viable and continues to work towards becoming a business enterprise that can provide long-term benefits for the community.

7.1 Observed Results and Impacts

Development Alternatives livelihood approach to preventing trafficking along the Indo-Nepal border areas is an experiment in not only capacity building, but also in giving people and specifically women, the opportunity and know-how to gain a wider perspective. Over the past three months the Integrated Resource Centre has developed into a place where around 150 women regularly come to learn zardozi, sewing, food processing, and computer operations. According to IRC trainers, local NGO representatives, DA project managers and consultants, some of the results and changes over the past three months include:

- Increase in infrastructural input, such as sewing machines for tailoring, wooden frames for zardozi work, and machines for the food processing unit.
- Better spatial organization of the IRC.
- Increase in women participating in the centre.
- More awareness among local NGO representatives about the holistic process of livelihood generation.
- Quick-paced learning of skills by

women resulting in better quality and diverse products, e.g. handbags, cushion covers, and a variety of processed foods (achaar and jam).

- Greater sense of ownership among women and pride in their work.
- An expressed interest by beneficiaries to learn about the complexities of starting an enterprise.
- More understanding among trainers, NGO workers and women participants about the business and marketing implications of the project.
- Drafting of the company constitution; this sets out the organizational structure and the parameters for stakeholder shares in the company.
- Women were found to be more proactive, from trainees to trainers to supervisors.
- There is a visible impact in terms of the response and acceptability of the project by both community and women; the rate of retention at the IRC has been high - thus these women are not likely to fall prey to traffickers and other ill intentioned channels.
- Women have acquired skills, so even if they have to migrate they will be migrating with skills. However, the proper impact on migration can only be assessed after the IRC has been run as a business unit for a few months.

In Focus:

Conversations with Pushpa Devi, Sunita & Guddi

The interest taken by those who come to the centre becomes especially evident when one hears the stories of women who travel for hours every day to reach the IRC. Pushpa Devi, Bimla Devi, Sunita and Guddi all come to the IRC from Panthagot, a village up in the mountains surrounding Tanakpur (see Case Study). They all wake up at 4 am and leave their homes at 6 am to reach the centre by 9 am. They must walk on rough ground, cross two rivers and a forest in order to reach the IRC in Banbassa. They recount that during the rainy season these paths are inundated and virtually impossible to cross. In the dry season they encounter wild animals along the way. As the courses finish in the late afternoons, the women return home mostly in the dark. Even though the traversing has become second nature to them, these women show admirable dedication in walking for over six hours everyday to be a part of the training. They appear to have a sense of pride in coming to the centre, especially when other village women would ask them where they are going - at first tauntingly and then enviously.



In Focus: Drafting a Constitution

The most recent development in the IRC has been the drafting of the constitution, which addresses the issues of stakeholder shares in the company, organizational structure and general rules and regulations of good conduct.

Objective of Constitution: Create a road map whereby if external funding was unavailable, then the IRC could run as a self-sustainable operation.

The breakdown of stakeholder shares is as follows:

- 40% of all profit goes to the beneficiaries
- 30% of all profit goes to PARAAJ (to cover the costs of running the centre, marketing, and overheads)
- 10% of all profit goes to a net owned capital fund
- 10% of all profit goes to the local implementing NGOs
- 10% of all profit goes to a community fund

The organizational structure of the company is defined as follows:

- The three separate units of tailoring, zardozi and food processing will each elect a committee that will control all aspects of production.
- The committee is made up of President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- An executive committee will comprise representatives from the NGO partner (PARAAJ) and supporting NGOs, with adequate representation from the community

7.2 Constraints

As a proof of concept, the establishment of the Integrated Resource Centre has been a success and provides a framework for a replicable concept. However, with limited time and money, the multiple stakeholders have encountered problems and voiced concerns regarding various aspects of the project and the centre itself.

Technology: Participatory group discussions held with the women in the Food Processing Unit brought to focus some of their concerns. The most strongly voiced constraint was the lack of up-to-date and efficient machines. The women were aware that without such technology, the final product took longer to make. There was a realization that in the production process, backward linkages were still weak. This meant that access to raw materials as well as packaging materials was erratic. A third key issue that came up was space. The women said that more space and storage was needed and also that there should be more sources of water in the IRC, since the same water source is being used for too many purposes.

The above concerns were voiced towards the end of the three month training schedule. A final field visit was made by DA staff one month later and visible changes had been made to the IRC. Most notably, more storage areas have been built for the Food Processing Unit and more work surfaces made available to the women.

Backward Linkages: A major constraint voiced by all levels of stakeholders has been the lack of backward linkages. As a result, there are problems with finding the right raw materials in the local markets and resources like fabric and thread often lack in quality and are not available in the desired colour combinations. For the purposes of training, raw materials have been sourced from Delhi, but this kind of backward linkage is not sustainable for a business enterprise as it



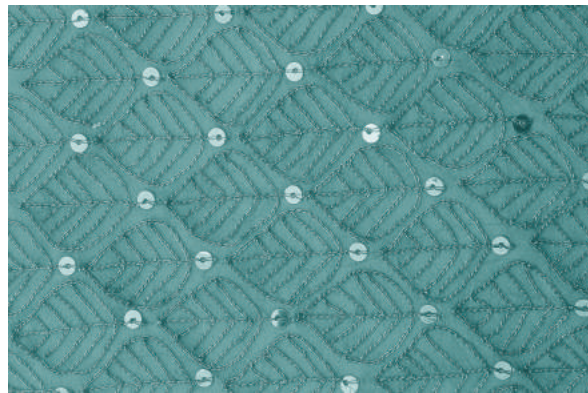
increases the cost of production. Some of the trainers have made trips to larger cities like Bareilly in order to procure raw materials. However, Bareilly is a 2-3 hour journey by road from the IRC and due to high transport costs and time consumed this method is not ideal for procuring raw materials.

Market Linkages: The capacity of the local market in and around Tanakpur is quite small, which means that in order to start business activities the beneficiaries and stakeholders will need to work through middlemen to get their products to larger markets. Since creating market linkages is a crucial aspect of any business venture, a number of suggestions have been put forth so that products can reach some markets. It was suggested that DA's TARAGram store in Jhansi could be a retail outlet for some of the products, especially for the textile unit. Also some of the trainers would be able to provide buffer markets through their own personal networks and linkages. The zarzadi trainer is willing to outsource some of his orders that come from Nepal to the IRC textile unit. In the tailoring unit, one trainer has a government issued card that allows her to set up retail stalls in places like Nainital, which attract large number tourists. These buffer markets can provide the beneficiaries with exposure to producing for various markets until solid market linkages are established.

Production Process: A number of constraints arise relating to the actual production process.

These include a lack of awareness and exposure to quality standards and standardization. Although the Food Processing Unit has gone through numerous training and discussion sessions about hygiene and quality control, the final products often do not reflect this. In one meeting with FPU trainers, it was discovered that recipes are not written down methodically for everyone to consult; they are often not followed precisely, resulting in different tastes and textures for the same product. The problems with standardization have been addressed by inviting various experts to speak to supervisors and women trainees.

Knowledge: Also in relation to the production process, there is a concerted lack of knowledge about market demand, current trends and fashion. This is due to the limited exposure and orientation to larger cities and markets. It is also due to the lack of incoming knowledge and information, but this is being remedied by the opening of the computer kiosk at the IRC. Women are being encouraged to learn how to



use computer facilities, but so far none of the beneficiaries have learned about internet.

Vision: A final constraint worthy of mention is at the level of the implementing NGO (PARAAJ). As discussed earlier, the entire project from inception to implementation is a new endeavour for local NGOs. The link between anti-trafficking and livelihood generation has till now never been considered in projects. And the follow-through of livelihood generation to sustainable business enterprise is a completely new approach for the NGO partners. Thus, conceptualizing a long-term vision and plan for the IRC has proved to be a challenge because there is no precedence for this kind of intervention in the area.



7.3 Challenges Ahead

The most immediate challenge relates to the establishment of a business venture. This is because many of the local stakeholders do not have much experience or knowledge of this process. Thus, the challenge lies less in tangible inputs and more in creating an environment conducive to efficient production, eventually leading to a self-sustainable enterprise.

Some of the challenges that remain are:

- Creating a "company-like" atmosphere
 - Structured marketing and production activities
 - Systematic division of labor activities
 - Implementing mechanisms that can respond to market demand
 - Initiate thinking about branding, costing, supply management and logistics
- Need for greater clarity in organizational structure
- Mental preparation - is there a willingness to invest in the IRC as a company?
- Help beneficiaries get over the feeling of abandonment
- Providing better access to knowledge of market demand, trends and fashion

Table 2: SWOT Analysis

Objective: Integrated Resource Centres as a catalyst for mitigating trafficking along border areas

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Positive community response ■ Quick uptake of skill sets ■ Model created with limited time and resources in "no livelihood intervention area" ■ Community owned and operated model, with proper stakes defined and outlined in a constitution ■ Capacity building for local NGOs to adopt livelihood approach instead of just advocacy ■ Regular inputs by experts in food processing and textile design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inadequate infrastructure ■ Not all women understand what it takes to run a company ■ A lack of well developed backward and forward linkages ■ Not enough information about market demand, trends and fashion ■ Difficulties in conceptualizing a long-term vision and plan at beneficiary and NGO levels
Opportunities:	Threats:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Buffer markets already created for textile products ■ High demand for zardozi work - domestic and overseas ■ Potential to learn computing skills as a business tool ■ Scope for expansion and replication of IRCs - involving more women and youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Women losing interest/confidence in the IRC due to slow rate of returns ■ Opening of similar centers in the region that would distract beneficiaries or incite competition

The above analysis has provided a foundation to work towards a way forward.

8. Way Forward and Stakeholder Perspective

The action research conducted to develop a proof of concept has resulted in the creation of a proper model for sustainable livelihood approach to vulnerable communities. The multiple stakeholders involved with the IRC, in terms of both capacity building and developing a business venture, have varying perspectives and inputs on immediate ways forward.

Since the impacts of this intervention are visible on the ground and through the positive responses from the community, we recommend that, (1) this model needs to be taken forward by expanding the scope and replicating it at various trafficking prone areas; and (2) this model should be implemented to remedy social ills afflicting other types of vulnerable groups.

Scaling up the IRC is two pronged: one is to provide long-term sustainability to the IRC and second is to provide more benefits to a greater number of women and youth in the region. During the intervention there was interest shown from community members to become part of the ongoing training, but due to limitations of time and resources, these people could not join the IRC. Scaling up the centre would provide an opportunity for these women to join the IRC.

Any foreseeable upscaling of the IRC would be on six levels:

1. Infrastructure
2. Capacity building
3. Product development
4. Market and business development
5. Creating livelihood nuclei around Tanakpur, which would be integrated with the IRC
6. Replicating this model in other trafficking prone areas

8.1 Infrastructure

The upscaling of infrastructure would include:

- Procuring a larger space for the IRC, so that each unit can have substantial work and production facilities. In particular, the Food Processing Unit would need a separate space in order to become a certified production unit.
- Also, infrastructural upscaling would require investment in essential equipment, like sewing and embroidery machines, basic material stocks and IT equipment.

Stakeholders & Experts	Way Forward
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commitment to the company and hard work · Further upgrading of skills · Regular exposure to fashion and trends
Trainers/Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · More machines for tailoring unit · Need to strengthen backward linkages, i.e. a consistent source for raw materials · Clarity of roles with the IRC as a business venture · Using personal networks and linkages to bring in orders and start the process of production and sales
Implementing NGO: PARAAJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Boost in product confidence · Implementation of constitution · Increase space for production
DA Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provide more training about business concepts · Systematization of production process with appropriate costing, logistics and labelling procedures · Further focus on standardization of products
Resource People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Investing in essential equipment · Exposure to existing systems of production · Standardization of processes and outputs



8.2 Capacity Building

Capacity building at the IRC would require upscaling on three levels.

1. **Benefiting the community:** Skill development and training for new beneficiaries, as well as upgradation of acquired skills for existing beneficiaries. The latter would require experts to come to the IRC and impart new knowledge in the form of design inputs, demonstration of new techniques and technologies, diversifying product ranges, etc. Beneficiaries would also need to be oriented on various aspects of business management and entrepreneurship.
2. **Benefiting trainers, supervisors and other administrative people:** Training would be provided to enhance their understanding of new designs, finishing and standardization of products; as well as market trends, technology integration and business management for long term sustainability.
3. **Benefiting local NGO community:** Advocating to local NGOs the importance of linking anti-trafficking to a livelihood approach and the effective implementation of such an approach. Emphasis would be placed on community ownership and participatory decision-making, as well as on business and enterprise management.

8.3 Product Development

Product development is an important component for not only mapping a business model and ethic, but also creating a sense of ownership among all beneficiaries. Product development would need to incorporate the following:

- Since the model of the IRC is based on an enterprise mode, there is a need to develop products and services that can be consumed in the market.
- The development of products should be on the strength of utility, quality, aesthetics, functional ease, and fair pricing.
- The products should be amenable to mass production and be easily transportable.
- The upscaling of product development would require the facility to customize products to the needs of buyers and the market.
- All of the above would have to be carried out in conjunction with an expert resource person, with the technical ability to move a product line forward and inject dynamism into it.



8.4 Market and Business Development

Market and business development involves various kinds of inputs.

- Brand creation would be the first and most important step in developing long term market linkages. It is the brand with which the company presents itself in an impersonal market, and brand recognition is a powerful means to business success.
- Promotion of sales through advertisements in the local media and at events, as well as participation in specific events.
- Market linkages need to be created with a dedicated retail shop or counter either in the local IRC or elsewhere. Network linkages can be formed with local retail stores; a virtual shop can be initiated via internet; and links can be made with exporters and institutions.
- Other marketing and business level upscaling could be providing supply chain management and peripheral services management such as warehousing, packaging and logistics. As with all businesses, a mechanism needs to be instituted for constant feedback on current market requirements.

8.5 Creation of Livelihood Nuclei (LN)

The fifth level of upscaling would be to create Livelihood Nuclei (LN) that are integrated with the IRC. The concept of Livelihood Nuclei was first discussed in the inception phase of the study, when a scan of trafficking prone communities was conducted. LNs are interventions based at the village or block level where local communities engage in livelihood activities that are resource or skill based. Initial support for LNs can come from local NGOs, but the aim is for ownership and management to be transferred to the community. The objective of LNs is to generate livelihoods. Thus, in order to provide more livelihood opportunities for women and youth, LNs need to be created at other locations in and around Tanakpur for those people who cannot attend the IRC. These LNs will be connected with the IRC in Banbassa, which will provide guidance and operational support.

8.6 Replication

Upscaling the IRC necessarily implies that this model must be replicated. The IRC in Banbassa was developed as a proof of concept for livelihood

generation in trafficking prone communities. The concept proved to be successful at all stakeholder levels. The IRC proved to be a workable endeavour in terms of skills training as well as orienting beneficiaries to an enterprise mode. The process of replicating this model would include:

- Targeting the border areas of UP and Uttarakhand, since the preliminary study identified these areas as being highly prone to trafficking and yet the areas lacked interventions focused on a livelihood approach.
- Upon conclusion of the field study, wider coverage alongside the Indo-Nepal border by establishing multiple IRCs would actually retard trafficking by eliminating many push factors. (See post-field study report: "Strengthening Livelihoods of Trafficking Prone Communities: A Project Framework for a Livelihood Approach to Prevent Trafficking").
- Replication of the model would necessitate the implementation of the project framework as described in the preliminary. The goal of the project framework is to create wide-ranging networks of IRCs and Livelihood Nuclei (LN) in the trafficking prone vulnerable areas. With these strong support structures in place the incentives for trafficking will be greatly reduced.

NGO support by way of a constitution is secured on a long term basis. PARAAJ is committed to be involved and work in collaboration with complete community participation. However, DA came to the conclusion that putting systems in place for long term sustainability and to provide institutional mechanisms is beyond the capacity of PARAAJ. It is therefore trying to garner more support to ensure that these issues are dealt with and the intervention is scaled up and strengthened. The time frame required for further hand holding is estimated to be about two years.



9. Case Studies

In the foothills of the Himalayas, the people of Nepal have been victims of political and economic instability for several years. This has resulted in insecurity and poverty.

The border areas between India and Nepal are quite porous and there has been little restrictions on movement; many Nepalese find India an attractive place to migrate. The large cities of India are seen as full of opportunities and consumerism. However, this attraction has resulted in significant social discontent and disruption of traditional values. Since migration of men is more common, many young married women are left behind to face the burden of maintaining the family and this has made them the most vulnerable targets of human trafficking. Nepali girls and women are trafficked not only to India but also to other countries. It is not only sex brokers who gain from this human trade, but also so-called "white-collar agents" who are making their fortunes through trafficking. In such a miserable scenario, the Integrated Resource Center has emerged as a ray of hope in many lives.

Anju Devi, 22, Food Processing Unit

Anju Devi lives in village Bhojla, in Nepal. She has three sisters and a younger brother. Her family belongs to the Budha caste. Anju Devi spent her childhood in the foothills of the Himalayas. Due to economic difficulties, the entire family moved down to the plains of Nepal, where her father worked hard to clear some 14 "bigha" of forested land to make it suitable for cultivation. But the cultivation of this land did not lift the family from poverty and Anju had to drop out of school after the 4th standard to help her mother take care of the younger siblings and help with the agriculture.

In 1997, Anju at 13 married Virendra Bahadur Budha. Virendra's father owned 9 "bigha" of land and a three bedroom house. Virendra also dropped out of school early and pursued embroidery work in a private company in Delhi. In his absence Anju could not get on with her mother-in-law and Virendra separated from her in 2003. She was completely abandoned and had to take care of an 8 year old boy and 4 year old girl.



In September 2006, Virendra married again and left for Delhi permanently. Now his mother wants to resettle in Delhi and sell off whatever ancestral land they have. This would have effectively left Anju Devi homeless. Fortunately, Anju came in contact with workers from two local NGOs - Serve Nepal and Reeds. They helped her with legal proceedings so that she could live on her husband's ancestral property and she successfully applied for her right to the land.

Anju Devi also met another activist from Reeds, Lalita, who helped her get in touch with another larger NGO, PARAAJ, in Banbassa. At the time, PARAAJ was being aided by USAID and Development Alternatives to start the IRC. Anju talked to the PARAAJ activists. While in Banbassa, she came to know about the programs offered by the IRC and she subsequently enrolled in the Food Processing Unit. She travels 12 km by cycle to the center for training. She has been a good trainee and has become a skilled technician. Now Anju hopes that after the training, she will be able to acquire a share in the company's work, so that she can support her children and live well.

Pushpa Bisht, 25, Zardozi Unit

Banbassa is situated on the Nepal Highway 125, on the Nepal-India border. Because there is no checking on either side, smuggling and trafficking along this stretch is rampant. On this highway there is a veterinary hospital where Sher Singh Bisht is a compounder. His family comprises his wife, his daughter Pooja, and two younger sons. When Pooja was 5 years old, she lost her voice and hearing when she fell off a terrace. Her family tried several medicines and cures, but when there was no improvement they gave up. The family could not afford to send her to a special school, so Pooja could not continue beyond primary level. Now that she is of marriageable age, her family has been looking for a suitable match, but in vain.

Pooja was able to contact the IRC at Banbassa. She chose tailoring as her vocation and now she comes with her friends to the training centre and is happy. She's an experienced tailor and she hopes with further training she will be able to support herself.



Bimla Devi, Pushpa Devi, Tailoring Unit

Panthagot is a small village within the Forest Department land, where around 30 families live. They mainly comprise Tamta, Arya, and Pandit caste families. It's completely isolated and has no good road connections or any kind of transportation system. Also, there is no electricity, families rely on lamps and they are constantly pestered by wild animals. The people of Panthagot are either agricultural laborers or the menfolk have migrated to cities like Delhi. The village is so isolated that only through the efforts of voluntary organizations that the people have been included on voter lists. Also with the help of voluntary organizations, the government has set up an EGS centre, where Nathu Ram is the teacher and the school teaches up to class 5. From this village, two women - Bimla Devi and Pushpa Devi - and three girls - Sunita, Guddi, and Sapna - came to hear about the IRC in Banbassa. They came to Banbassa and met people from PARAAJ and were able to get admission into the tailoring and zardozi units.

To reach the center on time, all five women have to be up at 4 am. Before leaving, they have to feed their family members and tend to their animals. At 6 am they leave the house. They walk three hours everyday through uneven terrain. On the way they cross a small river and two dense forests inhabited by wild animals. They leave the IRC at 2:30 pm and reach home at around 5 pm.

These women are totally committed and they have become good craftspeople. They hope to overcome their poverty and improve the lot of their families and communities.



Agni, 18, Zardozi Unit

Agni originally belongs to Ranchi in Jharkhand. Her father is no more and her mother cannot walk. Poverty rules out any kind of treatment for the mother. On their relocation to Banbassa, she has been working at the nearby military camp as a cleaner for the past four years. As the only earning member of her family, she gets a salary of Rs. 800 per month. Agni leaves for her job at the military camp at 6 am, finishes at 9:30 am. after which she reaches the IRC. Occasionally, she is not able to reach the centre on time, but she has permission to arrive late on some days. Sometimes she is not able to make it to the IRC at all. Agni is training in the zardozi unit and is gradually becoming efficient. She hopes to gain a better livelihood after the training.



Four Case Studies from Nepal

The following case studies describe women who come to the IRC from Nepal. These women live in the municipality of Mahinder Nagar, situated in District Kanchanpur. Mahinder Nagar is the last municipality before the Indian border and the Kali River, which naturally forms the India-Nepal border. On this river, there is a small cemented crossing that follows a barrage. This is the only traversable path leading into India.

On this crossing there is the "Pillar no. 7" and near this is "gadha chowki", manned by Nepali police and an armed constabulary. Situated in "gadha chowki" is a Nepalese anti-trafficking organization called "Serve Nepal" established in April, 2006. Bimla Joshi is in charge of the centre, and keeps a stern eye over every girl and woman who crosses the border and to date she has handled 44 incidences of human trafficking. These trafficked women were being taken to Delhi, Kuwait or Oman. Serve Nepal has been able to return victims of trafficking to their homes. These girls taken away from their homes often do not know where they are going or even why they have been taken. From District Kanchanpur, Anju Budha (story narrated earlier), Dhanna Khadka, Deepika Lehkik, Neelam (married), Anita, and Chandra, all came to PARAAJ and signed up for training courses in food processing at the IRC. The IRC in Banbassa has given them a lot of hope.



Dhanna Khadka, 25.

Dhanna has studied up till class 5, dropping out on account of her early marriage. Her husband, Basant Khadka, was diagnosed with polio three years ago and was taken to a large hospital in Delhi for treatment. After some time, both Basant and his doctor disappeared from the hospital and their whereabouts were never known. Her husband's parents are dead and his brothers and sisters live separately. Dhanna lives alone with her two children, aged 6 and 8, who attend school. Some time ago her son broke his hand and he was taken to the local hospital in Khadima for treatment. Dhanna had to pay Rs. 25,000 and became heavily indebted. Since then her parents have been supporting her. Since joining the centre, Dhanna's confidence and hope have increased though her when social and economic difficulties still persist.

Deepika Lehkik, 23.

Deepika was married at 13 and had to drop out of school after finishing class 7. Her husband, Narayan, stayed with her for only three months, after which he went to Bangalore to work in an incense making factory. He has since disappeared, and Deepika has been thrown out of the house by her in laws. With her children she came back to her parents' house. Her family's only source of livelihood is a small plot of land on which they carry out traditional agriculture. Deepika joined the IRC's Food Processing Unit and is now much happier.

Anita Kumari Chand, 19.

Anita has studied till class 10. She has two older brothers and a younger sister. Once, Anita's father owned a fairly prosperous shop in "gadha chowki", which he lost due to his drinking habit. The family's other source of income is their ancestral property on which they practice traditional agriculture. Economically, the family is very weak. Anita has been training with the Food Processing Unit and now feels that with this training she will be able to get a proper job.

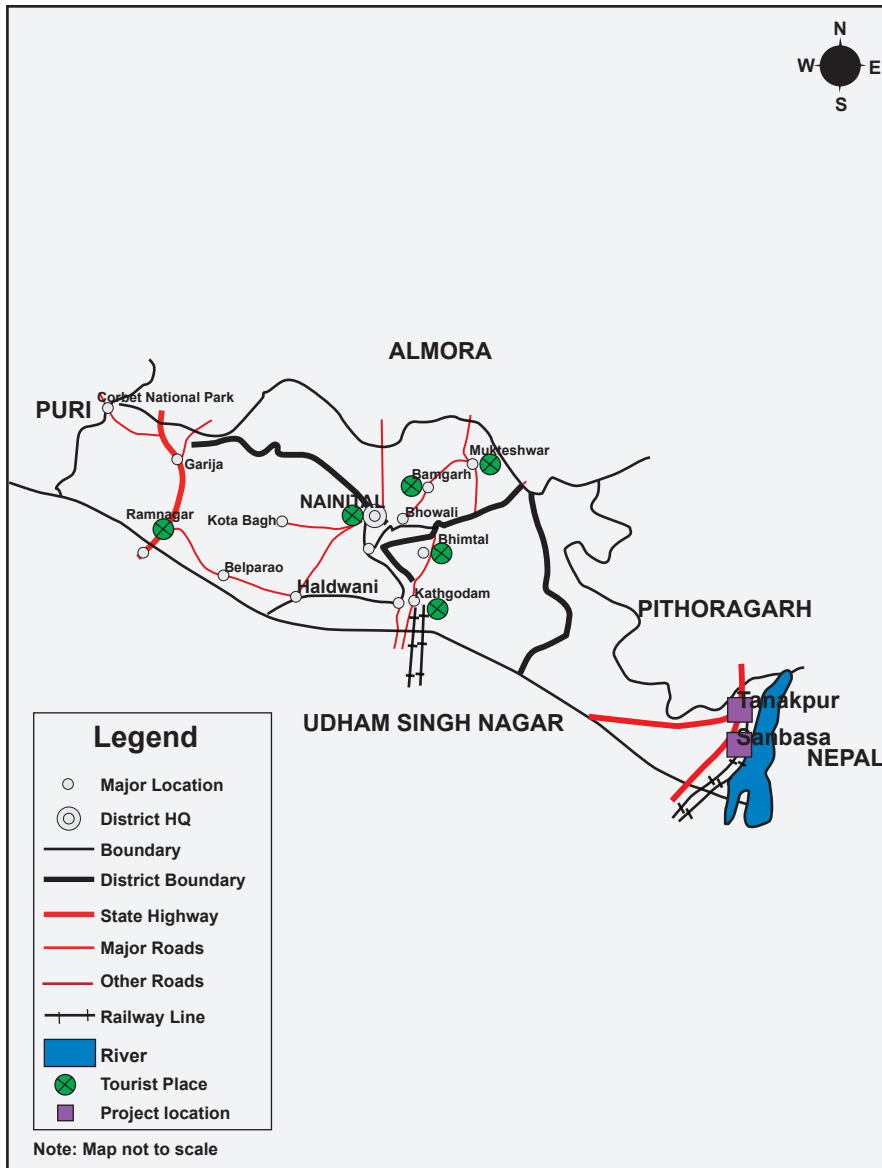
Chandra Kumari Khadhi, 14.

Chandra's story is similar to that of Anita's. She lives with her parents and four brothers and sisters. Her father is a labourer, but he only goes to work when he needs more money for his drinking. Chandra's asthmatic mother is also a labourer and whatever money she earns is taken away by her husband for alcohol. If she refuses to part with money, he beats up the entire family. Chandra joined the IRC and is eager to look for work after upon finishing the training.



Annexure - I

Project Area: Tanakpur & Banbasa



Annexure - II

Background - Tanakpur, Uttarakhand

(Source: "Brief Strategy Paper for Proposed USAID Project in Tanakpur". STADD Development Consulting Pvt. Ltd., September 2006.)

Tanakpur is situated in the state of Uttarakhand and is the last town in the plains as the road ascends to the district headquarters at Champawat. Tanakpur's bearings are latitude 29.08 degrees North and longitude 80.12 degrees east. The district of Champawat is the least populated district of Uttarakhand with only 2.65 percent of state's population.

As per 2001 India census, Tanakpur had a population of 15,810 with males constituting 53% of population and females 47%. The average literacy rate has been reported at 65%; higher than the national average of 59.5% with male literacy at 71%, and female literacy at 58%. 15% of the population was reported to be fewer than 6. However, estimates during the field trip gave an indication of 40,000 by way of likely population. The local economy is driven through trading activity, stone quarrying pursued at the banks of River Sarda, and conversion of army disposal trucks for public transport use, particularly to ferry river bed stones. As is the case with most rural areas, agriculture forms the backbone of livelihood pursuit - though this is getting increasingly threatened.

Tanakpur is connected to Bareilly, Pilibhit and Shajehanpur by a passenger train service which then offers onward connections. Road transport service is comparatively efficient and thus is the preferred mode of transport to the above locations and to Udham Singh Nagar (Rudrapur), Khatima, Rampur, Haldwani and Champawat; all of which are reference towns for personal and business related travel. Travel time is 2-5 hours for most destinations.

An important point worthy of mention is that Tanakpur is a border town located on the Sarda River or Kali as the Nepalese call it. As such the border can be approached travelling a short distance southwards from Tanakpur to Banbassa (see map) where a barrage over the river forms the passage of transit. While there are time restrictions to vehicular traffic to ply through the border (6 - 7 am and 12:00 - 16:00 hrs.) there is no restriction to crossing the border on foot.

On the Nepalese side, horse driven tongas are available to ferry travellers to Mahendranagar, a market town roughly 15 kms away within Nepal. The border is extremely porous with relatives of families on both sides. This does create social problems given the differences in historical, political and economic compulsions faced by Nepalese citizens who are keen to pursue a better life by crossing over to the Indian side. Trade is extensive between the two sides.

Problem Statement

As with any other problem there are two sides to the issue of human trafficking in the regional context. On the Indian side it has been reported that political compulsions force a higher level of tolerance to be exercised to the issue of migration, yet most agree to the inability of the local Indian populace to eke out a living by putting in due effort required, something that the Nepalese seize as an opportunity. For the Nepalese, the sheer desperation to seek a living has them go through the trouble of migration with many willing to go to

extremes to lead a better quality of life. Whatever be the compulsions, the result is that very many women are being exploited for sex and this has become a way of life with human trafficking establishing its deep roots.

In this context while Tanakpur may not be noticed for evident spurt in sex trade activities there, the fact remains that it is being used as a point of crossover for migrants who seek temporary shelter and move on, but not before they have influenced young Indian women. Uttaranchal being a mountain state has a high influx of tourist Indian population that visits it during the holiday season and at the time of certain local festivals, the Mela (Fair) at Puniagiri (also Purnagiri) Temple (see map - NE of Tanakpur) for one. The Mela lasts for nearly 3 months and during such times many males who visit areas such as Tanakpur

convince many young local girls to travel to their place of stay under the garb of marriage. The girl and her family see this as an opportunity to move to a better quality of life as promised and give in. While it is not the intention to blame all who do so, the fact is that very many do not have good intentions expressed ruining a young life in the bargain

Mention needs to be made that all regions that have

poverty are not witnessing such a phenomenon and to that extent one needs to question the factors that have impacted the social fabric of Uttaranchal households making them vulnerable, particularly since poverty in Uttaranchal is nowhere close to that witnessed in many other states. However the existent problem needs to be recognized and due attention given before things get out of hand.

While weakness in social conditions assumes great importance and needs to be addressed to counter the situation, a factor that can't be ignored is that of livelihoods since lack of options to earn a decent living also makes the affected to look to alternate options making them more vulnerable to ill intentioned traffickers. After having spoken to a few young girls at Tanakpur a sense of frustration was evident considering lack of opportunities available having educated themselves to a reasonable degree. The following sums up the response gathered from a discussion with social workers and women during the field visit:

1. Among other reasons of frustration was lack of colleges for technical courses with only one college present offering a Bachelor of Arts program, other than four intermediate colleges. Careers today are not built around such courses it was mentioned, and even the Industrial Technical Institute (ITI) located at Tanakpur was teaching shorthand, it had low future applicability. As a result girls were educating themselves to meet expectations of parents to improve their marriage prospects and not with a career view. However most felt that they needed to work and parents would not hold them back if good opportunities were presented.

2. Farming as an activity in rural areas was not practical to pursue given lack of water or attacks by wild pigs that attacked the crop for their food needs. Addressing these two aspects could open up vast tracts of land to agriculture that were otherwise

becoming degraded, restoring livelihood options to many. Moreover no real effort at improving agricultural practices had been pursued in the region.

3. Tanakpur had no major institutions or establishments that offered opportunities for work other than a power plant established by National Hydroelectric Power Corp. (NHPC) located at Banbasa, 10 kms away. There wasn't a larger prosperous town in close vicinity that could be accessed by young women from a work perspective.

4. Lack of internet access (no cyber café reported) prevented them from establishing contact with the rest of the country in terms of knowledge sharing. To cite a point, lack of internet access inhibits the delivery of distance education components through an agency such as IGNOU. It was mentioned by a social worker that even the newspapers resorted to reporting local news rather than have too much external news percolate in.

As can be noticed the young women are a neglected lot and while they hear of progress being made around them, there isn't a conducive environment for them to move ahead. With no other activities to pursue, drudgery sets in reducing precious human resource to a wasted lot finally leading them the wrong way. It is thus very important to strengthen the dwindling social fabric and amongst other measures to be pursued one that can show immediate results will be organising them around common causes through an institutional mechanism based on the lines of an affinity group functioning as a "Women's Resource Centre" (WRC). Such a step will bring them together allowing them to not only share issues between each other but will also lay the foundation for strengthening their cause. Livelihoods in the region thus will need to be strengthened alongside such efforts to be effective in the long run and must not be viewed in isolation.

DISCLAIMER: The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the US Government.



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