

VOCATIONAL SKILL TRAINING

A Report from Children GOOD



terre des hommes
stops child exploitation



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About

Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Terre des Hommes (TdH) - Netherlands prevents child exploitation, removes children from exploitative situations and ensures these children can develop themselves in a safe environment. Our thematic interventions cover worst forms of child labour, child trafficking and unsafe migration, commercial sexual exploitation of children, child abuse and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). We operate in 18 countries across the world.

In India, our projects primarily focus on eradicating worst forms of child labour in Jharkhand's Mica mines; eradicating child trafficking and child marriage in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana through advocacy; addressing child abuse, and sexual and reproductive health rights of early married girls and children of Devadasis in Karnataka.

India is home to 430 million children, nearly every fifth child in the world. Among them, 40% live in difficult circumstances: exploited, abused, trafficked, forced into labour or living on the streets. This dismal reality moves us to reach out to children in exploitative situations.



Children GOOD

A Background

Children Empowerment for GOOD (Getting Out Of Devadasi System) and Preventing Further Dedications is a project instituted by Terre des Hommes Netherlands in 2019 to address the Devadasi issue in a holistic manner in Northern Karnataka. The Devadasi system is a practice where young girls and women from lower sections of society perform sexual favours for men as part of an age old tradition. Adolescent girls are dedicated as Devadasis after a dedication ceremony.

The Children GOOD project is a comprehensive programme using the approaches of Prevention, Provision, Promotion (Advocacy & Lobbying) and Prosecution, reaching out to children, families and communities, the Government and Law Enforcement Agencies. It is a mass awareness and advocacy project which uses Child Participation and Child Empowerment to achieve its goals.



Children GOOD and Vocational Training

3.1 Introduction

The major source of livelihood in target areas¹ of the project apart from sex work is agriculture and allied activities. The uncertainty of agriculture coupled with the shortcomings of the MGNREGA²

scheme in the area, places families in livelihood trouble. As a result, many girls drop out of school and get into the Devadasi system and work as sex workers for lack of any other way to survive, getting trapped into a chain of helplessness and exploitation. Therefore, there is a need to provide these young girls, both vulnerable and exploited, with alternate sources of income due to their lack of access to opportunities to gain economic advancement. They need to be trained in employable vocational skills for jobs, thereby giving them a better quality of life.

Apart from being trained on the specific vocational skill, as part of the Vocational Skill Training programme, adolescent girls from Devadasi communities are also trained on child protection acts and systems, life skills in resilience and confidence, communication skills in English and on government programmes for education and self employment.

¹ Districts of Ballari, Koppal, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Vijayapura

² [Click here to know more about MGNREGA](#)



3.2 Project Activities

The Vocational Training programme is currently operational in the district of Ballari, North Karnataka. Three kinds of training are provided as below :

3.2.1 Fashion Design and Jeans Stitching Training

Ballari is a district well known for its Jeans Manufacturing industry with 500 manufacturing units. There is a huge demand for piece work orders/full material (pants) from these units. There is also a local demand for dresses.

The Jeans Stitching and Fashion Designing course under project GOOD is a combination of designing, method to fold the fabric for patterns, cutting, fitting and finishing stitching techniques jeans and other clothes. The Training is for a period of six months at the end of which trainees will be able to stitch jeans and clothes of different sizes according to the requirement.

3.2.2 Office Managers Course

An Office Managers course primarily involves the teaching of computer skills for official purposes. These skills are extremely useful to have to work in an office set up. Adolescent girls who have completed their secondary education are eligible for this course. They are trained on computer hardware, uses of software for office purposes, correspondence through e-mail, filing, basic accounts and tally. Before the start of the course, they are given an orientation on the syllabus and the job opportunities. The training is for a period of one year.

3.2.3 Four wheeler driving

Close to Ballari is the world famous tourist destination, Hampi. The programme trains girls on four-wheeler driving for tourism in the region.

3.3 Outcome

3.3.1 Reach

The following table reflects the reach of the Vocational Training programme

Vocational Skill	Target	Achieved ³		Total achieved
		Vulnerable	Exploited	
Office Managers Course	25	12	8	20
Fashion Design and Jeans Stitching	30	12	13	25
Four-Wheeler Driving	5	5		5

Table 3.1.1 Vocational Skill Training programme reach

The training was done in a centralised area at the block headquarters. For a few girls, who lived in remote villages, this was a little distant and cost the girls in terms of time and travel expenses. That's why the achieved number is less than the target.

3.3.2 Placement Details

The following table reflects the job details of the girls under the training programmes

Skill	Trained	Placement Details
Office Managers Course	20	All candidates completed the course by the end of Feb-2020. Placement is in progress
Fashion Design and Jeans Stitching	25	12 Girls have been given orders from a jeans unit, each earning Rs.4,500/- to Rs.5,000/- a month
Four-Wheeler Driving	5	No placements yet

Table 3.3.2 Placement details of the Vocational Skill Training programme

Girls who have received training in four-wheeler driving are yet to take it up as a profession.

³ Vulnerable girls are those vulnerable to sexual exploitation in the Devadasi system and Exploited girls are those who are victims of sexual exploitation in the Devadasi system

3.4 Budget Utilisation

Trade	Budget	Expenses	Variance	Reasons for Variance
Office Managers Course	5,626	3,013	2,613	Rent and trainer's honorarium is less
Fashion Design and Jeans Stitching	5,626	8,234	-2,608	Rent for the training centre, electricity bill, transportation cost of raw materials and finished goods, trainer's salary, was higher than expected
Four-Wheeler Driving	1,250	311	939	The training was done by a driving school. The project helped girls with only documentation and linking them to the driving school.
Total	12,505	11,558	947	

3.4 Budget Utilisation across Vocation Training programmes

All the trades are calculated at the same rate in the budget.

3.5 Impact and Achievements

The Vocational Skill training programme has led to the following

- a. The dedication of 50 girls from the Vocational Training group was prevented.
- b. 10 girls have enrolled for higher education⁴ after the Vocational Skill Training.
- c. 12 girls have started earning and providing for their families. As a result, they have gained dignity and a higher status in the eyes of society. Their purchasing power has increased and their quality of life has improved as a result of this economic advancement.
- d. The girls feel protected as they feel safe in the Vocational Training centres.
- e. Trainees are more confident and have increased life coping skills.
- f. Trainees have gained knowledge in child protection systems and acts. They can now protect themselves and others from any form of exploitation.

⁴ Bachelor's degree/undergraduate

Quotes

“Trainings on child protection systems-Childline-1098, Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Unit and on Child Protection Acts given us strength to protect ourselves and our friends also from being dedicated as a Devadasi”

Radhika

Completed her Office Managers course, and was then motivated to pursue a higher education. She is currently focusing on her undergraduate studies

“I am confident after the vocational skill training and life skill training.”

Nandini

Completed her Office Manager's course

“I never thought I'll work and earn Rs. 5000 a month. It's like a dream for me.”

Mamatha

Now working in a Jeans stitching unit after the training



Case Story

Amala gets a new life

“The staff from SNEHA (TdH partner organisation) rescued me from a police station where I was taken for enquiry. They took me home and counselled me and my mother. It is thanks to them that I have not been sexually exploited. I'm so happy that I have learnt how to stitch. I'm even more grateful to project GOOD after I got a job. I'm now able to solely provide for the family and take care of my mother.”

Amala



Nineteen-year-old Amala⁵ belongs to a Devadasi family in Kudligi, Karnataka, where her mother and her older sister both engaged in sex work for a living. Her mother was even arrested on the grounds of selling girls to clients.

Amala dropped out of school in class 9 to act in the local theatre. Growing up in a Devadasi community, she was not exposed to the benefits of education and believed that performing art is all there was to life. The risk surrounding this profession was that girls from the Devadasi community during shows were molested and sexually taken advantage of. When Amala was on the brink of joining the theatre group, her older sister was murdered by one of her clients.

When this tragedy struck, Amala's mother pushed her to pursue sex work as a profession, thinking that it was the only way to end the family's poverty. Amala was distraught.

A few months later, the Children GOOD project (Getting Out of the Devadasi System) entered Amala's life. The staff counselled Amala and her mother on the ills of sex work and the risks of sexual exploitation. Amala was enrolled in a Kishori Group (Children's Club), where she was trained on child rights and imparted life skills. After a few activities with the Kishori Group, Amala was enrolled into a jeans stitching vocational training programme as part of the project. Production of jeans is a thriving economic activity in Kudligi, Karnataka.

After the course, Amala got a job offer at a nearby Jeans production unit. She now earns Rs.6,000 to Rs.7,000 a month.

⁵ Name changed to protect identity

3.7 Challenges

The following were the challenges in carrying out the training

- a. It was difficult to reach out to extremely vulnerable girls who could not afford to travel to the training centres.
- b. It was a challenge to counsel some family heads (usually mothers and grandmothers) to let their child take up Vocational Training as they would lose a source of family income.
- c. It was a challenge to develop self-confidence and teach communication skills to girls from Devadasi families due to their history of oppression.

3.8 Learnings

The following were the key learnings

- a. Vocational Training helps prevent child marriage and dedications as Devadasis as families see hope for a better life.
- b. Combination of vocational skills and life coping skills helps young girls conduct themselves well across different environments. They are also more confident, are more willing to communicate and develop soft skills.
- c. There is a relationship between Education and Vocational Training. With Vocational Training girls are able to assess their skills and some of them wish to equip themselves with degrees.

3.9 Way Forward

The project will ensure that all girls are placed. Trainees will be assisted in preparing for job interviews. Necessary support shall be given to girls who wish to continue their studies.

To address specific challenges, the project plans to

- a. Organise Vocational Training Units in a centre which is relatively equidistant from all villages/Mobilise travel expenses from Gram Panchayat under SC/ST development fund.
- b. Exercise more efforts in counselling by taking live examples of change.
- c. Build interpersonal relationships with the girls and increasing their participation in activities to instill confidence and communication skills.

The project also plans to expand its Vocational Training programme to other project operational districts such as Koppal, Belagavi, Bagalkot and Vijayapura.



Thank you

Imason

TdH-NL and its implementing partners thank Imason for their valuable support towards the economic and social development of girls from Devadasi communities. This support will go a long way in ensuring a better quality of life for the Devadasi community. This collaboration is not only monetary, it is also a gesture towards the well being of an extremely vulnerable community that lacks access to basic human rights. TdH-NL thanks Imason once again for helping us reach out to the ignored and the marginalised, giving them a life with opportunities to look forward to.



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