



Report and Case Studies

DAS Children 2006



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The experience was deeply rewarding and we hope this report goes some way to reflect the sterling work of Development Action Society.

A sincere thank-you,

Sarah Gibney and Joanne Malone

(Suas Volunteer Programme, Calcutta 2006)



Introduction

The following report and case studies are the result of the compilation of 14 interviews conducted in Anandalok, Nabaujal, Nabadeep and Mukulbithy schools on the 17th, 18th and 21st of August 2006.

The purpose of conducting these case studies was to provide an in-depth factual account of the backgrounds of the selected children. Detailed information on the following topics was collected:

- 1) Education; *status (as of August 2006), attitudes of child and parent towards education, and each child's personal interests and future outlook.*
- 2) Family; *location, composition, personal relations, home environment, employment and family income.*
- 3) Community environment; *social and physical hazards, social networks, local employment.*

This structure is also used in the following discussion.

The final purpose of this report is to provide a suitable *structure* for conducting future case studies that will offer continuity over time, allowing for comparative analysis.



Methodology

The interviews were conducted using the semi-structured method, whereby specific topics previously determined were used to facilitate an informal discussion. This method was chosen as it allowed a degree of flexibility to pursue unanticipated issues and further inquiry. The interview schedule¹ of pre-determined topics was compiled on the basis of a content analysis of previous case studies conducted in 2005 and in liaison with the DAS staff.

The interviews took place in the classrooms of each school, separate from the other students. The interviews were conducted by Joanne Malone and Sarah Gibney (Suas) with the support of Sreemoyee Dasgupta, Aditya and Panchanaan (DAS) in coordinating, facilitating and interpreting for the children. Also present were the teachers from each respective school, for further facilitation. Each interview took approximately 50 minutes.

¹ See appendix A for interview schedule



Discussion of Results

Education

Status

While 9 of the 14 children reported being first generation learners, it was of note that many indicated prior awareness of schooling and education.

Two children in Anandalok (Budha and Bapan) reported time in schools being interrupted by their family's economic migration.

Of note in Mukulbithy was the fact that Raju enrolled himself in the school out of interest and a desire to learn.

Others cited long interventions, home visits and an interest in attending school encouraged by siblings attending school as their reasons for being enrolled in school.

Attitudes toward education (children and parents)

All the children reported positive attitudes to school and in some cases were extremely positive. A number of children described positive peer pressure in the community to come to school as well as encouraging their friends to attend².

A number of children and teachers mentioned extra-curricular activities (e.g. drama) as key to maintaining interest and encouraging positive attitudes to school attendance.

The majority of parents are positive toward their children attending school. In the majority of cases, parents have become more positive over time. Of note, mothers were cited as being more positive and fathers more reluctant.

Understanding the value of education was indicated as a key factor in creating positive attitudes. However, it was also mentioned that the illegality of child labour, when explained to parents, has been a motivating factor in children attending school.³

Pressure to work from their parents, in paid labour and in the home, was cited as a common experience in all schools.⁴

² See Bapan (Anandalok) and Mukulbithy.

³ See Krishna (Anandalok)



It was reiterated throughout the interviews that negative attitudes due to financial pressures have changed over time. The fact that nearly all the mothers of the children interviewed now attend meetings regularly in the schools was interpreted as indicative of this attitudinal change.

Future Outlook

Three of the children want to be teachers. Of note was the desire to help other children who have difficulty learning and to encourage children who are in similar situations to themselves to come to school.⁵

Five of the children wish to be doctors. The absence of a doctor in Makathala village (Mukulbithy School) and the desire to educate others about the importance of seeking medical treatment when ill were cited as strong motivational factors.⁶

It was of note that the majority of children had an acute community awareness that was influencing their future aspirations. Security in adulthood was also cited as motivation for continued education influencing career outcomes.

The link between education and security in adulthood was further reiterated by Samita (Nabadeep) who cited her difficulty in balancing school and work making her future uncertain.

Strong family obligations were evident in one child's desire to get married, remain in the home and raise a family.⁷

Both Shampa and Palash (Nabadeep) were unsure about their future. Shampa's mother articulated her fear over her child's care and well-being when she becomes unable to care for her.⁸

⁴ See Aklima and Rajul (Nabaujal) and Samita (Nabadeep).

⁵ See Meena and Bapan (Anandalok)

⁶ See Budha (Anandalok) and Mukulbithy

⁷ See Aklima (Nabaujal)

⁸ See Shampa and Palash (Nabadeep)



Family

Location

All the children interviewed in Anandalok School are children of economic migrants, bar one child whose family migrated after a family feud. Most families have migrated approx. 70kms areas in close proximity to the school; Kasba, Anandapur. One family has migrated from the Sunderbans. It was emphasised that their situation is not permanent and they may move again to find work in another area.

In contrast, the families in Makathala (Mukulbithy School) have been long settled in the area, many for 60 years and one for 200 years.

The children in Malpara (Nabaujal School) belong to the Muslim community of approximately 200 families. This is a very close community and there is little movement in or out of the community. Girls marrying and leaving the area is the exception to this.

The families in Arupota (Nabadeep School) are well established, some have been in the area for generations. Many have a large extended family network in the area. Similar to Malpara, movement out of the community is strongly linked to girls marrying and moving away.

Composition

The average family size (children) is 4.

The average family size (children) by school is:

- Anandalok: 5.25
- Mukulbithy: 2.8
- Nabaujal: 6
- Nabadeep: 3.6



It was explained that in Malpara (Nabaujal School) that the absence of family planning leads to large family size (8 and 4 children respectively for the children interviewed).

In Arupota (Nabadeep) it was explained that there are large networks of extended family, exemplified in the case of Palash who lives with 35 members of his immediate family and Samita who has 2 uncles, 1 aunt and 8 cousins living in the area.

6 of the children have lost one or both parents, either through illness (cancer, snake-bite and liver disease) or because their parents have left them to start a new life with new partners. Where parents have left, two children in Makathala (Mukulbithy) live with their paternal grandmothers.

Relations

All of the children described having good relations with their siblings, and many had strong bonds with their parents, in particular their mothers. The majority of the girls interviewed described having a strong dedication to their homes and family life, shown through caring for younger brothers and sisters and helping their mothers both inside and outside the home.

Of the two children who lived with their grandmothers, the relationships were comparably strong and supportive as well a reciprocal.

Stress and strain on family relations result from financial difficulty, pressure on the children to work⁹, and alcohol dependence,¹⁰ and long-term illness (parents and children).¹¹

Employment and income

Common occupations were: maid-servants, daily-labourers, rickshaw pullers, fisherman, factory worker, vegetable seller, salesman, rice growing and selling, cycle

⁹ See Rajul (Nabaujal)

¹⁰ See Meena (Anandalok) and Samir (Mukulbithy)

¹¹ See Rajul (Mukulbithy) and Shampa (Nabadeep)



van puller, gardening and vegetable cultivation.

Females (mothers and sisters and in some cases the children themselves) were usually in paid work as maid servants and/or worked in their home unpaid, cooking cleaning and caring for siblings.

Paid employment for females was, while obtaining a lower average wage than men, was generally more frequent.

Most commonly, males were daily labourers. Their paid work was overall, less frequent than females but potential earnings on a Rs. /day basis were significantly higher.

Direct female/male earnings comparison was apparent in the case of Palash's parents; both work the same hours in a local garden, cultivating vegetables. Palash's father earns Rs. 50-60 per day; his mother Rs. 30-40.

The following table has been constructed, showing the total incomes of each family (where information was available).

Earners have been categorised into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary based on their average daily wage.

Table 1: Average household income (Rupees per day) by earner

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1.	Rs. 70-80	Rs. 33	-
2.	Rs. 33	-	-
3.	Rs. 100	Rs. 10	-
4.	Rs. 100	Rs. 33	-
5.	Unknown	Rs. 15	-
6.	Rs. 100	Rs. 50	-
7.	Rs. 15	Rs. 5	-
8.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
9.	Unknown	Rs. 7	-
10.	Rs. 50-100	Unknown	
11.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown*
12.	Rs. 50-60	Rs. 16	-
13.	Rs. 60-70	Rs. 25	-
14.	Rs. 50-60	Rs. 30-40	-



*Note: it was explained that the child's older brother took his wages.¹²

Primary earners are primarily fathers, except where fathers are absent or unemployed. It is however, important to note that the majority of fathers are employed as daily labourers, who anecdotally, work infrequently. Therefore, while they appear to be the primary earners of the household, it is possible that this is not the case in reality. Further indication that the fathers who are daily labourers may not be the primary earners is the fact that the mothers even at a lower wage rate per day, are in consistent paid employment.

Although there is little information relating to the income of tertiary earners, it appeared relevant to include the category. From the interviews, it was evident that the tertiary earners are commonly older siblings or the children themselves. Moreover, nearly all the children interviewed were involved in either casual paid work or unpaid work in the home, and therefore their position in the distribution of economic activity within the family must be recognised.

Few of the children interviewed continue to work frequently. Those who do, work as maid-servants¹³, in factories¹⁴ or collecting items to sell at the end of the month¹⁵.

Children who were previously child labourers worked in factories¹⁶, washing cars¹⁷, on tea stalls¹⁸, as maid servants and collecting items to sell.

¹² See Rajul (Nabaujal)

¹³ See Samita (Nabadeep)

¹⁴ See Rajul (Nabaujal)

¹⁵ See Sapna (Mukulbithy)

¹⁶ See Bapan (Anandalok)

¹⁷ See Budha (Anandalok)

¹⁸ See Krishna (Anandalok)



Community

(Social and physical environmental hazards)

Anandalok

40% of the children in the area are child labourers, finding work as rag pickers, on tea stalls, in hotels and restaurants.

Among the children of the area there is the major problem of drug taking, smoking and alcohol consumption. Many of the children buy alcohol from “fixed” shops with which they have a safe contract. They purchase cheap wine and “Country Liquor”¹⁹

There are large “slum” areas, heavily populated with families of economic migrants. Drains are exposed and there is an abundance of rubbish making sanitary conditions extremely poor. The canal is commonly used for waste disposal, human and household.

Mukulbithy

Close proximity to the dump is cited as the main working environment for child labour in the village.

As well as the physical hazards of cave-ins, fire and injuries attribute to working in the dump, physical ailments also result. Such illnesses and conditions mentioned were fever, malaria, liver problems, poor eyesight, teeth, and bone and skin diseases.

There are a large number of rivers and ponds surrounding the village, the water of which is heavily polluted from the dump and from usage for sanitation purposes. It was observed that the children regularly swim in the ponds and drink water from the pump in the village. The poor sanitation was also cited as a contributory factor in the occurrence of the physical ailments mentioned previously

¹⁹ Country Liquor is made from starch e.g. rice and sugar. It has an extremely high alcohol content. Death from its consumption common.



The main social hazards articulated were the societal pressure for girls to marry young, and the occurrence of substance abuse (especially glue) and physical violence, though relatively rare.

The teacher also explained that a number of children smoke from an early age but that through the school and in a classroom setting he has been successfully intervening in such behaviour and teaching the children the harm of smoking.

Nabaujal

In this area, family networks are strong and family size is large. There is little evidence of family planning and early marriage (girls aged 12-16). Child labour is common pulling rickshaws, doing infrequent daily work in the paddy fields and farming and consistent work in a number of factories in the area. Girls work to a large extent in the family home.

Educational attainment in the area is low.

Alcohol dependency was cited as a major issue as well as smoking, especially among men and boys is also common.

Nabadeep

Child labour is common in the area, especially for girls in domestic labour. Poor sanitation is widespread. There is also evidence of early marriage for girls and alcohol dependency.



The Case Studies



Anandalok

Case study 1

Name: Meena Manna

Gender: Female

Age: 12

Class: 3

School: Anandalok

Educational status

Meena did not have any educational grounding (formal or informal) prior to coming to Anandalok. After one year of intervention on the part of the teaching staff at Anandalok centre, Meena began attending the centre – class 2 level - at age ten. It is intended that she be mainstreamed into government school - class 5 level - in May 2007. She is a first generation learner.

Family situation

Meena has two younger brothers attending Anandalok School – Deep and Mongal - and one older sister. Her sister has been married since the age of 16 and Meena only sees her two times a year or so on festival occasions. Her father has a second family in Delhi, with two children. He rarely sees this family and does not support them financially.

Family location

Meena's family are economic migrants, having travelled 60-70km to Anandapur, Kolkata 5-6 years ago from Baarasat where employment prospects were scarce. None of her extended family is located in Anandapur. Meena's sister lives far from Anandapur with her husband's family. The family will remain in Anandapur as long as there is available employment.



Employment and Family Income

Meena's mother is a maidservant and earns approximately Rs.1000 per month. Her father is a daily worker (wage labourer), finding work as a rag picker²⁰, road or field worker on a day-to-day basis. He can potentially earn Rs.70-80 per day. However, he is not always able to find or retain work for reasons relating to his lifestyle as well as to the labour market; Meena's father is an alcoholic and has a gambling problem. His income thus fluctuates. He is also prone to leave the family for periods of time. The household is dependent on Meena's mother for income and maintenance.

Meena worked prior to coming to Anandalok. Meena is uncertain at which age she started working as a maid servant but stopped working when she was 10 and has been attending school for the last two years. Previously, Meena worked in two houses earning Rs. 500 (Rs.300 and Rs.200) per month, which was her household contribution. She worked shifts similar to her mother's current schedule (from 6.30-7am to 9am, again from 1.30-2pm to 8pm) Meena was also involved in sibling care and housework (food preparation, cleaning).

Both of Meena's brothers (aged 8 and 10) have been employed on tea stalls but are now also in Anandalok School.

Home Environment

Meena and her family live in a rented, one-room home located in a "slum" area among other migrant families from a variety of areas. Cooking is done inside the home. There are two toilets in the area, which the children are not permitted to use; they must use the side of the road in consequence. Drains are exposed and there is an abundance of rubbish making sanitary conditions extremely poor.

Family relations

Meena has a good relationship with her brothers and plays regularly with them at home and brings them to school everyday.

²⁰ *Rag Picking*: collecting and salvageable/reusable rubbish items e.g. Plastics to sell.



She explained that she and her mother share a close bond in looking after her brothers and running the house.

Her father is abusive and beats her mother and her regularly.

Community Environment

40% of the children in the area are child labourers, finding work as rag pickers, on tea stalls, in hotels and restaurants.

Among the children of the area there is the major problem of drug taking, smoking and alcohol consumption. Meena explained that when she tells her peers that such activity is bad, they physically hurt her – beating etc.

Of her friends in the community who do not attend school (either those who have dropped out or never attended), they have cited the fact that their parents wish them to contribute to the household income as preventing their attendance. When asked whether these friends are curious about school she explained that they are not, but that they will sometimes ask her why she goes to school when she could be earning money. However, she says that they do not actively discourage her from going to school.

Child's attitude to education

Meena has a positive attitude to school. She likes to play in school and enjoys stories. Her teachers have explained that such activity was necessary to maintain her interest level at the outset. She is now very motivated. It is noteworthy that she is a member of the Children's parliament, and seems to be very aware of the importance of education and its relevance in other areas.

Parent's attitude to education

As previously reported, there was approximately one year between DAS's initial intervention and Meena coming to school. Initially her mother was unhappy about the prospect of Meena attending school, as she would not be available to work in the house and take care of her siblings. Her father was hostile towards Meena attending school and beat her for not working in the home. On one occasion, Meena was



severely beaten with a stick by her father. There are cases of more recent abuse – she was beaten the night prior to the interview – the night of the 16th of August.

There has been a noticeable change in parental attitude over time. The fact that Meena and her brothers are attending school and receiving three meals a day in school has relieved their parents of the need to provide food for the children every day, which demanded a substantial proportion of their daily income and constituted a heavy burden. Their attitude towards education has thus become more positive.

Meena's mother now regularly attends meetings at Anandalok to talk to the teachers and have a chance to discuss her problems. DAS has emphasised to Meena's parents the harm that is done to a child through physical and psychological abuse. Meena's father is reluctant to come to school meetings, and the general contention is that he believes that he will be reprimanded for his treatment of the family and his choice of lifestyle.

Future outlook

Meena wants to be a schoolteacher when she is older. When asked why, she explained that she wants to help other children who have problems learning and studying. She says that she would do level testing to make sure that the needs of every child were met.

Personal interests

Meena enjoys playing Ludo and football. She plays with her brothers and the other girls her age who live in her community. She also likes Hindi dance, skipping and enjoys learning.

Environmental hazards

Child labour, domestic abuse, peer pressure to work, exposure to drugs, alcohol, smoking, sibling care.



Case study 2

Name: Budha Boidya

Gender: Male

Age: 11

Class: 1

School: Anandalok

Educational status

Budha attended school – nursery level – in his native town of Joynagar for an unspecified period of time in his early years. He has not attended any educational institution in Kolkata since moving here more than five years ago. He has just joined Anandalok – class 1 level - in May 2006. He is a first generation learner.

Family situation

Budha's father died of cancer when Budha was six years old. He has three older sisters who have got married and left the family home. He has three older brothers who no longer live at home either. Budha lives with his mother and his nine-year-old sister Sunda (also attending Anandalok centre).

Family Location

Following a family dispute, Budha's family migrated to Kasba, Kolkata from Joynagar (70km south of Kolkata). He lives in a slum area off Gariahat Road. He has no extended family in the area.

Employment and Family Income

Budha's mother works as a maidservant as well as in her own home. She earns approximately Rs.1000 per month.

Budha was previously employed in a car garage in Anandapur. He worked for 1 and



½ years from 8am to 6pm washing cars for Rs.100 per month. He was also expected to run errands and do household work for his employer. He found his employment extremely unpleasant and stated that he would not like to go back to work. He wants to study so that he can avoid such hardship in the workplace in future.

Home Environment

The slum area is extremely unhealthy. There are no toilets and the canal is used for waste disposal. The slum is congested with 300 people living in a small area.

Family relations

Budha has a stable home life. He has little interaction with his siblings that have left the home, but he gets on well with his mother and younger sister. Budha has a good relationship with his mother who does not ask him to work in the home and is conscious of her children's health and well-being; Budha says that she tries to ensure Budha and Sunda have medical treatment if they fall ill. Budha has a good relationship with Sunda who also attends Anandalok School. He takes care of her and makes sure she gets to and from school everyday.

Community Environment

Many of the children in Budha's area are involved in child labour. Budha cites parental pressure to work as the reason that children in his area are not attending school.

At the time of interview, when asked about his friends in the community, Budha explained that he had not talked with them in a week due to a dispute. Budha explained that disputes are a regular occurrence among his friends and are usually over issues such as family background, lifestyles choices such as smoking, drinking and violence (e.g. the older children beating the younger children). He explains that many of the children in his area are hostile and frustrated.

Many of the children in Budha's area steal from local houses and sell the items at the



market. The younger children buy ice cream and puffed rice while the older children buy cigarettes. Budha explained that he does not challenge the other children about stealing for fear of being beat up. Many of the children buy alcohol from “fixed” shops with which they have a safe contract. They purchase cheap wine and “Country Liquor”, which is illegal but widely available. The interpreter explained that this alcohol is extremely toxic and many people die from the effects; it causes brain and liver damage as well as bleeding from the mouth prior to death.

Child’s attitude to education

Budha’s past experience in the work place has made him very eager to learn so that he can avoid such strenuous (manual) work in the future. He is very committed to school, his favourite subject being maths. His teachers remarked that he had a very low level when he came to school. As with most child labourers, he was also prone to distract and be distracted – to try to have his own way. He seems to be settling into school now somewhat. He is a slow learner but is making progress. He has also shown a talent for drama.

Parent’s attitude to education

Budha’s mother is illiterate and his siblings have very little (if any) grounding in education. Budha’s mother initially failed to attend meetings at the school but is increasingly present and supportive of her children’s education. She does not put pressure on either Budha or his sister to work either.

Future outlook

Budha would like to be a doctor when he is older. When asked why, he explained that many of the children in his community die from disease due to a lack of medical care. Children often die from fevers and heart conditions. While Budha’s mother is aware that it is necessary to take them to hospital when they are ill, many mothers in the community are not. Budha wishes to change this.

Personal interests



Budha likes to play football ad enjoys studying.

Environmental hazards

Child labour, peer pressure to work, exposure to smoking, drinking and violence and poor living conditions in the slum.



Case study 3

Name: Bapan Mondal

Gender: Male

Age: 12

Class: 4

School: Anandalok

Educational status

Bapan joined Anandalok – class 2 level - two years ago. He had attended school for one year - PP level - in his home place of Canning prior to moving to Kolkata five years ago, but was not enrolled in any educational institution in Kolkata before Anandalok. He is now in class 4, and it is hoped that he will be mainstreamed into class 5 in 2007.

Family situation

Bapan lives with his parents and his ten year-old sister, Swaraswati. He has one older sister and one older brother who are both married. He had a second older sister who was “lost” at the age of eight in the family’s native place. When asked about the exact circumstances surrounding his sister’s disappearance, Bapan said that the family/community suspect that she was taken by visiting businessmen (trading in the area at the time).

Family location

Bapan is a child of a migrant family. The family moved to Calcutta from Canning, a rural area situated approximately 70km from the city, five years ago. The move was work-motivated. The family now live near the canal at Anandapur.

Employment and family income

Bapan’s parents both work: his father works as a rickshaw puller and can earn up to



Rs.100 a day (his income is very variable, however); his mother works as a housemaid and earns approximately Rs.300 per month.

Bapan worked for a month in a hand glove factory prior to coming to Anandalok. He worked from 8am to 6pm and earned Rs.600 a month. There were occupational hazards, notably close proximity to the mechanical apparatus used to make the gloves. Bapan was sacked. The interpreter and teachers explained that he might not have been small/nimble enough to work as much as other children could have in the same position. He has not been employed since this time.

Home environment

Bapan and his family live in a two-room house in a canal-side slum at Anandapur. One room is rented out, and Bapan's family occupies one room. There is an adjoining toilet and latrine. The family also have access to electricity.

Family relations

Bapan seems to have a good working relationship with his parents and his family in general. His parents are very supportive of his and his sister's education – Swaraswati is also at school. He helps his parents in return by fetching two drums of water for the family from the local well everyday. Although his father seems to have something of a dependence on alcohol – he spends approximately 5 Rs a day on country liquor – he has never been abusive with his family. Furthermore, Bapan's parents seem to be very much against alcohol consumption and smoking for their children – Bapan said that he does not socialise with the boys in the community who do take alcohol and cigarettes for fear of being put out of the house.

Community environment

Physical violence and substance abuse are issues in the community. The area is also subject to noise pollution.



Child's attitude to education

Bapan has a very positive attitude towards education. His teachers remarked that he found it hard to concentrate and wanted to play and do whatever he liked when he first came to school. Now, he shows great aptitude for learning and works hard with the view to becoming a teacher.

Parent's attitude to education

Bapan's parents are very supportive of Bapan's education to the point where they encourage him to attend whenever he is absent. Bapan's mother attends mothers meetings at Anandalok regularly also.

Future outlook

Bapan wants to be a teacher. He says that he wants to bring children like himself back to school. He is already working towards this – his teachers say that he actively encourages his friends in the community to come to school.

Personal interests

Bapan is a member of Children's Parliament. He also participates in drama classes at Anandalok and has shown a knack for drama – he got the medal for Best Performance at the Cultural Programme at Arupota this year. He likes English at school, and likes to play football after school.

Environmental hazards

Exposure to physical violence and substance abuse, living conditions in the slum e.g. noise pollution.



Case study 4

Name: Krishna Banerjee

Gender: Male

Age: 10

Class: 1

School: Anandalok

Educational status

Krishna has been in Anandalok School for 2 years. Krishna is a first-generation learner. He had no experience of education and was totally illiterate prior to coming to Anandalok centre.

Family situation

Krishna lives with his parents, his older (twelve year-old) brother and his younger (nine year-old) sister, Madhavi – she also attends Anandalok centre.

Family location

Krishna is a child of a migrant family. His family came from the Sunderbans to Kolkata five years ago. The family live in a slum area close to Ruby General Hospital – Anandapur West.

Employment and family income

Krishna's father is a daily labourer and can earn up to Rs.100 a day. Of course, work varies and his income fluctuates. Krishna's mother is a maidservant and earns approximately Rs.1000 a month. Krishna's older brother works in a pen factory, but Krishna does not know how much he earns.

Both Krishna and his younger sister worked prior to coming to Anandalok. Krishna was employed briefly in a tea stall on Anandapur Road. He worked from 9am to 9pm



and earned approximately Rs.300 a month. Madhavi was also a child labourer, mainly working alongside her mother in her work as a maidservant. Now, neither Krishna nor Madhavi work outside the home. They help with the household chores, however, and with the cooking on festival days.

Home environment

Krishna and his family have a one-room home in Anandapur West close to Ruby General Hospital. The family do not have their own toilet but share toilet facilities with the rest of the community – there are almost 200 families. The slum has obvious problems with hygiene, particularly during the rainy season. The family do have access to electricity, however.

Family relations

Krishna seems to have a very good relationship with his parents. In his words, they love and support him. Physical abuse and substance abuse are not issues at home either.

Community environment

Whereas physical abuse and substance abuse are not rife in Krishna's home, the teachers and interpreters explained that Krishna's family is more the exception than the rule in the community. There is a country liquor shop in the slum that might contribute to the problem of alcoholism. Krishna says that some of the older boys in the community smoke cigarettes and consume alcohol but that his friends do not and come to school also.

Child's attitude to education

Krishna had no experience of education prior to Anandalok centre. He seems content to be in school. His teachers say that he is an average student but is patient, obedient and involved when it comes to school and is a quick learner. Krishna explained that he likes English and spelling English words.



Parent's attitude to education

Krishna began attending Anandalok centre when one of the teachers (Lalita) spotted him through friends and approached his parents to discuss his education. The illegality of child labour was explained to them, as was the importance and value of education. The teachers explained that Krishna's parents initially sent Krishna to Anandalok somewhat reluctantly – the argument is that they were motivated more by the fear of clashing with authorities than by the prospect of education for Krishna – but have become more and more supportive as time has gone on. Krishna's mother now regularly attends mothers meetings at Anandalok centre.

Future outlook

Krishna says that he hopes to have a professional job such as that of teacher or policeman. He cites security as his motivation.

Personal interests

Krishna takes part in drama classes at Anandalok on Saturdays. Many of the dramas are issue-based and relate to common social pressures faced by the children. He played the role of matchmaker in the Anandalok performance for the Cultural Programme at Arupota. He also likes to sing: he says that he is not a particularly good singer; he just likes to sing Bengali songs.

Environmental hazards

Child labour, living conditions in the slum, exposure to substance abuse.



Mukulbithy

Case study 1

Name: Tagari Mondal

Gender: Female

Age: 9

Class: PP1

School: Mukulbithy

Educational status

Tagari had no experience of education prior to coming to Mukulbithi centre one and a half years ago. She is now in PP1.

Family situation

Tagari lives with her parents and siblings. She has one younger (three-year-old) sister and one younger (one-year-old) brother.

Family location

Tagari and her family are resident in Mukultala where Mukulbithi centre is located. Her family has long been resident in the community – for the past 200 years – but has only been on the tax books for the past 60 years. Tagari has a bachelor uncle living in the area. According to the teachers, there are approximately 800 people or 250 families in total living in the area.

Employment and family income

Tagari's father works regularly as a fisherman near to his home. Tagari's mother works mainly in the family home but also sells scrap collected by Tagari in the dump.



Tagari attends Mukulbithy in the morning and spends her afternoons in the dump. She goes to the dump at 1pm and returns at 6pm. She is generally alone but usually meets her friends while she searches for scrap. She brings buckets for the purposes of collection, and she goes weather permitting or not. The scrap that Tagari collects, and which Tagari's mother sells, is worth about Rs.15 a day to the family. When questioned about how she finds working in the dump, Tagari says that she does not like the work but she must do it for the sake of her family.

Home environment

Tagari and her family live in a one-room house (bamboo frame, mud wall, corrugated iron roof) in the village. They have no sanitation system and no electricity.

Family relations

Tagari says that she gets on very well with her family and with her mother in particular.

Community environment

The teachers and interpreter explained that one of the major issues in the community is early marriage; it is not uncommon for girls to get married at the age of 12 and 13 already. Alcoholism is also an issue. Physical abuse is no doubt present but is not thought to be widespread in the community.

The community supports the educational efforts underway in Mukulbithi centre, and many of the children of school-going age in the community have been enrolled. For instance, all of Tagari's friends are in the school. It would seem that education goes hand in hand with work in the dump, however; just as a high number of children go to school, an equally high number work in the dump before or after school.

Child's attitude to education

Tagari says that she likes dance, rhymes and songs in school.



Parent's attitude to education

Tagari's parents are, according to Tagari's teachers, very supportive of her education.

Future outlook

Tagari says that she does not yet to know what she would like to do in later life.

Personal interests

Art, drawing in particular.

Environmental hazards

Close proximity to the dump is cited as the main working environment for child labour in the village.

As well as the physical hazards of cave-ins, fire and injuries attribute to working in the dump, physical ailments also result. Such illnesses and conditions mentioned were fever, malaria, liver problems, poor eyesight, teeth, and bone and skin diseases.

There are a large number of rivers and ponds surrounding the village, the water of which is heavily polluted from the dump and from usage for sanitation purposes. It was observed that the children regularly swim in the ponds and drink water from the pump in the village. The poor sanitation was also cited as a contributory factor in the occurrence of the physical ailments mentioned previously

The main social hazards articulated were the societal pressure for girls to marry young, and the occurrence of substance abuse (especially glue) and physical violence, though relatively rare.

The teacher also explained that a number of children smoke from an early age but that through the school and in a classroom setting he has been successfully intervening in such behaviour and teaching the children the harm of smoking.



Case study 2

Name: Raju Mondal

Gender: Male

Age: 14

Class: P1

School: Mukulbithi

Educational status

Raju had no experience of education prior to coming to Mukulbithi one and a half years ago. He is now in P1. It is noteworthy that Raju came to the centre on his own initiative; he wanted to learn and enrolled himself.

Family situation

Raju's mother died as a result of a snake bite about ten years ago. Raju's father is still living, and Raju has one older (twenty-two year-old) brother, three older sisters and one younger (ten year-old) sister, Sapna. Sapna also attends Mukulbithi centre. Raju's older sisters are all married – as is Raju's older brother.

Family location

The family has been resident in Mukultala for the past sixty years.

Employment and family income

Raju's father works as a labourer in the fields near Mukultala and earns approximately Rs.50 a day - his income is relatively secure. Raju's brother also works as a daily labourer and can earn up to Rs.100 a day – but his income is more variable and is contingent on work availability.

Raju and Sapna used to work in the dump but no longer do; they continue to work in



their home as well as focus on their education. At home, Raju looks after the three cows that belong to the family and Sapna assumes most of the household duties.

Home environment

Raju lives in a small two-room house (bamboo frame, mud walls, corrugated iron roof). The family has no sanitation system and no electricity.

Family relations

Relations can be strained at times, as Raju's father is prone to be abusive. Raju said that his father has a psychological illness since the death of his mother and can lash out at certain times. Raju's father can have these episodes as often as every two weeks during which time he can be aggressive towards his children who try to avoid him as best they can. The interpreter explains that the family have no money for treatment.

Community environment

As mentioned above, early marriage, alcoholism and child labour is very relevant issues in Mukultala.

It should be noted that the community is very small and self-contained; there is no inward migration for want of proper infrastructure and communication networks. There is a certain amount of homogeneity in terms of lifestyle e.g. the entire village seems to operate on the same (particular) time schedule; due to the absence of electricity, the community tends to settle for the night at 8pm and rise at 4.30am in the morning. Generally speaking, community plays a very important role in shaping the lives of the inhabitants.

Child's attitude to education

Raju is very interested in education. As mentioned above, he came to school on his own initiative. His favourite subject is Bengali. He mentions that his three closest



friends also come to Mukulbithi so he is not directly affected by peer pressure to drop out in order to work full-time.

Parent's attitude to education

Raju's father is supportive of his education and attends meetings in Mukulbithi. He is prone to change his opinion on the subject on occasion, however.

Future outlook

Raju says that he would like to be a doctor.

Personal interests

Playing, dancing, football and cricket.

Environmental hazards

As above.



Case study 3

Name: Surojit Bag

Gender: Male

Age: 11

Class: P1

School: Mukulbithy

Educational status

Surojit had no experience of education prior to coming to Mukulbithi one and a half years ago. He is now in P1.

Family situation

Surojit lives with his older brother (15 years old) and his paternal grandmother (in her fifties). He has no contact with his parents who left the family and the village when Surojit was four years old. According to the teachers, the couple left to embark on new relationships – Surojit’s father to be with another woman and Surojit’s mother to be with another man.

Family location

The family has long been resident in Mukultala.

Employment and family income

Both Surojit’s brother and grandmother work. Surojit’s brother works in a handgloves factory, which is located quite far from the family home. The work is regular, however; he works from 9am to 7pm and earns Rs.150 a month. Surojit’s grandmother is a vegetable seller. She works in this capacity between 6am and 1pm each day and earns on average Rs.15 a day.



Home environment

The family live in a two-room house (bamboo frame, mud walls, corrugated iron roof). There is no provision for sanitation and, as in the entire village, no electricity.

Family relations

Surojit has a very stable home environment. He gets on very well with his grandmother in particular. It is unclear whether or not he has a very close relationship with his brother. He mentions that his brother also wanted to go to school but had to work to support the family.

Community environment

As above.

Child's attitude to education

Surojit is very positive on the issue of education. He is a good student; he likes all subjects but Bengali is his favourite. Surojit's two closest friends are also attending Mukulbithi centre.

Parent's attitude to education

Surojit's grandmother is very supportive of Surojit's education - to the extent that she has arranged for him to have private tuition in the afternoons to focus on any/all subject areas where he might have difficulty. She pays Rs.40 a month for his tuition. Surojit does not go to the dump and has minimal chores, if any, at home so he can focus on his studies.

Future outlook

Surojit says that he would like to be a doctor one day and help people in his community.



Personal interests

He likes to sleep and play, he says first. He also likes to sing songs and play football and cricket when he has the time.

Environmental hazards

As above.



Case study 4

Name: Sapna Mondal

Gender: Female

Age: 11

Class: P2

School: Mukulbithy

Educational status

Sapna had no experience of education prior to coming to Mukulbithi one and a half years ago. She is now in P2 – as is her twin brother Sapun.

Family situation

Sapna lives with her mother and brother. She has no contact with her father who left the family when she was four years old and is now settled with another woman. She has quite a lot of extended family nearby – three uncles and six aunties live in the vicinity.

Family location

The family is resident in Makathala.

Employment and family income

Sapna's mother is a wage labourer. As her work is of an irregular nature, she also sells anything that can be salvaged from the dump. Every morning, prior to coming to school at 12.30pm, Sapna and Sapun go to the dump for three hours or so to collect scrap for their mother to sell. Their mother generally works a ten-hour day; she begins at 7am and finishes at 5pm. Her income is unknown.

Home environment



Information not obtained

Family relations

Sapna gets on very well with her mother and brother. She helps her mother with a lot of the household work including food preparation (every morning, Sapna gets up at 7am and works for two hours in her home before going to the dump at 9am). She works with her brother in the dump prior to going to school, and she says that they have developed a good relationship; they used to argue a lot. The family are very dependent on, and supportive of, one another.

Community environment

As above.

Child's attitude to education

According to her teachers, Sapna is an excellent student but has a tendency to miss days in order to work in the dump for her mother. Nonetheless, she seems to appreciate the importance of education and works consistently to be on top of things. Her three closest friends are also in Mukulbithi centre.

Parent's attitude to education

Sapna's mother is very supportive of her education. She comes to mother's meetings.

Future outlook

Sapna would like to be a doctor. When asked why, she says that there is no doctor in the village to look after those in need of medical care.

Personal interests

Dance, story-telling, poem-reciting.



Environmental hazards

As above.



Case study 5

Name: Samir Sardar

Gender: Male

Age: 13

Class: 1

School: Mukulbithi

Educational status

Samir had no experience of education prior to coming to Mukulbithi centre one and a half years ago. He is now in P1.

Family situation

Samir lives with his paternal grandmother, father and two younger brothers (both of whom are attending school and are in classes PP2 and P1 respectively). Samir's uncle and aunt also live in the family home. Samir's mother died of a liver illness when she was twenty-three years old - Samir was four years old at the time.

Family location

The family are resident in Mukultala.

Employment and family income

Samir's father is unemployed. His grandmother buys and sells vegetables between 6am and 4pm every day, but her income is unknown. His uncle and aunt work in the fisheries but their income is again unknown. Samir collects scrap material in the dump on Saturday and Sunday mornings and goes to a nearby market once a month to sell what he has collected. He can earn up to Rs.200 a month in this way, some of which he gives to his grandmother.



Home environment

Samir lives in a two-room house typical of the area (bamboo frame, mud walls, corrugated iron roof). There is no provision for electricity and the canal side is used in place of a sanitation system.

Family relations

Samir seems to get on very well with his family. He helps in the home - fetches water from the pump and looks after his brothers. He also helps his grandmother in the market prior to coming to school in the morning. Samir says that his father and grandmother are both supportive of his education and want him to continue with his studies. While Samir's father and uncle both drink alcohol regularly, Samir says that neither are abusive under the influence of alcohol but that he sometimes feels afraid, particularly when his father shouts at him. His response is to stay out of his father's way by staying in the bedroom.

Community environment

As above.

Child's attitude to education

Samir likes coming to school and enjoys learning Bengali in particular. His three closest friends in the community come to Mukulbithi too. Further, he is very much aware of the dangers of child labour esp. in the dump. He knew two children of his age who were knocked down by trucks and died in the dump in the recent past (two or three years ago).

Parent's attitude to education

As stated by Samir, Samir's father and grandmother are supportive of his education. They regularly come to meetings and seem very keen for him to pursue his education.



Future outlook

Like the other children, Samir would like to be a doctor. The absence of medical care in the area is very much an issue for the community.

Personal interests

Football and Bengali.

Environmental hazards

As above.



Nabaujal School

Case study 1

Name: Aklima Khatun

Gender: Female

Age 14(+)

Class: 1

School: Nabaujal

Educational status

Aklima is not a first generation learner. Her older brother previously attended Nabaujal and is now working. She started in Nabaujal as a result of a home visit by DAS staff at the time her brother was attending the school. All her sisters are in school.

Aklima was initially in a government primary school in class 4 but it was explained that the standard was very low. Due to this she is now in class 1.

Family situation

Aklima comes from a Muslim family. She has six sisters and one brother. Two of her sisters are in a government primary school and three are in Nabaujal as well.

Family Location

Her family live in the Muslim community (approx. 200 families) in Malpara. This is 5 minutes from Nabaujal School. It was explained that the community is very close and that there is little migration from or in migration to the community.

Employment and family income

Aklima's father is a salesman, operating in Malpara and another village nearby.



Without owning land in this area, food is scarce. He can earn between Rs.50 and 100 per day but this varies on a daily basis and is not guaranteed.

Aklima's older brother also works as a salesman, selling bracelets for after marriage in another village.

Aklima's mother works in her home.

Aklima was previously employed as a maidservant, working from 4pm to 6pm. She then worked in her home. She still cooks and works in her home after school.

Home Environment

Aklima lives in an eight room house with ten people. They have their own sanitation system but no electricity.

Family relations

Aklima has good relations with her family and stresses that her father is a good man. She looks after her younger sisters and, despite often being physically tired, is happy and is conscious of her sense of duty to her family.

Community Environment

The community is poor, with the majority employed as daily workers and salesmen. Those who have land are involved in the cultivation and sale of rice. The village is large, with approx. 200 families, each with 7-10 children. There is little family planning evident among community members.

Among her friends in the community, Aklima is the oldest to be unmarried. She wishes to get married but does not get picked or singled out for not being married.

Many of the children in her area are child labourers, working in his factories near the village. There is also the problem of alcoholism among some of the older men in the community, and smoking among the younger members of the community.

Childs attitude to education



Aklima has a positive attitude to education. However, her education is heavily mediated by her sense of family duty and household obligations. This is reflected in her irregular attendance and reduced time for study. She has strong family values and has a strong desire to get married. Once married, she explains, she will stop her education but plans to send her children to school.

Parent's attitude to education

Although her father was initially angry that Aklima was going to school, he is now supportive of her education. Her mother regularly attends meetings in the school. However, Aklima and her teacher cite residual pressure from her parents to work in the home as the reason for her irregular attendance.

Future Outlook

Throughout the interview Aklima reiterated her strong wish to get married, to have a family and to be a good wife. She does not want to work outside the home like her other friends. All her friends her age are married and she is the oldest among those unmarried. She says that all her friends who are married are happy and that she will not mind moving away from the village when married.

Personal interests

Aklima is a keen dancer. She explained that she saw dancers on television and has been dancing ever since. She plays regularly with her sisters, especially skipping and hide and seek and "Kabaddi".

Environmental hazards

In this area, family networks are strong and family size is large. There is little evidence of family planning and early marriage (girls aged 12-16). Child labour is common pulling rickshaws, doing infrequent daily work in the paddy fields and farming and consistent work in a number of factories in the area. Girls work to a large extent in the family home.



Educational attainment in the area is low.

Alcohol dependency was cited as a major issue. Of note, when discussing her family, it was important for Aklima to mention that her father was not a drunkard.

Smoking, especially among men and boys is also common.



Case study 2

Rajul Tarafdar

Age: 10

Class: 2

School: Nabaujal

Educational status

Rajul can be considered a first generation learner; however it is worth noting that his family had some knowledge of education and schools prior to him attending school.

Family situation

Rajul has three married sisters aged between 15 and 16 and one brother aged 14, he is the youngest of all the siblings. He does not see his sisters any more as they have moved far from his village to live with their husbands' families.

Family Location

Rajul has lived in Malpara all his life, as have the rest of his family. There is no history of migration in his family and the only family members who have left are his sisters who have married men from outside the village.

Employment and family Income

Rajul's father owns a small piece of land on which he cultivates rice which he then sells. At the time of year that the rice is not being grown Rajul's father stays at home. He suffers from respiratory problems. His father's income fluctuates depending on the crop. His mother works in the home.

Rajul works in a leather bag factory close to his house under the supervision of his brother. He does not know how much he earns as his brother is given his monthly wages which contribute to the family income. At work Rajul pastes pieces of material together using glue that gives off toxic fumes. He works at a table that gives him back



pain and he finds the work strenuous and uncomfortable.

Before attending school, Rajul worked in the leather bag factory from 4pm until 12-1am. It was explained that working hours are dependent on the size of the order, meaning while Rajul would normally finishes work between 12-1am, and he may be required later to finish the complete the order. Similarly, when an order is finished ahead of schedule, Rajul is allowed to leave early.

Rajul now gets up at 7am to go to work at 8am. He comes to school at 12 noon then returns to work at 4pm to 6pm.

Home Environment

Information not obtained

Family relations

Rajul mentioned that his brother sometimes beat him if he does not work. He mentions little else about his family only that his parents encourage him in school but stress the necessity of work.

Community Environment

Within Rajul's community many of the children are involved in child labour in local factories. Early marriage is extremely common with most girls being married to men from outside the village by the age of 15. The standard of education in the village is low and most of the community members are employed as daily workers, rickshaw pullers, farming and working in the paddy fields.

Childs attitude to education

Rajul is positive to education and his favourite subject is Bengali. He also states that he feels working is extremely important. When asked if he would prefer to have more time to study or play with friends if he was not working he said “no” and that if he was not working he would be only be doing nothing at home. He also explains that



while some of his friends are in school, the majority work in the local factories.

Parents' attitude to education

Rajul's parents encourage him in school but are also adamant that he must in the factory.

Future outlook

Rajul wants to be a carpenter when he grows up. He likes the woodwork that he sees frequently on the sides of the road and is interested in decorative carving and chair making.

Personal interests

Rajul likes to play football but emphasised that he had little time to play with friends.

Environmental Hazards

See above.



Nabadeep School

Case study 1

Samita Pramanik

Gender: Female

Age: 15

Class:

School: Nabadeep

Educational status

Samita is not a first generation learner. She has spent over 3 years in school. Her two younger brothers and one younger sister are all in school.

Family situation

Samita's father died when she was 13 years old. He was alcohol dependent and she cites this as the cause of his death. Her older brother is married and lives with his wife in her father's house. Her two younger brothers are aged 12 and 8.

She has two uncles and one aunt in the area and 8 cousins (6 older, 2 younger). However, she does not see them often but they come together for festivals and have a meal together.

Family location

Samita's family have always lived in Arupota and she has a large extended family in the area.

Employment and family income

Samita's father owned an alcohol business before he died. Her older brother is an electrician but work and income is irregular.



Her mother buys vegetables from the market and sells the approx. 4 miles from Arupota. She gets up at 5am and leaves at 5.30am to go to the market and comes home at 4pm. She earns Rs.50-60 per day.

Samita gets up at 4.30am to do housework and to cook for the family in the morning. She works in two houses for 1 hour and for 2 ½ hours respectively before school. She the houses she carries buckets of water, cooks, cleans and brushes. She earns Rs.500 per month; for housework and for carrying water.

She comes home to eat before going to school from 11am to 4pm.

She works at home after 4pm to help her mother and frequently misses school to work with her mother.

Home environment

Samita's home is close to the school. There is no sanitation and so they use their neighbours toilet. Her house has one room and is very rundown.

Family relations

Samita is close to her mother and her family have a strong, loving relationship evidenced in Samita's dedication to her siblings and her mother.

Community environment

There are roughly 400 families living in the area. While there are a large number of children involved in labour, Samita mentions there being pressure to come to school.

The types of labour common in the area are domestic labour, gardening, fieldwork (ploughing), daily labouring and factory work. She had one friend in the community but she married and moved away last year.

Child's attitude to education

Samita loves school and wants to attend more regularly. She likes doing handcrafts (knitting, stitching and jute work) and practices whenever she has the time. She loves



Bengali and English but does not like maths.

In spite of working long hours, she manages to study for 30 minutes per day. She explained that she finds school difficult as she is extremely tired and often falls asleep.

Parent's attitude to education

Her mother is supportive of her education in principle and is extremely unhappy when Samita has to come to work with her.

Future outlook

Samita explained that she wants to learn more and more so that she can do something in the future. However, she explained that because it is so hard for her to come to school regularly that it will be impossible for her to be something in the future.

At the time of interview, Samita had missed the two previous months of school due to working at home. She also said that she will be dropping out of school for the next two weeks to work.

Personal interests

Samita loves drama and singing but not dancing, as well as doing handcrafts. She wishes she had more time to play after school but she does play games such as hide and seek with her younger siblings.

Environmental hazards

Child labour is common in the area, especially for girls in domestic labour. Poor sanitation is widespread. There is also evidence of early marriage for girls and alcohol dependency.



Case study 2

Shampa Sardar

Gender: female

Age: 16

Class: Nursery

At the time of interview, it was explained that Shampa has a problem with her vocal chords and so her mother was also present to talk/interpret for her in conjunction with Aditya from DAS.

During the interview it emerged that Shampa has problems “imagining”, “thinking” and “expressing”, and that she cannot do any form of work and cannot understand properly. Her mother explained that they did not know the cause of what appear to be severe cognitive difficulties.

Educational status

Shampa is in nursery class and has been attending Nabadeep School for the last 7 years. She is not a first generation learner.

Family situation

Shampa has one older sister who married when she was 18 and lives 4 km away. She sees her often. She has two younger brothers who are 12 and 10 and in class 7 and 3 respectively in a government school.

Family location

Her family have lived in Arupota for a number of generations but they have no extended family in the area.

Employment and family income

Shampa’s father is a cycle-van puller and can earn between Rs.60-70. However, the



work is infrequent.

Her mother works irregularly in local gardens and can earn Rs.25 per day.

Money is a significant problem for the family. Shampa's mother explains that when they do buy medicine for Shampa it is extremely costly.

Home environment

Shampa lives in a two roomed house constructed with bricks and a bamboo frame. They have their own sanitation system and electricity. They also use the community well to supply water.

Family relations

Shampa's mother explains that she finds Shampa difficult in the house. Shampa does not do anything in the house but nags her mother constantly and gets extremely frustrated. Her mother described a recent incident where Shampa wanted a new dress and was frustrated to the point of beating her mother.

Community environment

Shampa has three of four good friends in the area. One of her friends is already married aged 15. All of her friends (except her married friend) are in school.

Shampa's mother worries constantly about her safety but is adamant that no one takes advantage of Shampa as she is always there.

Child's attitude to education

It was only ascertained that Shampa liked school.

Parents' attitude to education

Shampa's father is supportive of her going to school but is frustrated that she has made no progress in school.

Shampa's mother is happy that Shampa can go to school everyday as it is safe and she



stays there from 12 noon to 4pm. She also comes to mothers' meetings regularly.

Future outlook

It was explained that Shampa had had a CT scan and that the doctor recommended that she should not be allowed to marry and would permanent care.

Shampa's mother feels that there is no remedy and no hope for her daughter. She explained that she fears for the future when she will no longer be able to care for Shampa and that there is no solution to this problem.

Personal interests

It was not articulated that Shampa had any particular personal interests.

Environmental hazards

While there are certain common hazards in this community that have be detailed previously, the extent to which they affect Shampa at present is restricted by her mother's constant presence and her own cognitive difficulties. For example she is not able to engage in child labour and it was indicated that there are a number of close members of the community who routinely look out for Shampa to ensure not harm comes to her. Conversely, Shampa is in an extremely vulnerable position, needing constant, life-long care and there are hazards, both social and physical, that are unique to her situation.



Case study 3

Palash Sardar

Gender: Male

Age: 15

Class: PP2

Similar to Shampa Sardar, Palash presented with apparent communication problems. He suffers from severe fevers 2-3 times a year which last approx. 3 days. He feels embarrassed about getting fevers.

His mother explains that he has no problem understanding but has difficulty expressing as he cannot speak properly and frequently gets sores in his mouth but tries to express himself using gestures. For this reason, his mother was present to help him. She explained that Palash has had problems since birth but with homeopathic treatment, she believes his condition to be improving.

Educational status

Palash has been in Nabadeep School for 7 years. He entered at nursery level and is now in PP2. All his siblings are also in school and he is not a first generation learner.

Family situation

Palash as on younger brother aged 6 and two younger sisters aged 12 and 10. They are all in government schools and have been mainstreamed.

Palash lives with his immediate and extended family which is large (35 members in all) as his father has 6 brothers.

Family location

Palash's family have lived in the area for generations.

Employment and family income



Both of Palash's parents have regular work in the gardens and fields in the area, ploughing and picking rice and vegetables. His father earns Rs.50-60 per day and his mother earns Rs.30-40.

None of the children are involved in labouring as Palash's parents want all their children to go to school.

Home environment

Palash lives in a house with six rooms and a long veranda. It has a corrugated iron roof. There is no problem with sanitation and they have electricity.

Family relations

It appears that Palash gets on well with his family. His parents do not put pressure on him to do anything in the house so he is free to do what he wants. All the other children help his mother in the house.

Community environment

While Palash's mother expressed her concern about alcohol dependence in the area, she explained that Palash does not mix with other people in the community so the hazard is limited. All of Palash's friends are in school and are the same age, and he does not mix with children who work and are not in school.

Child's attitude to education

Palash is positive towards school and education and he comes to school regularly. He is not good at studying but is getting better. He likes English, Bengali and Maths.

Parent's attitude to education

Palash's parents are extremely pro-education. They want Palash to be admitted to a government school. However, his mother is certain that this will not happen. They are adamant that all their children go to school and do not work. Palash's mother admitted



him to Nabadeep initially and it is noteworthy that all his siblings have been mainstreamed.

Future outlook

Palash does not know what he wants to do when he is older and there is no pressure from his family to work. When asked about his siblings, his mother explained that they do not know what they want to do in the future; for the moment they are concentrating on learning.

Personal interests

Palash is a keen footballer.

Environmental hazards

It is worth noting that in spite of the presence of the common social and physical hazards discussed previously, Palash benefits from a large, close family network which shields him from exposure to certain risk behaviour such as alcohol and substance dependence. He is also prevented from engaging in child labour, through his family's economic status and his parents' values regarding education.



Appendices



Appendix 1:

Interview schedule

Name

Age

Gender

Class

Family background:

Brothers and sisters (age, gender, relationship with the child e.g. in care of, caring for), extended family (where relationship is especially significant to the child), father's status and occupation (inc. salary) and character, mother's status and occupation (inc. salary), parents relationship with the child, parents/family values and beliefs, family attitude towards education, family attitude towards work, family support for education, wants of the family and outlook (future goals).

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

What age(s) are they?

Do you look after them/ they look after you? How do you look after them/they look after you?

Do you get on well with your brothers and sisters? Do you fight at all?

Are close to your aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents?

What does your father work as? What is his salary? What is his role in the household?

What does your mother work as? Salary? Mother's status in the household?

How do you get on with our parents?

Interests/personality/future outlook:

What is the child interested in, what are they good at in school, where have they shown potential, what would they like to be when they grow up.

The child and school:

Class in school, class on entry to school, years attending school, why and when did the child start attending school, who got them interested/involved, what is keeping them in school, is there pressure to drop out of school? Their attitude towards school.

The child and his/her community:

Position of the child in the community (labourer, school, job), friends/peers in the community, their activities in the community (e.g., playing football), age and characteristics of friends/peers in the community and activities engaged in as a group, family's position in the community, how family came to be part of the community (was there a location change in the history of the family or has the family been in the community for generations), occupation of members of the community, attitude of the community towards education, number of other children in the community in



education, number of children in the community involved in child labour (inc. forms of child labour), attitude of the child towards the community (happy, not happy, isolated, involved)

Risks that are assessed in their environment:

Home environment: activities that they are involved in the home, which are inappropriate and/or hazardous, the home itself (adequate shelter, living conditions?)

Community environment (physical and social): immediate environment; hazardous? (E.g. Mukulbithy dump as extremely dangerous) socially; are the members of the community that the child engages detrimental to the child's development (e.g. encouraging their involvement in inappropriate activities such as drug taking, gambling, labour)

Family Environment: are family members abusive, is the child expected to carry out inappropriate tasks, is the family environment having an adverse effect on the child's development.



Appendix 2:

Format of final report

Contents

- a) Abstract
- b) Contents
- c) Acknowledgements
- d) Introduction
- e) Methodology (semi-structured interviews, timing)
- f) Discussion of results (education, family, community)
- g) Conclusions and recommendations (more time for doing studies, recording interviews)
- h) Case studies (1-14; grouped by school)
- i) Appendix:
 - a. Interview schedule
 - b. Format for writing report and case studies

Format of case studies writing

- a) Demographics
 - i. Name
 - ii. Gender
 - iii. Age
 - iv. Class
 - v. School
- b) Educational status
- c) Family situation
- d) Family location
- e) Employment and family income
- f) Home environment
- g) Family relations
- h) Community environment
- i) Childs attitude to education
- j) Parents' attitude to education
- k) Future outlook
- l) Personal interest
- m) Environmental hazards

Format of Discussion topics

1. Education; statues, attitudes (child and family), future outlook
2. Family; Location, situation, relations, employment and income
3. Community environment; social and physical hazards (by community/school)