

Review 2001-3

MVF India:
Social Mobility for
getting Children out
of Work and into School
(IND 059)

Janne Lexow, LINS/DECO/NCG
Martin Pinto, Pinto M.P.&Associates

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Executive summary

NORAD support

The project entitled “ IND 059 *Support for Social Mobilization for Getting Children out of Work and into School*” is being implemented under a contract between the Government of The Kingdom of Norway and The United Nations Development Programme, India dated. 6th. December 1996. Under the contract NORAD agreed to provide financial assistance of NOK 5,119,184.- (INR 27,522,497.00) for implementing the programme. In 1998, it was subsequently agreed to provide additional financial assistance of NOK 880,000.- (INR 5,000,000.00) for furtherance of the objectives with a special focus on girls. Further assistance of NOK 357,808.- (INR 1,900,000/-) in 1999 was granted to research and document the key issues contributing to the success of the M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF) approach. The NORAD/UNDP funds have been concentrated on the Nawabpet Mandal (administrative unit) in the Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh.

The funds for MVF are being routed through and monitored by UNDP. The project has two main objectives:

- *to support community mobilization efforts through an NGO to get children out of work and into school with implementation by MVF in Andhra Pradesh, and,*
- *to evolve through grassroots consultations, other models of Social Mobilization for getting children out of work and into school with implementation by UNDP, New Delhi.*

The scope of the problem

In the 1991 census Andhra Pradesh was recorded as the Indian state with the highest number of child labour. The state is also known for its high number of people in bonded labour, which means that children (mostly boys) are sent to work because parents have become indebted to the employers or have taken financial advances. The child has to work until the parents' debts are repaid. The profile of the working children places most boys and girls in the agricultural sector, but also shows a large number of girls in the domestic sector. Employment in these sectors is not prohibited by the Child Labour Act (1986). However, the law in India prohibits bonded labour and child marriages. Nevertheless, both practices are prevalent in rural areas.

The situation prior to MVF intervention

Child labour has never been an issue addressed in the formal education system of Andhra Pradesh. In accordance with the principles laid down in the National Child Labour Programme, non-formal education (NFE) centres to create educational opportunities for working children have been the main strategy for providing education for child labourers. This education was built on a special NFE curriculum that combined basic literacy training with vocational/skills training. Important elements of the government strategy were to provide each child with a stipend Rs 100,- each month to compensate for possible loss of income and to hold classes in the evening so as to adapt to the children's working schedule.

MVF's mission

MVF's fundamental premise is that child labour is not inevitable. MVF operates on the basic principle that every child out of school is a child labourer. The organisation does not distinguish between children engaged in different forms of work. MVF holds an uncompromising view that to eliminate child labour it will be necessary to universalise education and that the only form of education that is acceptable is full time formal school education. MVF argues against the idea that poverty is a reason for not sending children to school. This "non-negotiable" agenda is central to MVF's approach in Nawabpet Mandal.

The organization's objective in the project area is to make the project area child labour free. The target is therefore ambitious, and implies enrolling and retaining all 5-14 year old children in Nawabpet into the formal school system.

Main findings and conclusions

Getting children into school

After five years of operation, MVF is in a position to report that all children in the 5-8 age group are enrolled in the formal government school in the specific focus area. Only a handful of the 9-14 age group is still out of school, although not all of them have yet been enrolled in formal government school. Quite a number are still enrolled in special bridge courses camps. The overall conclusion is therefore that in Nawabpet Mandal the majority of villages have become child labour free.

In a "normal" Indian rural village the drop out rate from school is high. The practice of enrolling all children in the first grade regardless of their age easily leads to drop out. MVF has created alternatives both for these children and those never having been enrolled. A necessary first step was to convince the government authorities that children who are qualified for mainstreaming into higher grades may enrol in the grade appropriate to their age. The next step was to

actually qualify them. Both strategies have worked . The 18 month long bridge course has been a central innovation to achieve this. MVF has demonstrated that it is possible for motivated children to speed up the learning process and catch up with their peers. This has required special teaching methodology, a revised curriculum and trained staff who can cater for the child as a whole- including emotional and basic physical needs.

The boarding approach is therefore an appropriate and relevant approach in areas where child labour is prevalent and most families have never been exposed to schools. Very many child labourers need more than academic skills to change their attitudes and acquire a “school-going mentality”. Many would also benefit greatly by changing the immediate environment from homes in which very often the family would discourage schooling to a place where all activities are centred around children’s development and their needs.

There is nothing extravagant in the camps, and expenses are kept low by using abandoned buildings and voluntary staff. Between 1997 and 2000 more than 1500 children were mainstreamed into the formal school after having spent some months in the bridge course camp.

MVF sees enrolment and retention as interlinked, and uses basically the same strategies to ensure that children are both enrolled and kept in school. There is still a problem of promotion to higher classes. Taking children to summer schools for extra tuition has worked. 30% of the girls are promoted to higher classes.

MVF has succeeded in reducing the number engaged in bonded child labour. Bonded child labour¹ used to be prevalent in the area, but today there are only two cases left. The problems related to girl child marriages have been difficult to tackle, but have been significantly reduced. It should be particularly noted that while girls still outnumber boys in the non-school going category, the gap between boys and girls has been significantly reduced.

Intensive motivation at village level and discussions with the women’s groups in the area have led to large number of girls joining the mainstream formal school system. Women’s groups have also started to observe small tendencies towards change in gender relations in the area. The combat against early child marriages is for example gaining ground. MVF found that under the specific gender bias prevailing in the rural areas, girls needed special attention and more orientation time to motivate them to join the formal school or bridge course camps. MVF female staff are specific devoted to working with women and girls to encourage girl children to be sent to school.

¹ Children are sent to work because parents have taken an advance from employers. Children work as bonded labourers till the advance money is adjusted against the wages of the children or repaid. Bonded labour is against the law but happens very often.

Not all parents are convinced that children are better off in school than at work. There are also cases of abusive parents. These cases pose particular dilemmas for MVF as occasionally children may run away and join the camps without their parents' consent. The review team came across children who had run away from home to join the camps. In most run-away cases the parents would be informed that their children are safe and they usually start supporting the child's education after some initial reluctance. As dialogue and consensus are the principles on which all MVF's interaction with the community is based, care should be taken to discourage running away, and to find other solutions instead.

Social mobilisation

The key to understanding MVF's success very much lies in its social mobilisation strategy. The following elements can be highlighted:

- MVF believes in a non-confrontational approach where dialogue and consensus with all stakeholders are essential.
- The mobilization strategy builds on using existing community groups instead of creating new ones.
- The emphasis is on building processes for total involvement of the community, for example by setting up forums to bring social pressure and change to the existing framework. MVF has been able to build alliances with a very large network of stakeholders; the formal schoolteachers, government officials at various levels, landlords, parents, panchayats, children, and village elders and most importantly, a huge cadre of youth volunteers.
- Mobilizing employers has been important. Instead of confronting them with legal repercussions, MVF has mainly tried to build upon their feeling of pride and felicitated them in public when they release child labour.
- Building alliances with teachers to change their attitudes towards their roles, performance and attitudes towards disadvantaged children have been effective. On a voluntary basis teachers have joined together in a campaign against child labour and from a meager 50 teachers in the state who showed any interest in the issues in 1996, today more than 1000 teachers have become actively mobilized in the state. In 2000, the five teachers' unions for the first time in history brought the issue of child labour onto their political agenda.

Quality aspects

MVF has not addressed the content and relevance of schooling, but the effects of the organization's work have nevertheless resulted in qualitative improvements. Teachers gave credit to MVF for having changed the negative relationship that the community previously held towards the school. MVF has stimulated school friendly and school centered communities. Schools have become an important institution and are seen by the community as being the

center for future development. Teachers have changed the way in which they perceive their own role and this has also improved their performance. They have become much more active in the classroom and become more accountable to the whole community. Despite all this, there is no denial that the quality in formal government schools is far from satisfactory and that the schools lack nearly everything.

Another stimulus is recruitment of para-teachers. As new classrooms are established MVF supplements the regular government teaching force by recruiting para-teachers. These are academically not comparable to government teachers and they also get paid much less. MVF is concerned that these teachers are not viewed by the government as an easy and cheap replacement of regular teachers. The para-teachers' role is not to teach but to constitute the link between the school and the community as education activists.

Coping strategies

Many organizations working to eliminate child labour are concerned that some economic incentives must be introduced to compensate for loss of income from children's work. MVF takes a clear stand against this:

- Empirical evidence in the project area shows that poverty *per se* is a minor explanatory factor for child labour. MVF's findings confirm that even poor people will send their children to school provided that they are convinced that this is good for them. Actually the wages received by children are meager and in most cases have not contributed much to the family income.

MVF has demonstrated that a root cause of child labour is the high profit margin for the employer or owner of the means of production. Children are often not paid much more than a third of adult wages, and they do nearly the same amount of work. Children in a sense compete for work with unemployed adults, mainly men. Employers do not favour adults because they inevitably demand better pay and working conditions than children.

Exploitation of poor children is made possible because lower castes and tribes have always been told by the advantaged groups that education is of no use to them and that formal schooling is not relevant for their children. These attitudes are so internalized by the disadvantaged groups that they even believe that sending children to work instead of school is the best solution for them. They even learn to feel gratitude towards the employer who provides the opportunity for the child to work.

MVF has observed that there is no law enforcement insofar as the Minimum Wage Act has never been implemented. With a large reservoir of available

children, employers have access to cheap labour. However, after some years of MVF operations few children are now available to be employed. As a result, employers simply have to hire adults. Lack of child labour has actually resulted in a doubling of the daily rate for men. For work that used to bring in only 15 rupees a day, men can now easily get more than 30 rupees.

The review team did not get consistent information as far as changes in unpaid domestic labour are concerned. Some people said that parents themselves had taken over the work that used to be performed by girls. There was even information showing that fathers and brothers had started to do more household work. Others said that girls had the same workload as before, but that they had just changed the time of day when they performed these tasks. The issue should be examined further.

Interaction with NGOs

MVF has entered into partnership with a number of NGOs. Building alliances and networking with others are essential strategies in its work. The spread of MVF's experiences to others is a result of these efforts. MVF is increasingly receiving a large number of people in its training sessions. It seems that a very large number of NGOs see MVF as a sort of model from which there is much to learn.

Influencing government policies

MVF's experiences have resulted in significant policy changes all over the state of Andhra Pradesh. This has not happened overnight but is a result of multiple strategies, innovative moves and the ability to build alliances with the "right" people at the "right" time. The significance of showing that it is possible to eliminate child labour by setting the right priorities and tapping into already existing funds, should not be underestimated. The results are impressive:

- MVF's model of bridge courses has been adopted by the Department of Social Welfare in the "Back to School" programme which is implemented all over the state. 300 000 children have been through the bridge course and more than 40% have been mainstreamed into the formal school system.
- Encouraged by MVF, the government has also done away with all NFE night schools and converted them all into day schools.
- A major change has also occurred in the World Bank funded District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). This programme has now based its mainstreaming strategy on bridge courses similar to those conducted by MVF. The fundamental principles of the non-negotiable issues have

been transferred to the DPEP. With the tremendous impact this large scale investment programme may have, it is promising that MFV has been asked to provide technical expertise and training for the programme.

- The need for credibility is important when dealing with government institutions. An important strategy of MVF has been to document the scope of the problem and progress with facts and figures, not just anecdotal observations. The specific strategy of using names of children and not only aggregate numbers has helped changing the current education planning system. The Department of Education has therefore developed a database in which all schools and all children are registered. Educational planning can now become more realistic and based on an accurate situational analysis, not as before just on “guesstimates.”
- In Andhra Pradesh, government policies and action on education have been spread over many government authorities. The state Government noted that due to stimulation from MVF they were in the process of consolidating all educational services into one department. This carries with it the potential for better planning and a better overview of the impact of diverse programmes trying to address the out-of school population.
- The new government White Paper on education from 2001 has been strongly influenced by MVF. For the first time child labour issues have become integral to all aspects of educational concern. The wide notion of child labourers as children being out of school is a prominent feature of the new policy.

Organisational issues

MVF has structured an organization that empowers both staff and volunteers. The review team sees the “empowering” management structure as one of the explanatory factors for the organization’s ability to continuously expand its operations into new areas. The basic operating decisions are decentralized to the operating levels. Staff at other levels take decisions that concern their input and their work. Information is, at the same time shared and communicated throughout the organisation through a structured reporting system both vertically and horizontally. All financial routines seem to function well and the system is transparent so that everyone can see what has been discussed in the meetings and the conclusions reached.

MVF has continuously gained a high reputation as a training ground for others. MVF receives more than 1000 visitors a month and in addition to some structured theoretical training, most of the training focus is on practical experience. At the time of the review the government sent more than 60 government employees to be trained each week. Many of these employees worked in large-scale education programmes such as the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

Accountability is an ongoing concern in MVF. Again there appears to be much to be learned from the organisation. MVF has a wide range of formal and informal monitoring systems that can be used to track performance. Whereas the formal systems are a mirror of budgets and planning documents, the informal ones focus on situational aspects, learning from others and identification of problems. The unique aspect of MVF is that apparently everybody always knows where he or she stands and how he or she would like to improve. Secondly, monitoring information is used for structuring the daily work of the operational staff. Thirdly, there appear to be no major bottlenecks in the communication flow vertically and horizontally in the organisation. The review team felt that the management style had really facilitated this and encouraged an organisational atmosphere where people were proud of what they were doing and therefore wanted to do it well. The many opportunities created for field staff to air their concerns were in particular welcomed by the female staff. MVF has created arenas also for women's voices and sharing of experiences between women staff by separate women's meetings. This came about after a critique had been raised to MVF that male staff often had prejudices against women. Despite many positive steps being taken to address this, women staff do, however, still feel need for a broader range of opportunities for promotion within the system.

Sustainability

MVF has shown that while additional funds are required to improve the government school system at large, not all improvements depend on fresh money. An important strategy for MVF has been to mobilise support for using government funds that are already there, but that one needs to use this money better and according to intentions. A case in point involved student hostels which actually were funded but not used. Whilst still receiving government salaries, hostel staff had been sitting idle for years simply because children were absent. Each year earmarked funds were reallocated to other purposes. MVF has managed to turn this negative practice into something fruitful by ensuring that funds were released for use directly for the benefit of children. Ensuring that children actually seek boarding in the hostels has apparently made the government aware of the negative consequences of a passive approach, and this seems to have a promising bearing on sustainability.

Another aspect of sustainability is that MVF operations are cost-effective. MVF has not relied on expensive infrastructure or building of new houses. All premises are donated on a temporary basis from the government. There is also a significant community contribution to this project and from government resources. The organisation can also tap into the labour contributed by 8,000 volunteers who are willing to work for them. These volunteers work for no salary and are transmitting ideas and values of MVF messages to an increasingly larger number of people.

In some cases, community committees still seem to create some hand-holding and dependency. MVF needs to develop strategies to ensure that they function without the continuous presence of members of the staff.

Replication

The lessons from MVF are already being applied elsewhere in the state and in various places around India. The review could not assess these replications. What is significant is that groups and programmes committed to elimination of child labour have taken the MVF and adapted it to their own circumstances. Their experience will eventually demonstrate the validity of the model and its transferability.

The empowering management approach characterising MVF should in principle be transferable across states and to other organisations. Crucial elements in this are diffusing of responsibility to operating levels, individual autonomy, high level of transparency for all staff and a well- functioning monitoring system.

It should nevertheless be noted that the review team does not conclude that the project automatically can be implemented in urban areas (cities) or in other states. In a way what is necessary is the replication of the idea and a change in the mindsets of those who are change agents rather than a replication of the programme as such.

Financial issues

The total funds received by MVF during the years 1997-98 to 1999-2000 exceeded 30 million Indian rupees of which the NORAD/UNDP contributions comprised only 14.76%; 20.63% and 21.68% respectively. MVF has been able to seek funds from a wide range of government sources. Among external funding agencies, HIVOS is the main donor.

The project has been running smoothly. The expenses incurred by MVF are based on the agreed budget lines without any major deviation. However, the budget in respect of UNDP needs to be revised as in the first four years UNDP has spent only 29.72% of its total budget. The decision with regard to the unutilized amount and interest earned needs to be taken at an appropriate level for optimum utilization of funds in the remaining part of the project.

The project has complied with the standards of control and accountability agreed to. The project is being implemented on the basis of the project description and budget. The project management and expenditure are being governed by the regulations, rules and directives of UNDP. It is observed that in the year 1998 and 1999 there was a delay in submission of financial reports and requests for

advances by MVF in all four quarters. A long-term contract between UNDP and MVF was to be entered into. In the meanwhile UNDP had a yearly contract with MVF pending finalization of a long-term contract with them. But no long-term agreement was available at the time of the review and even the yearly contract had not been extended for the period beyond 31st. March 1999.

Future scenario

The MVF's approach is not to view expansion of the MVF project in new areas but to envisage expansion by facilitating new areas in taking up their own initiatives for elimination of child labour without compromising on the basic non-negotiable principles. In its experience such a change in the perspective of the NGOs on the issue of child labour and education has enabled them to formulate policies to suit the context in which they are functioning. Significantly, the non-negotiables were found to be as relevant in the tribal pockets of Orissa as in the urban areas of Mumbai or Calcutta and the deserts of Rajasthan. Once there is a conviction among the organisers that children must not work and that all of them deserve to be in schools the possibilities of making this a reality become more and more tangible. *In a way what is necessary is the replication of the idea and a change in the mindsets of those who are change agents rather than a replication of the programme as such.*

UNDP as a channel of support

The Review team found that by and large UNDP seems to be a highly relevant and efficient channel for NORAD's support to MVF. This conclusion is based on more than narrow project-related technical assistance, where occasionally NORAD has complained that reports are submitted late etc.

While it is true that child labour is high on the Indian political agenda, there is still not enough commitment to really tackle child labour and invest in the education sector in a massive way. 100 million children are still out of school. The government is still ambiguous with regard to the question of how to deal with child labour. With its huge country programme and central role among the UN organizations in India, UNDP has access to all government departments and influential people. UNDP has used experiences from MVF actively to influence and seek a broader understanding of what child labour is all about, the causal relationships and also the implications of the legal prescriptions which leave out millions of children working full time in a range of economic sectors. While the law has not changed on account of this, positive conceptual changes seem to have occurred. Also in the corridors of government and in official reports child labour is today more broadly defined than hitherto.

MVF experiences have been used as basis for mobilizing support from other donors and from government in specific programmes. UNDP has in particular been able to link up closely to the government in states where general country programmes are implemented. The shift in focus to looking at child labour issues from more angles than before, including in general primary education programmes, seems promising.

Today UNDP links up with 10 NGOs, all with the same goal but pursuing different strategies. Thus this does not mean that “a model intervention” is near. This would be naïve and would most likely never happen in the foreseeable future. What UNDP has been doing, however, is to bring experiences from various projects into a common framework of social mobilization, ensuring that organizations get access to information on what others are doing, with what results etc. Perhaps the most interesting recent achievement towards this is the establishment of the UNDP/India internet portal on “children and poverty”. Here one can easily get access to relevant discussion papers, research and information about on-going projects.

MVF has appreciated the role UNDP has played. Two aspects were highlighted: increased visibility of MVF at work and technical assistance to deal more systematically with issues related to gender and the girl child. It should be noted that a lot of UNDP’s assistance has been channeled to monitoring missions and consultancies. It is uncertain how UNDP has helped MVF to be more cost-effective because none of the assets provided under this agreement have actually been purchased through the UN system.

Recommendations

Continued support

The review team recommends continued Norwegian support to MVF. The team endorses the MVF strategy to start up another pilot project in which the whole Class I-X cycle is covered. This will create a model for the government on how former working children can be moved upwards into the school system and reach a level where they can either be made ready for the job market or continue their education in higher classes. Special attention should be given to girl children and to the qualitative aspects of education. If MVF does not for the time being have relevant competence in aspects related to quality in education, they should link themselves up to organisations that already possess such capabilities or improve their own capacities through training.

The team recommends that funds also be channeled through UNDP the next phase; not so much for the technical assistance UNDP can provide, but for its

ability to advocate MVF experiences very broadly. MVF today has reached a level where its financial and administrative routines and procedures can easily be handled by the organization on its own. This is also reflected in an under spending of UNDP funds. Instead funds should be redirected to UNDP initiatives to facilitate more research and studies. UNDP should still continuously contribute to quality monitoring of critical aspects that may have some potential for replication in a wider sense. NORAD funds should also be used to publish documentation and findings and in particular to further expand the development of the children's web page. This would facilitate global access to important information.

NORAD, in turn, should be clearer in formulating more precisely what its expectations from UNDP should realistically be. Until now the Embassy has had a high turn over of project officers and to avoid misunderstandings, these expectations should be written down in a formal agreement.

Training

In order to spread the ideas and approaches to other areas, the review team recommends further emphasis on training of other groups and individuals. This would involve some physical strengthening of the existing training center. MVF should make a systematic effort to assess their own training needs and calculate the costs involved in the training provided to others. As a rule MVF should charge a fee from other institutions and organisations that corresponds at least to a break-even budget. The review team feels that if parents from poor communities can pay for teachers needed to educate their children, government departments and other NGOs should also be asked to pay for their training.

Reserve fund

The team recommends that MVF be provided with a reserve fund, which could be revolved to handle time delays in projects sanctioned and disbursed over government's budgets. This will encourage the organisation to go in for even further linkages with the government and tap government budgets that are available.

Studies

The team recommends several studies to be conducted in the near future:

1. An assessment of how effective the model is in urban cities/areas and in other Mandals beyond Nawabpet.

2. A study of migrant families and their coping strategies. In particular what happens to a child who is left behind to attend school in the village.
3. A study of the girl child - marriage implications with special reference to how parents cope with the dowry at a later stage.
4. An overall study of the whole organisation to look at linkages between various projects and programmes funded by several donors, within the same or in different areas. A particular concern is to be given to issues related to administrative costs.

Small grant

The review team does not recommend that continued Norwegian support includes provision for grants by MVF to other CBOs or NGOs. This applies whether or not future funds are channeled through UNDP or to MVF directly. The team finds that such a grant would create a risk of becoming too complicated as far as monitoring of these organisations is concerned, that there is a risk for creating dependency between a larger organisation and the others. Furthermore, some system for subsidising the absolutely weakest organisations as far as covering their training costs can be incorporated into the training component of MVF. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has already decided to incorporate bridge courses as a permanent policy in all the districts. Hence, the need to help other organisations to establish and run bridge courses is minimized.

Development of appropriate tools to enhance efficient economic management.

MVF is no longer a simple organisation. It has developed into a complex organisation with many more structures and people at all levels. MVF needs to formalize systems and procedures of purchases, personnel and other administrative procedures (travel claims etc.). It is suggested that an accounting manual specifying various systems and procedures be developed and implemented.

Considering the size and nature of the organization a proper internal audit system should be introduced for constructive appraisal of operations and attainment of the objectives of the various projects run by the organization.

MVF should make a systematic effort to assess their own training needs and calculate the cost involved in the training provided for others. It is recommended that MVF charge a fee from other institutions and organizations that contributes at least to a break-even situation, enabling sustainability of training.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background for the review

On December 6th, 1996, an agreement between NORAD and UNDP was signed regarding support for the project "*Support for Social Mobilisation for Getting Children Out of Work and into School*" for a period of five years amounting to NOK 5.119.184. On 14th December, 1998, Addendum 1 to the Agreement was signed for a further NOK 880.000. On 13th December, 1999 an Addendum II was signed for NOK 357. 808. 00 to be used for documentation and research.

The agreement between NORAD and UNDP expires in late 2001.

The overall objective of the project is to get children out of work and to successfully integrate them into school through a process of social mobilisation for poverty alleviation. The project has two main objectives.

- ❖ To support community mobilisation efforts through an NGO to get children out of work and into school.
- ❖ To assess at least five different approaches to Social Mobilisation for getting children out of work and into school in order to develop a model for elimination of child labour.

The project funds are being routed through UNDP. M.Venkataramaiya Foundation (MVF), a non-governmental organisation in Andhra Pradesh, is implementing objective one and objective two is implemented by UNDP, New Delhi.

1.2 Purposes

1. The main purpose of the project review was to ascertain achievements compared to plans and objectives.
2. In addition, the review was designed to assess the role of the organisation in the broader context of advocacy work for the rights of the child,

Objective 1: Outputs

- a. Community mobilised
- b. 1741 children removed from work and put into school by the end of the project period.
- c. 5321 children retained within the formal school system at the end of the fifth year

Objective 2 : Outputs

- d. At least 5 NGO models assessed
- e. At least 5 grassroots level workshops held
- f. Action plan developed
- g. Micro-macro linkages established.

elimination of child labour and basic education.

3. Finally, the review was to assess the replicability of the model.

1.3 Methodology

The initial briefing meeting between the Norwegian Embassy and the team clarified that the team could not be expected to undertake separate studies of impact, people's coping strategies etc. The team had to rely on information that was easily accessible within MVF and from other key people met during the field visit.

A programme for the review was prepared by the Embassy in advance. Most of the time was devoted to the field visit and little to follow-up meetings in New Delhi. It goes without saying that the report also reflects this, and that the team could not assess much information on, for example, UNDP's role and other projects that are supported under the UNDP framework.

The team conducted a one-week field visit to Nawabpet Mandal - the main focus area for UNDP/NORAD support in Ranga Reddy district, in Andhra Pradesh. There the team interviewed project staff, volunteers, teachers, para-teachers, government officials, and representatives from the decentralised political system, children and parents. The team benefited greatly from responses to queries posed by the team-leader to UNDP and MVF prior to her visit to India. On the basis of these questions MVF could prepare some of the factual information in advance.

The team visited UNICEF both in Delhi and in Hyderabad. Various approaches to child labour were also discussed informally at a dinner organised by the Embassy with other bilateral agencies working on the topic; notably DFID, GTZ and CIDA.

Due to holidays, representatives from the district administration in Reddy Ranga District and representatives from the Central Government in Delhi could not be met. However, representatives from the National Institute of Labour in Delhi were met at a workshop on child labour issues organised by the Norwegian Embassy.

At the request of the Norwegian Embassy the team leader gave a presentation on 'Child Labour issues in Norwegian Policies'. Although interesting, this necessitated time for preparation and presentation for two of the team members.

A first draft report of this report was presented to the Norwegian Embassy during a debriefing meeting on the 22nd March 2001. The team leader was allocated only three days for report writing to cover both drafting and finalising the report.

2 Child labour issues in Andhra Pradesh

2.1 *The scope of the problem*

According to the Indian Census of 1991, Andhra Pradesh has the worst record as far as involvement in child labour is concerned, with 14.7% of its children in the workforce². The State of Uttar Pradesh comes second.

The Department of Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh operates with a state average gross enrolment rate (GER) of 86.2%, urban and rural areas taken together. One assumes that rural area rates are much lower. The GER is not adjusted for over-aged children or repeaters. At State level, net enrolment ratios (NER) are likely to be much lower. Non-participation in the 6-13 years age bracket is 24.03% of the total school-age population.

In Andhra Pradesh, the government never used to think specifically of the formal education sector to address child labour issues. As in the rest of India, out-of-school children have been offered non-formal education (NFE). The commonly held view was that poor people send children to work because they need the income from children's work. It has also been assumed that one of the reasons for parents not sending their children to formal school, was irrelevance of the formal school curriculum. The NFE alternative was therefore designed with a more flexible curriculum, combining basic literacy training with vocational/skills training. NFE classes are held at hours which take into account children's work schedule.

The project under review is being implemented in Nawabpet Mandal of the Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh. Most of the poor live through agricultural activities as daily wage earners, tenants and marginal peasants in a semi-dry zone. The employer-employee relations in regard to agricultural land have the characteristics of a feudal mode of domination. The poor have a genuine problem of not getting the minimum wage for their work. Children are seen as cheap labour and landlords often prefer to employ children instead of adults because of this. Men often tend to depend on women and children to meet the daily requirements of sustenance in the family. There are no large holdings in the area. Most of the population in MVF's focus area belong to so-called Scheduled

The children in rural areas are mostly engaged in:

- Bonded labour
- Cattleherders or shepherds for the family (boys and girls)
- Agricultural labourers involved in sowing, weeding and harvesting (girls) and ploughing (boys) either for family or on a wage employment basis
- Domestic workers fetching water, fuel-wood, caring of siblings, washing clothes, cooking and housekeeping (mostly girls)

² Defined according to number of children in the formal wage sector.

Castes.³ 90% of the child labourers in Reddy Ranga District are to be found in the rural areas.

3 Basic principles for MVF

MVF. has been concentrating on issues related to child labour since the year 1991, when it began by running non-formal education centres along with addressing land tenure issues. The organisation is also engaged in work to do with housing, minimum wages and the running of co-operatives in Shankarpally Mandal in Ranga Reddy district. Today it reaches out to 17 Mandals⁴.

While bonded child labour was the initial focus group of the organisation, over the years general child labour, particularly for girl children, came to be included in the programmes. Over the years MVF has also come to an understanding that non-formal education will not alleviate the problem of child labour, but rather reinforce the status quo. MVF's fundamental premise is that even in the Indian context, child labour⁵ is not inevitable and that full time formal schools are the only way that will keep children free from work.

***Basic Principles on the issue of elimination of child labour
(The Non-Negotiables)***

- *All children must attend full-time formal day schools*
- *Any child out of school is a child labourer*
- *All work is hazardous and harms the overall growth of the child.*
- *There must be a total abolition of child labour - any law regulating child work is unacceptable*
- *Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned. Arguments such as a) harsh reality of family, b) poverty c) child earnings and income is necessary for the family d) unwillingness of parents e) teachers and schools are bad f) education is useless and does not provide employment and g) children loose skills and become irrelevant to their surroundings once educated, are all anti-child and go against their real development.*

³ The notion of caste was traditionally seen as a principle part of the Hindu religion. The caste system is a highly graduated and complex hierarchy based on racial, social and occupational distinctions. Low/outcastes were at the bottom of the social ladder and subject to much discrimination. Today the caste system is officially abolished in India. But the Government has granted specific rights to those formerly regarded as outcaste. These groups are called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In practice, however, the caste divide seems to live on. While not necessarily the poorest in monetary terms, the SCs are poor in other aspects such as having little or no decision-making powers to influence village affairs.

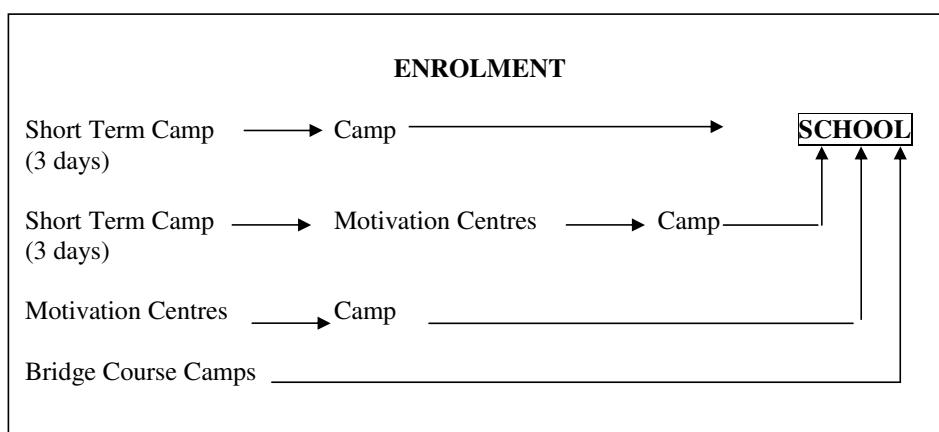
⁴ There are 4 administrative levels in the state of AP. Village, Mandal, district and state. The Mandal covers a population of about 50-60000 people.

⁵ MVF's definition of child labour encompasses every non-school going child irrespective of whether engaged in wage work or non-wage work, self-employed or working for others, employed in hazardous or non-hazardous occupation, employed on daily wage or on contract basis as bonded labour.

4 Education enrolment strategies

4.1 From camps to school

MVF has designed a number of strategies to enrol children in formal government schools. They are all aimed at getting children enrolled but different strategies have to be used for different groups of children.



The above diagram reveals that there is a slot for every child coming to MVF. Residential camps play an important role in the strategy. There are basically three different types of camps, all of which have the objective of motivating children and facilitating their enrolment in formal government schools.

(i) **Short term camps.** Children from 3 to 4 villages are brought together for three days. These camps are often not residential. The main objective is to motivate children and their parents. Over the years more than 400 such camps have been organised.

(ii) **Motivation Centres.** These centres are only for older girls in the 11-14 years age group. They are automatically wound up once the girls are withdrawn from work, sent into the bridge course camp and finally enrolled in formal schools. According to Dr. Shantha Sinha as well as the field staff, 10-18 motivation centres were originally required each year. Now these are no longer needed for girls in Nawabpet Mandal.

A total of 751 adolescent girls have been through motivation at these centres in the project area. A good two-thirds of them have been mainstreamed into the formal school system.

Motivation Centres For Girls

Year	Enrolled	Mainstreamed
1996	294	198
1997	180	110
1998	213	146
1999	92	57
2000	72	NA

(iii) Bridge Course Camps. The education policy in Andhra Pradesh has until now not included specific arrangements for absorbing illiterate older children. As a result older children have even been enrolled in the first grade. Not only does this lead to congestion of large numbers of children in the first grade, but many of them never get past this grade because the quality of education tends to deteriorate in the process.

Children in these camps are prepared to become students as they are helped to catch up for the lost schooling they should have completed according to their age. These are residential camps. For children in the 9-11 years age group, the bridge course lasts 4 months, but for those in the 12-14 years age group, it may last anytime between 12 to 18 months.

The motivation centre is often a step on the way towards formal school for girls, and the bridge course camps represent the second step. Experience shows that many girls are unable to perform well enough academically to be immediately mainstreamed into the schools. Quite a few therefore proceed to MVF's Bridge Course for further academic training before being entering into the school system.

Residential Bridge Courses in Nawabpet Mandal		
Year	Boys	Girls
1997	150	150
1998	159	173
1999	221	201
2000	320	206
Total	850	730

As can be seen from the table above, the number of children coming to the camps has increased over the years. It should be noted, however, that whereas the majority of these

children used to come from Nawabpet Mandal itself, now the majority of children are recruited from adjacent Mandals. In Nawabpet the need for these camps is not so pressing any longer, as most of the backlog of children who used to be out of school, has now been addressed by MVF.

The methods used in the bridge course camps may differ from one camp to another. Nevertheless, there are certain commonalities.

- **Adjustment phase.** The first 15 days are used to make children feel comfortable and understand them better.
- **Dividing children into groups.** Children are divided into groups after the adjustment phase on the basis of their knowledge of the alphabet. These groups are further sub-divided to ensure smaller manageable groups and focussed attention to each child.
- **Building literacy through the vernacular.** The language capacities of the children are built up through use of words that are familiar to the child e.g. cow, goat, tree, mother, father, sun, moon etc.
- **Subject teaching.** This is introduced gradually. MVF has devised teaching modules based on the government school syllabus to make it easier and simpler for children to understand. The teaching material developed by MVF uses children's own experiences and stories to make learning simple and enjoyable.
- **Preparing for class VII examination.**
- **Slow learners.** Personal attention and individual assessment of every slow learner is an integral component of the bridge course. Attempts are made to pair up a slow learner with a fast learner, who is asked to help the former. The pair is under constant observation by the teacher. Every day, after dinner, the teachers try to give special attention to the slow learners.

Children in the camps are encouraged to manage their own life. As a result they form committees that look into the day-to-day requirements in the camps. The committees meet regularly to review their progress and requirements.

In the girls' camps there is a special committee of older girls that meets once every week along with all the women teachers to discuss reproductive health issues and issues like child marriage etc. There are regular health check-ups of the children in the camps. Doctors visit the camps regularly.

Even though these camps are not required for children in Nawabpet Mandal any longer, MVF would like funding for the camps to continue as they are used as exposure grounds for training those who come to MVF.

The Bridge Course camps seem to be one of the strategies of MVF that could be replicated elsewhere.

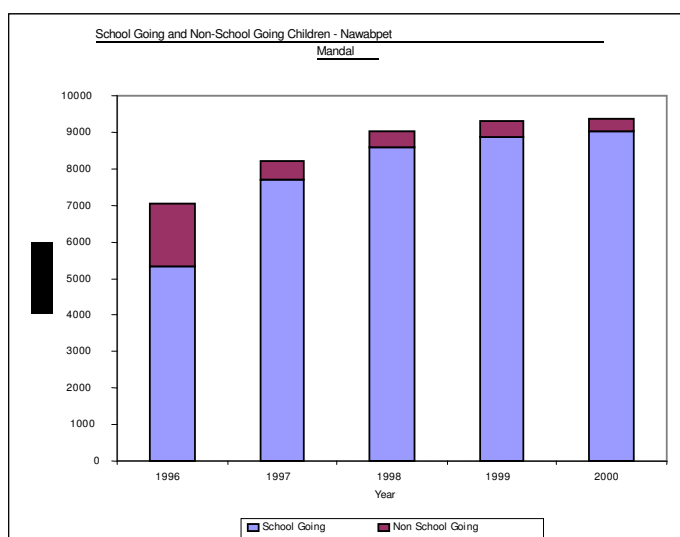
4.2 Achievements in enrolment rates 1996-2000

Nawabpet Mandal. 1996-2000.

Year	School Going	Non School Going	Total
1996	5321	1741	7062
1997	7712	504	8216
1998	8603	424	9027
1999	8858	468	9326
2000	9020	340	9360

It should be noted that the 1996 and 1998 figures represent official government figures at the time. These did not cover several groups of children “missing from school” such as young girls who were married. It is one of the accomplishments of MVF that more refined methods covering *all groups of children* have been developed such that officials can provide a more accurate picture at present.

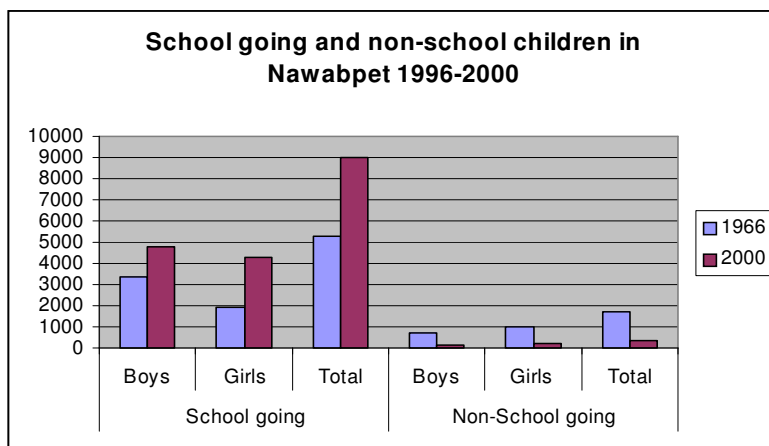
The graph below illustrates the reduction in non-school going children in the project period. There was a sharp increase in enrolment between the years 1996 and 1997, partly due to the fact that MVF carried out a massive enrolment of all children out of school. Today nearly all children aged 9-14 are enrolled in a school related activity; either as a student in the formal government schools or in one of the alternative *bridge courses* that have been established as part of the project strategy. In 1996 the percentage of children not going to school was 24.6% compared to 3 % in 2000.



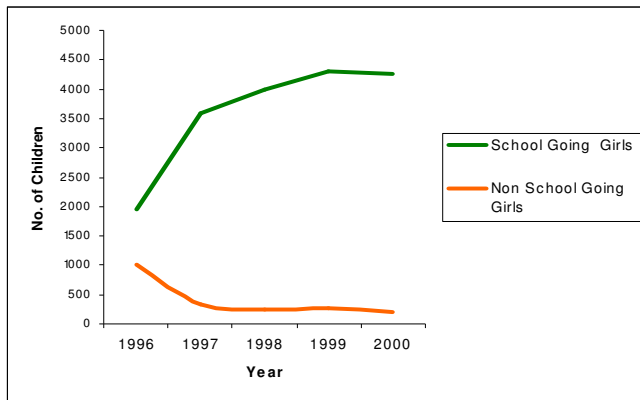
4.3 Enrolment of girls

According to the 1991 census, the overall literacy rate in the district was 49% but for females it was only 37%. In some pockets only 11% of the women had ever been to school. MVF has paid special attention to enrolment of non-school going girl children since 1998. MVF has experienced that the girls need a longer period of orientation before they get into formal schools as they themselves as well as their families are not oriented towards education but towards work.

Girls have been enrolled in large numbers, but still there is a discrepancy between girls and boys, in favour of boys.



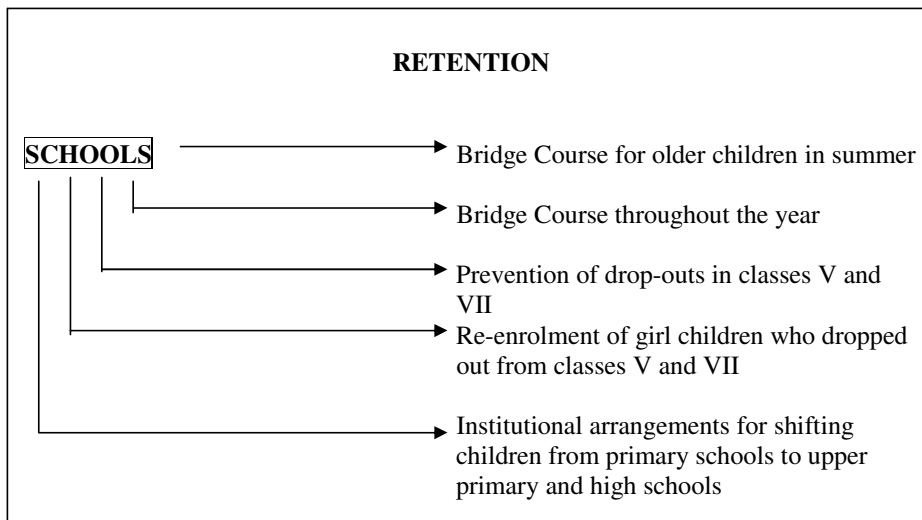
In 1996, a total of 1,006 girls in the age group of 5-14 years were reported as out of school, compared to 1,953 girls going to school. The figure below shows that the number of non-school-going girls has decreased to close to zero. The percentage of girls not going to school has been reduced by 11% between 1996 and 2000.



5 Retention Strategies

It should be noted that correct retention figures are not easily obtained. The situation may be subject to much change and children may drop out temporarily as family circumstances alter. A child may be called upon to take care of sick members in the family or a newly born sibling.

Some of the strategies adopted by MVF to retain children in schools are presented in the diagram that follows.



- As can be seen, MVF applies many of the same strategies for retaining children as for enrolment. Bridge course camps are said to be quite effective, and due to intense monitoring by MVF volunteers and in particular government school teachers, it is possible to identify children who need special attention. Children in Class V and VII are at risk, and these children are prevented from dropping out by teachers' help in checking school attendance every day and following-up absent children by home visits.
- The summer schools have proven to be effective. 608 children out of 745 in class 1 were upgraded to Class 2 and 502 out of 520 children in class 2 were upgraded to Class 3 after having participated in the summer school programme in June 2000.
- Often children have to shift schools if they get promoted to higher classes. This is a very critical phase. A major barrier has been that shifting school requires initiatives from parents themselves to register at the new school. Birth certificates are also often requested. Many parents have not bothered to go through these hurdles. To help the situation, MVF has shifted the responsibility from the parents to the school itself, which makes it easier for parents to send their children to a new school. The Mandal Education Officer has issued circulars to this effect.
- Girls Committees have been formed in all schools since 1998. They work closely with MVF's education activists to follow-up dropped out girls and bring them back to school.
- The Social Welfare Department in every State runs hostels for children belonging to marginalised sections of society such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, with the aim of facilitating entry of these children into schools. Usually the hostels lie unused, but MVF has reactivated them so that children can live there while they go to school. Getting children into such hostels ensures that they will not leave school and go back to working. Education activists of MVF visit children in the social welfare hostels to give them additional tuition and coaching after school hours. Not only are the children helped with school work, they are provided with books, stationery and at times even daily necessities like soap, water, oil, toothpaste etc. This follow-up mechanism ensures that children go to school and do not think of dropping out.

By 2000, six villages out of the 36 were totally child labour-free. These villages also have a retention rate greater than 99%, showing that the dropout rate has been reduced to a minimum. There is variation between the villages on this point. In three villages the retention rate was down to 90%. The reasons for dropping out are

- inability to cope with schools
- lack of teachers and overcrowded classrooms and
- bad behaviour of teachers and

- bad conditions in hostels (a special boarding scheme for children classified as SC, ST and OBC⁶ under the Ministry of Social Welfare)

5.1 Promotion to higher classes

In general, the number of children who manage to pass on to higher grades in the elementary school (Class 1-7) is limited for both girls and boys. An example from the team's visit to schools during the review illustrates this point.

Meenapally Kalan 2000-2001 (Nawabpet Mandal)

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
I	42	40	82
II	19	19	38
III	30	24	54
IV	20	21	41
V	23	27	50
VI	17	20	37
VII	17	19	37
VIII	15	14	29
Total	183	184	367

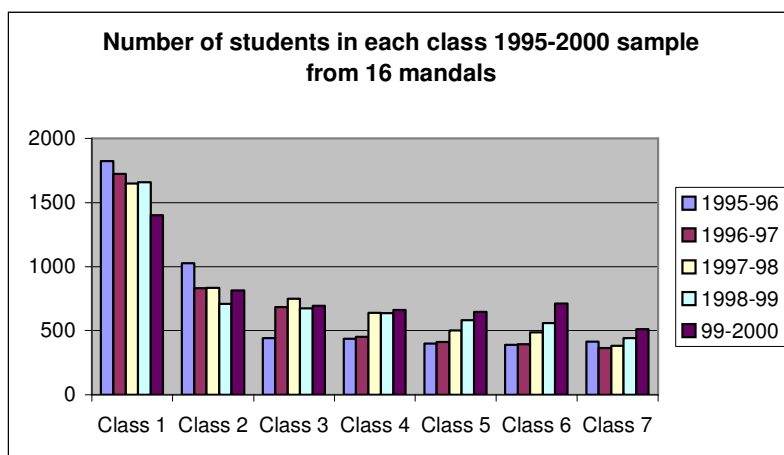
Source: information provided by MVF staff to the review team.

The table above shows that while there are 82 students in Class 1, there are only 29 students in Class 7 in this particular school. It should be noted that the review team could not make any independent assessment of where these missing children were. But the table above illustrates:

- That due to MVF, retention and promotion can now be monitored
- That the bridge course camps, separate tuition and summer courses are relevant and that many of the "missing" children actually participate in one of those camps, later being put into classes appropriate for their age.

The same trends can be seen if one looks beyond Nawabpet Mandal and takes into account the situation in the total 16 Mandals in which MVF operates in Ranga Reddy district.

⁶ OBC refers to the other backward castes and classes recognised by the Indian Government as a minority group and a marginalised section of the society, other than the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.



The number of girls who have proceeded to the upper classes (7-10) has increased to approximately 30%.

The above figure⁷ is based on data not only from Nawabpet Mandal, but also from a selected number of upper primary schools in all the sixteen Mandals in which MVF is involved. It shows that a general problem of both keeping children in school and also transferring them upwards in the system still prevails. It should be noted that the slight decline in Class 1 between 1995/96 and 1999/2000 is related to the fact that MVF has managed to ensure that in Class 1 there are no longer any over-aged children. Class 1 used to be over-crowded with a number of children continuously repeating. One can also see that overall in the 16 Mandals, there is a slight increase of children enrolled in upper primary classes.

The figure shows that even in Ranga Reddy district the problems of getting children through the full elementary cycle are far from resolved. There are many factors at play but some of these relate to⁸:

- 1) **Pull-out factors** (Parents withdraw children, particularly girls because of need for domestic work or to get them married),
- 2) **Push-out factors** (The school itself pushes the children out, because of bad behaviour from the teacher or poor quality of teaching, lack of material, irrelevance of education etc.)
- 3) **Stay-out factors** (Around 16% of children have no interest in continuing their schooling)

⁷ "A study on enrolment and retention pattern" Carried out for MVF by Research and Development Studies. Several studies have been conducted under the Addendum 3 of the agreement between NORAD and UNDP. None of these are yet completed. The figure is based on preliminary findings on Enrolment in Ranga Reddy district. The data is not yet analysed by MVF.

⁸ Prof. C.J. Daswani distinguished between these factors during the workshop organised by the Embassy

6 Social mobilisation

6.1 *The non-confrontationist approach*

The key to understanding MVF's success as far as enrolment/retention is concerned lies in its approach to social mobilisation. The following describes some of the main elements of the social mobilisation processes.

Initially MVF adopted a more aggressive approach, but today there is an underlying philosophy of non-confrontation that governs all their efforts at social mobilisation. Some essentials of this philosophy are:

- Consensus building and strictly adhering to the principle of non-violence.
- Negotiating resistance.
- Creating a demand for education.
- Community ownership.
- Strengthening existing structures and institutions instead of creating parallel structures.
- Taking an inclusive approach.
- Decentralised management, democratic participation and sharing of information.
- Facilitating change.

6.2 *The target groups*

The organisation's strategies for social mobilisation and advocacy are geared towards the community at large. To be more specific these include:

- the children themselves,
- their parents,
- the employers,
- the youth in the community,
- school teachers,
- people's representatives at the local village level i.e. the Gram Panchayat members such as the Sarpanch (leader),
- Government officials at the Mandal, District and State level,
- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs),
- the local police,
- Teacher's Unions,

- Other organisations working in the development sector, especially on child labour and education or on issues related to the girl child, who agree with the non-negotiables laid down by MVF for elimination of child labour.

Since there is no single target group for social mobilisation, there are no specific formulas for it. Some strategic processes and interventions have however been used successfully over and over again.

6.3 Entry into the villages

6.3.1 Youth mobilisation

Instead of getting straight into awareness raising campaigns and other strategies for social mobilisation, MVF first identifies the youth in the villages who can become a permanent link with the community. Youth organisations have existed as interest groups for young men long before MVF came into the area. What MVF has tried to do is to revitalise them and stimulate the youth to take on wider responsibilities for community matters, and mobilise them to become central actors to stop practices related to child labour. Youth groups have become instrumental in putting a stop to the widespread practice of marrying off very young girl children. In a rural Indian set-up, child marriages are common. A child is treated as an adult once he/she gets married and people do not refer to them as children anymore. Instead of sending girls to school, parents often prefer to marry them off at an age of 10-12 because this reduces the size of the dowry, which has to be paid to the groom's family.

Year	No. of Girl Child Marriages Stopped
1999	6
2000	27

Child marriages have now become part of the public debate in the project area. There has been an increase in the number of cases reported to the Mandal office for action. Very often a warning would invite action sufficient to stop it. Still, child marriages are prevalent and it is considered by MVF as a very complex issue to address.

6.3.2 Surveys

The next step is to take stock of the situation in the village, especially the situation of children and status of education through surveys.

In the process of data collection, the youth also try to persuade parents to send their children to school. It is not simply a data collection exercise, as the results from these surveys are later shared with the community and discussed with them.

Data on number of school going and non-school going children is updated every year through annual surveys. Precise data has been one of MVF's strengths in drawing government's attention to the problem of child labour. The accuracy of the figures has improved significantly over the years. After the initial base line survey in 1996, MVF discovered that it was not a tradition to refer to married girls as children even if they were below 14 years of age. As a result MVF developed improved survey methods to ensure that these children were also recorded.

6.4 Releasing the latent demand for education

6.4.1 Mobilising parents and children

Despite the fact that many parents themselves have never been to school, they have hope and aspirations for their children. MVF argues that a demand is latent and that instead of asking why children do not go to school, one should instead ask why so many children actually do go to school. It is a fact that government schools are run-down and considered to be of poor quality. Still the same schools are overcrowded.

MVF tries to avoid encouraging unrealistic dreams about future job opportunities for children who are sent to school, while still referring to school as one of the few arenas where new opportunities may emerge. The 'child to child' campaign is an important strategy to mobilise children for education. Interaction between children in school and those out of school helps convince the latter for education.

MVF has proved that most parents are willing to send their children to school. MVF firmly believes in changing the mindset and convincing them to send their children to school through dialogue and consensus. In some cases children run away from unwilling parents to join the camps. In a few cases these children may have felt encouraged by the general motivation campaigns to do so. In the current positive mood that prevails in Nawabpet, all parents know that their children have joined one of the MVF camps. However, it may take some time for them to come to terms with the idea that children want to be educated instead of working. In the team's opinion this is one of the more controversial aspects of MVF's strategies, but it seems that MVF staff are very careful about ensuring consent from the local police. At any one time MVF has a small number of run-away children residing with them in the bridge course camps.

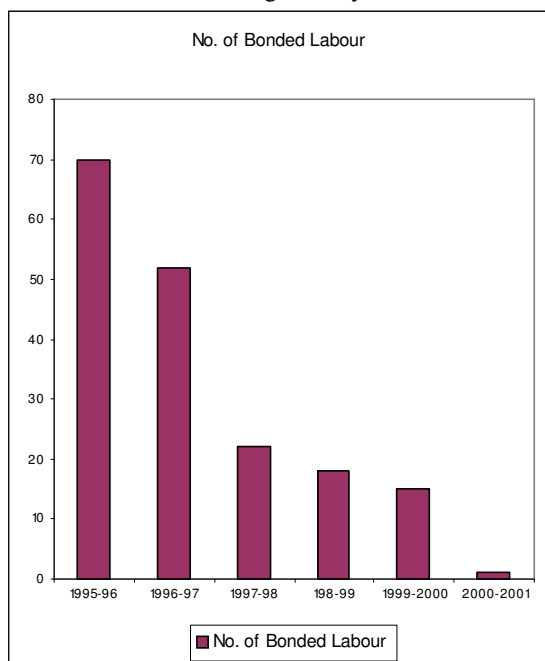
Parents are encouraged to visit the camps and see for themselves how their children cope and develop. This helps convince the parents to enrol their children into mainstream schools.

6.4.2 Mobilising employers

For the employers, besides one to one discussions, the strategy has been to congratulate them in public when they release child labourers. This gives a boost to their ego, brings them greater respect and softens their hearts.

What must be remembered is that the employers in Ranga Reddy district are largely marginal farmers, who also have to borrow money at times for cultivation. In such a situation, it is difficult to convince them to release the children working for them in lieu of the loans taken by their parents. Where it is hard to mobilise the employers, they are warned about the legal consequences of keeping children in bondage.

Bonded labour is against the law (Bonded Labour System Act 1976). But the authorities have seldom been active in following up this law and legal prosecutions are seldom undertaken. This law has nevertheless been a powerful weapon for NGOs in situations where the State takes little action, and it has created an enabling provision for MVF to act in Ranga Reddy district.



Bonded labour (traditionally boys) has been a very difficult issue to tackle. Parents, employers of bonded labour, the community at large, the children themselves and the district administration have all been simultaneously targeted for awareness raising.

Nawabpet, the focus area for UNDP/NORAD interventions, is now nearly totally free of bonded labour children. Of the 93 bonded child labourers in 1995/96 only two cases

remain to be enrolled. These boys have been subject to a lot of persuasion and motivation by the MVF staff and local volunteers. Still, they have not succeeded in releasing the two boys. In MVF's focus area at large, the employers have released more than 4,000-bonded labourers.

6.3.3 Mobilising the community

MVF's strategies on social mobilisation and advocacy are directed at generating public awareness on the issue of child labour and motivation of everyone in the community. These include use of street theatre, public meetings, campaigns, rallies, using public functions and platforms to raise and discuss child labour and education issues. They have been particularly useful in building alliances with the authorities and getting their support.

The first street theatre performed in Nawabpet was called 'Bhoomi Thalli Biddalu'. The response was incredible as some parents offered to send their children to school, some child marriages that had already been fixed were cancelled, the Village Assistant Officer (VAO), the Mandal Development Officer (MDO) and the Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) were highly impressed and started showing interest in advocating the child labour issue, a few children studying in private schools were withdrawn and put into government schools, some teachers also realised the importance of their role in education, the issue of child labour came to be taken on as one of the agendas of the gram panchayat.
(Based on Annual Progress Report, 1996-97)

The street plays used by MVF are said to be full of wit and humour along with serious comments on the child labour situation and society's contribution to it. These plays bring about a lot of self-realisation as people watch them being performed. After the performance, discussions are held with the audience to reflect on it. The street plays are changed and improvised upon every now and then to raise newer issues and concerns that emerge e.g. the issue of child marriage.

Non-MVF⁹ groups were identified in 1998 to carry the agenda forward in a more systematic way. The link

Non-MVF groups are:

- The Youth Committees
- The Youth Forum for Elimination of Child Labour
- The Social Education Committees (SECs). Till 1998, there were Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) that consisted of both parents and teachers. However, in 1998, the State Government's Department of Education announced the establishment of a SEC in every village, which is primarily a platform for parents to discuss and take up the issue of access to school and quality education. Each SEC constitutes of 4 members of which one is the school headmaster and the rest are the parents.
- The Gram Panchayat. This is a village level elected body in the three-tier system of local self-governance that exists in India.
- The DWCRA women's group - These are self-help thrift groups under the Department of Rural Development.
- The mothers' committees
- BKVV- Bal Karmika Vimochana Vidhayak (Forum for Liberation of Child Labour - Teacher's Wing). This was set up by some teachers committed to the cause. From, 50, it has a membership of 1700 teachers today.
- The School Development Committees (SDCs). A SDC includes members from all other committees.
- The Child Rights Protection Committees

⁹ Non-MVF groups have not been established by MVF but was established either as part of local democratic institutions or as voluntary community groups.

between mobilisation and institution building was planned as the need was felt for sustainable structures for follow-up. Often a movement or a mission fails in the absence of such follow-up structures.

Each of these committees is responsible for enrolment and retention of children in school; addressing the issue of child labour with a focus on non-school going girls; mobilising resources for the development of schools and planning for the schools' needs etc.

These institutions did not all emerge as a result of MVF. Gram Panchayats are local government structures and School Education Committees (SEC) were introduced in the late 90's throughout Andhra Pradesh as a result of the state government policy to ensure community involvement in educational issues. MVF has made some changes to this structure in the project area. SECS replaced the parent-teachers associations (PTAs) which had been set up by MVF. After some time of functioning, the community felt that four members (which is according to the government's guidelines) were not enough to mobilise the community at large. Therefore the communities and MVF jointly decided that School Development Committees (SDC) should replace the SECS. All parents are now members of the SDCs.

As the organisation started focussing on girl children, the need to organise women, especially mothers became important. While the mothers' committees have been set up and linked to the women's groups under the Government's DWCRA project (income generating/saving's groups), they do not seem to be working effectively and MVF needs to help these committees emerge as strong and independent collectives.

Between MVF and these committees, meetings are held as and when required. MVF feels that these committees still require some handholding, before they can be fully empowered to function on their own. This does not mean that MVF decides the agenda for these committees whenever they meet.

The SECs and Gram Panchayats have been trained by MVF to evaluate themselves on the basis of child labour initiatives and programmes in villages other than their own. This certainly helps in improving local understanding and increasing their ownership of the programme. The SECs are strengthened to become a supporting agency in addition to being a monitoring agency. They are made accountable to the Gram Panchayat. The SECs are now also taking active interest in strengthening schools with material requirement, including raising funds for construction of additional rooms in school and a boundary wall where necessary. The construction of classrooms is done with help from the Gram Panchayat in terms of getting voluntary labour for construction.

Using significant public forums has retained the momentum. Public functions like the Republic Day, Children's Day etc. have been important arenas for generating awareness of the child labour issue and mobilising the community. The organisation has been effectively utilising public platforms provided by the State Government such as the

Janmabhoomi¹⁰ campaign of the State Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, to highlight the issue of child labour and education. The Janabhoomi campaign has given impetus to MVF's work in the area as it is attended by people like the Mandal level government officials, the elected village representatives in the Gram Panchayats, parents and teachers. Every resolution coming out of this campaign is a government resolution and made in public with consensus and therefore it gets implemented. Such campaigns further motivate and give strength to people involved in ensuring children their right to education, dignity and childhood.

7 Quality in education

7.1 Quality and relevance

Children coming to school in large numbers does not automatically confer quality. MVF recognises that the formal education system is not without its defects, but it should be noted that so far MVF has not been involved in the content of education nor has it made any attempts to change the relevance of the pedagogical methods used in the classrooms. In MVF's view the organisation does not have qualified staff to deal with such issues.

Contrary to what is commonly believed, MVF rejects the notion that people do not send their children to school because of poor quality and because the curriculum is irrelevant. Some people would claim that formal education is not relevant for children who most likely will spend the rest of their life ploughing fields or tending to domestic chores. MVF goes against these arguments and say that children in the age group 5 to 10 are very rarely in a position to pick up a vocational skill.

Formal education is the only place that can provide some equal opportunities. MVF asks from whose point of view relevance is to be decided. Is it right for outsiders to determine that just because one is likely to become a farmer, reading or writing is not relevant for you? MVF turns the question of relevance around and asks why do parents all over India send their children to school in large numbers? Formal government schools are well known to be of poor quality all over the country, but still the majority of parents actually do see this type of school as a better opportunity than nothing. In the organisation's view what has kept parents from sending children to school is the belief that education is not relevant for them nor is it intended for them. It is this mind-set that needs to be changed.

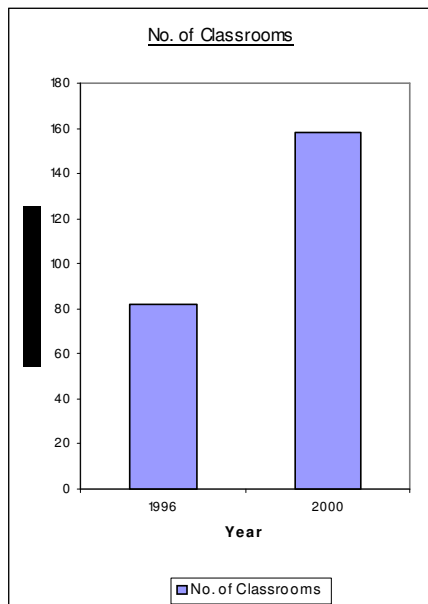
MVF finds that quality in the school cannot improve by not sending children there. It will improve only when parents develop a vested interest in good quality education and that can happen only when children are enrolled into schools in more and more numbers. There is thus a need to create sufficient demand for schools and before interventions are made to improve the curriculum and the teaching learning methods in the classroom.

¹⁰ Janmabhoomi Programme: It is a public works programme of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, where the government involves various sections of the society on issue of concern.

7.2 School infrastructure

MVF's contribution to quality changes has therefore mainly been in the form of stimulating changes in infrastructure and availability of teachers. All the schools actually have a permanent structure, but this is insufficient to accommodate seven classes. Classrooms are small and overcrowded.

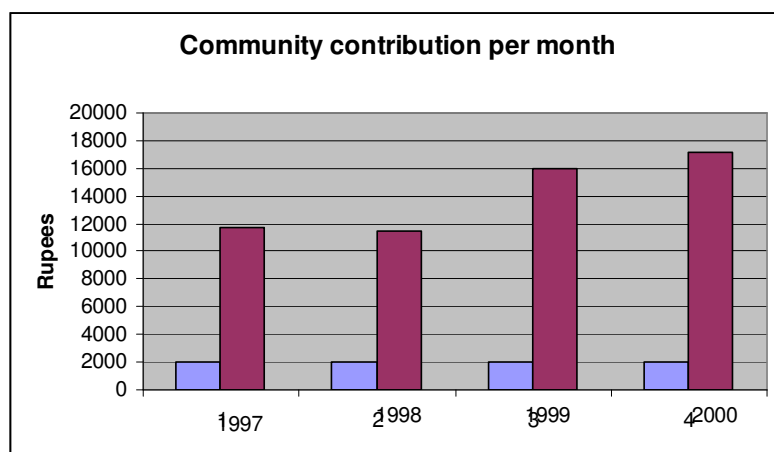
Government schemes such as the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has alleviated the situation somewhat. In the year 2000 there were 7 Upper Primary Schools as against 3 Upper Primary Schools in 1996. Four Higher Secondary Schools existed in 1996 and 7 as of today. This shows that access has improved during the project period.



Increase in Classrooms

Existing Classrooms in 1996	Additional Classrooms 1996-2001				Existing Classrooms in 2001
	DPEP	Other programmes	Community/MVF	Total	
82	40	22	14	76	158

An average estimate of the unit cost of classrooms is 120,000 rupees. The community's contribution towards classroom construction for DPEP varies from that of MVF. In the Government DPEP scheme funds are provided to the Village Education Committee under the Gram Panchayat to hire labour from the village. In the Community/MVF scheme the funds from MVF cover materials whereas labour is to be contributed free by the community itself. Parents divide themselves into groups which develop a system of rotation for work. This arrangement ensures a fair distribution of work between various community groups.



Establishment and expansion of school infrastructure in the narrow sense is an important strategy to reach girl children. While more classrooms, schools, teachers etc. help to expand and improve access to education for both boys and girls, it is particularly important for girls. They benefit from a denser network of schools as safety considerations mean that they are not always allowed to attend schools situated a considerable distance away.

7.3 Teachers

The spurt in enrolment has obviously meant that demand for teachers is on the increase. The original project proposal stipulated a necessary increase of 100 teachers immediately. Funds for the project accommodated 99 teachers all throughout the project period.

Year	No. of Government Teachers	No. of MVF teachers	No. of Community Teachers
1995-96	95	99	0
1996-97	95	99	0
1997-98	98	99	0
1998-99	111	99	7
1999-2000	110	99	3
2000-01	135	99	13

It should be noted that the MVF teachers usually have less formal teaching qualifications than government teachers. MVF does not see their teachers as substitute teachers, but as so called para-teachers or education activists whose main functions should be liaison between the school and the community. Their job is first of all to ensure that all children are retained in school. The para-teachers receive training in pedagogy, motivation and mobilisation techniques. An interesting point is the fact that since 1998, the communities themselves have started to fund teachers with 1,000 rupees per month. Newly recruited government teachers start on a salary of 1,200 per month and move rapidly up 2,400 rupees per month after four years. On confirming their status as permanent teachers, they climb on to a scale ranging from 3,750 rupees to 7,650 rupees per month, after 10 years.

It should be noted that after MVF started recruiting para-teachers to the schools, the community has also shown a keen interest in paying para-teachers' salaries. At present there are 13 community teachers funded entirely by the community. The para-teachers are recruited by the SECs, which are also responsible for paying their salaries. 5 rupees is charged per month on every ration card¹¹ from every family in every village whether they have children going to school or not and the amount collected is used to pay the para-teachers. Another option for raising funds for salaries of para-teachers is a levy of 5 rupees on the nutrition supply to children in schools that comes through the government's mid-day meal scheme. During the harvest season, lorries carrying the produce are made to pay a levy of 200 to 500 rupees depending on the load they carry. When there is a shortage of funds, this collection is also used to pay salaries to the para-teachers. These mechanisms of fund raising are not a part of any government rule. It is a decision of the SECs and the Gram Panchayats.

In relation to teachers, MVF's efforts have created a positive environment for an improved teacher- community relationship. Teachers' perceptions of their own roles and functions have improved and some teachers met felt a change in their status and that parents had become more appreciative of the teaching profession. Teachers felt more

¹¹ Ration card is a part of India's public distribution system, which ensures purchase of food and related articles at subsidised rates.

accountable for what they were doing, and headmasters reported that this was manifested in more regularity and concern about what was happening in the school.

7.4 Teaching/learning materials

There is a serious lack of furniture and in almost every school children sit on the concrete floor. Teaching and learning materials are lacking. In quite a few cases equipment, which came under the Government's Operation Blackboard scheme¹² was not in use, but kept under lock and key somewhere in the school. Although teaching/ learning materials are still virtually non-existent, both teachers and headmasters report that at least the little that is available has now come into good use. MVF has provided some 25,000 rupees to each school for the purchase of teaching/learning materials. However, MVF has not been able to monitor the implementation of the Operation Blackboard Scheme and take it up with the government.

8 Coping strategies

Does removing children from work and into school cause more poverty among people? Can poor parents manage additional costs associated with children going to school? There are probably many answers to these questions, but from the field study the most interesting observation was that parents actually are both willing and able to go a long way to cope with additional expenses in the household as long as they are convinced that this is the right thing to do.

- In Ranga Reddy District, information from parents revealed that the economic side of the problem was not the biggest obstacle. Children's earnings are very meagre. It is precisely because children earn so little that they are so popular as a workforce. Often they receive not more than 2-4 rupees per day. This means that an employer can hire more children and still maintain a good profit margin. As it seems, it was precisely because children were available in large number that so many adults, in particular adult men, were out of work. Some preliminary results from studies undertaken by MVF actually show that in many cases children in the family used to work both longer hours per day and more days in a month than their fathers. Often fathers were entirely jobless and quite dependent upon the income from children and women in the family. Competition from children also kept adult wages down. But with a large number of children in the workforce, the daily pay for an adult male was on average only 15 rupees a day. When children are no longer available as cheap labour, some changes in adult- employers

¹² In a phased manner all schools are supposed to have been provided with 2 teachers, additional classrooms and some kits containing teacher/learning materials. Text books to children belonging to the OBCs, SCs and STs are supposed to be provided free of cost. In practice such materials are seldom to be found in the schools.

situation seem to have been pushed forward. Farmers still needed daily workers, but with less competition from children, adult men had to be taken on instead. This has changed both working hours and salaries. What would fetch an adult man 15 rupees per day when children were available for work now provides them with 30 rupees per day. The wages of adult women have also doubled. While these are changes that have taken place at a broader level, in the families too the situation has undergone a change.

- There was anecdotal evidence that some people had sold their means of production, such as cattle, to cope with school expenses. It is very unclear to the team how widespread this has been and what implications this might have on the long-term sustainability of the household. Other examples that were given pointed to the disposal of savings, which had been accumulated to pay for the girls' dowry. MVF staff had advised parents to save some of this money in the bank and then use the interest to pay for the schooling. But such cases seemed to be rare and most parents felt that they were able to pay for the school expenses without any dramatic measures of any kind.

- Changes in distribution of domestic work have occurred. Children, and in particular young girls, usually carry a heavy burden in the household, and when they go to school somebody else has to do the work instead. A study undertaken by MVF shows that a common response of the parents has been sharing of household work amongst themselves. There are examples that fathers and brothers have taken over some of the tasks, which were earlier performed by the now school-going children. It is not clear how widespread this is. In the case of girls, information is far from consistent. Apparently, many mothers have now taken over some tasks such as taking the goats or cattle out for grazing, collecting firewood and also completing all cooking. Still, some parents told the review team that very often girls had just changed the time of the day for doing household chores. Sometimes they rose earlier than they used to in order to prepare

Durga Prasad, aged 15 years, used to graze cattle about 5 years ago. Today he is appearing for the class X examination as a student of the Zila Parishad High School, village & Mandal Nawabpet. He was about 10-11 years old when he joined the MVF camp. He had run away from home. An MVF organiser Vitthal used to talk to the children in the village about education. Vitthal asked Durga Prasad to come to the MVF camp. Durga's brothers were educated but his parents would not send him to school. He had started asking his parents as to why was he being denied the opportunity. When they did not respond, with encouragement from the MVF organiser, he ran away to the camp. His parents did not know about his whereabouts till 2 months. In the meantime the parents sold off the cattle he used to graze. Durga in fact got in touch with his parents only after 5 months.

After the camp he was put into the Nawabpet High School. For some time he lived in the Government hostel for boys belonging to the scheduled caste communities. This hostel only accommodates children till they are in standard VII. Now he lives with his parents.

He wants to become a computer operator. The computer is available in the school in the secondary classes.

breakfast, and household work had to be carried out after school instead. In the case of boys, it has been found that parents dispose of excess cattle, retaining only cattle required to till the land. Some parents have hired cattle to ease the additional burden of work.

- Parents usually feel proud of getting letters from their children who are in the camps. There is a sense of empowerment amongst those who have been sending their children to school.

9 Networking and impact on policies

9.1 Government authorities

In the State of Andhra Pradesh, there is no single department dealing with children. Official responsibilities for dealing with child labour issues have been fragmented. Legal aspects related to child labour and various government schemes addressing children are spread out among the Labour Department, Department of Women and Child Development, Department of Social Welfare, Directorate of Juvenile Welfare, Department of Health, Education, Police etc. There is no special coordination or cross-departmental mechanisms set up for overseeing children's welfare and child rights' issues.

The District Collector, who has the overall responsibility for development, legal aspects and revenues, heads the line ministries at district level. The District Development Officer reports directly to him. At the lower administrative level, the two responsible officers - the Mandal Development Officer and the Mandal Revenue Officer - are at par in terms of administrative responsibilities. Together they constitute the Mandal power for public administration and are important people to get on board for all MVF activities.

9.2 Mobilising additional government resources

The Ministry of Social Welfare has operated hostels for SC/ST children since independence. Funds were largely unutilised and transferred back to the government each year. Today all hostels are full in Ranga Reddy district, and more funds are allocated to these structures than before.

9.3 Influencing government programmes

There are a number of important schemes and programmes in operation at state and district level. Formal education is a state responsibility of the Education Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The National Child Labour Project (ILO-IPEC related) has until now been under the Department of Labour. In Andhra Pradesh the NCLP operates in 22 districts with a total of 975 schools with an enrolment of 61,050

children.¹³ There are also National schemes implemented by the State, such as for example Operation Black Board (OBB). Typical of such schemes is that they are distributed evenly, but thinly throughout the state. Another national programme will be developed according to the state government priorities and requirements such as the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). This is a World Bank funded programme. Ranga Reddy District, in which MVF operates, was not one of the original six districts to be selected for DPEP interventions, but was added on in the next round. Other schemes such as the World Bank funded District Poverty Initiatives Programme (DPIP) is also introduced on the basis of specific criteria. Aiming at the poorest groups of the population, six districts were selected on the basis of a number of socio-economic indicators reflecting the districts' poverty status.

MVF has been a source of inspiration as well as a catalyst for a number of important policy changes in government programmes. Inspired by MVF's results achieved in the Bridge Course Camps, the Department of Social Welfare issued an order to establish summer camps ("Back to School Programme) in order to mainstream children into school in 1997. The first year was considered as a pilot scheme covering 1,000 children per district, and in 1998 the programme reached out to 100,000 children. In 1999, 200,000 children all over the state participated and the programme was taken to a large scale in the year 2000 with more than 500,000 children enrolled in the two-month summer camp. Again inspired by MVF, the government realised that it was sitting on a wealth of unused hostels all over the state, and that the personnel hired such as wards, matrons, headmasters etc. actually were sitting idle. Still they were on the government's payroll. The response from parents and students was overall far greater than expected. Today the programme is implemented with a longer period of study time, so it covers 40,000 children. An evaluation has shown that more than 36,000 were mainstreamed. The "Back to School Programme" is generally considered as a great success. Additional cost of the programme has been 635 rupees per child for two months full boarding, not factoring in costs such as salaries and infrastructure.

The first significant step in transformation was changing the government programme on non-formal education (NFE) from night courses to day schools and bringing positive changes in the schools run under the Government's National Child Labour Project (NCLP). These changes happened as a direct result of MVF influence. MVF had assisted the government in running some of the NFE and NCLP centres, but refused to operate them in accordance with the official criteria. The basic arguments against these education structures were that they were established as a response to the needs of working children and not on the right of the child to be a child. The underlying philosophy of the NFE centres is also that it is poverty that causes child labour. Therefore incentives of 100 rupees a month were given to the children. MVF is strongly convinced that incentives are not necessary. Having proved that they could get former working children into school without such incentives, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has now changed its policy. The NFE centres have been closed all over the state, and in the year

¹³ Information provided by the National Institute of Labour during the workshop organised on child labour.

2001 all funds that were formerly provided to the NCLP will be transferred to the Education Department and its programmes to expand formal elementary schooling for all children.

The DPEP and DPIP have been influenced greatly by the bridge course concept. Bridge courses have now become integral in both programmes. The DPIP has taken up a special focus establishing girls' camps, and will rely much on the training provided by MVF in that respect. Bridge courses have now been taken on board in all World Bank funded programmes in Andhra Pradesh, and 18 of these have already been established in the original six DPEP districts. MVF experiences regarding duration of the courses have also been replicated. All bridge courses throughout the state will be conducted on a full year basis.

The National Child Labour Project (NCLP), which has been running a three-year programme with the aim of mainstreaming children into formal school, is in the process of undergoing profound changes. Originally this programme was meant for children withdrawn from hazardous occupations. But, with MVF's influence the programme offers a three-year course for all willing children, often of an age where they in principle should be entering the first classes at primary level. As of this year, the programme will be transferred from the Labour Department to the Education Department. The programme will hereafter be conducted as a bridge course for older children who should be mainstreamed into higher classes. There will be standardisation of the curriculum and the duration will be a maximum of one and a half years. The NCLP has never undergone an evaluation, but currently children will appear for the formal 7th grade state level public examination for the first time.

9.4 The non-negotiables

The principles of the so-called "non-negotiables" have become more accepted. The current official DPEP (2001-2005) programme presents the non-negotiables in full text, and states that these are the principles on which the future DPEP interventions will be built.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh implemented several mechanisms that are prerequisites for pursuing the charter of the non-negotiable issues. Some of the more critical are as follows:

- Relaxation of entry time for children who want to enrol in school. *Children used to be allowed entrance only during the months of July-August. Today children may enter at any time of the year.*
- Shifting the responsibility for providing necessary certificates for transfer of children to another school from the parents to the school. *This was formally seen as a major obstacle for children who wanted to be promoted to higher classes.*

- Permitting MVF para-teachers to sit for the entrance examination for the formal government teacher training institutes. *Access had previously been impossible for such candidates*
- Involving the elected representatives at the village level in the programme. *This had a lot to do with mobilising the higher political apparatus. 20 MLAs in the district have been convinced on the non-negotiables concerning child labour. However, the organisation also feels the need to bring these 20 MLAs together to persuade them regarding the budget for ensuring education to all children in their constituencies. Involving more and more MLAs and increasing their commitment to elimination of child labour forms an important part of MVF's agenda for the next five years.*

9.5 A new government education policy in the making

The recently developed (2000) Andhra Pradesh White Paper on School Education, which is expected to be approved soon, is dramatically different in its policy orientation from the current policy. The Director of DPEP claims that this is due to direct inspiration from MVF.

Some abstracts from this White Paper presented below, speak for themselves.

Existing policy¹⁴	White Paper 2001
<i>Education for all has to be viewed in the larger context of elimination of poverty and general economic development of the State.</i>	<i>EFA is possible even at the present level of economic development. Demand for education at elementary level exists across all segments of the population and education policies need to harness this demand and meet it.</i>
<i>Child labour is not treated within the domain of the education policies.</i>	<i>Elimination of child labour and universalising elementary education are viewed as simultaneous and inter-linked processes.</i>
<i>Improvement of quality of education and making it more relevant are essential prerequisites to Universal Elementary Education.</i>	<i>Improvement of quality of education including making it more relevant is a continuous process and not a pre-requisite.</i>
<i>Provide access to different streams of school and systems depending on the nature of clientele served, e.g. formal schools for full time students and NFE schools for part-time students.</i>	<i>Providing access to all children to formal day schools. Alternate schools, non-formal education and bridge schools should be developed as purely temporary strategies to mainstream children to formal schools and not as separate streams of education.</i>
<i>District as a unit of planning</i>	<i>Develop Mandal as unit for planning.</i>

¹⁴ This policy is not to be found in one single document, but is a mix of several policy measures, all referred to in the White Paper 2001.

9.6 Reforms in government educational planning

The focus on child labour, defined as non-school going children, has led to important reforms in the government's education planning system. Inspired by MVF, now all children, school-going and non-school going are listed by name. So far the Education Department has entered more than 10,000 children into its database. This is expected to provide the government with a much better basis for educational planning for infrastructure, number of teachers required and quality aspects. Earlier the planning was done at district level, which meant that rather inaccurate estimates were provided. This responsibility will be shifted to the school and Mandal levels with greater potential for more accurate data and a better basis for monitoring actual progress in enrolment and retention.

9.7 The demand for MVF's advisory services

The demand for MVF's advisory services has increased all the time. DPEP has requested MVF to depute its volunteers and organisers to a number of Mandals to carry out social mobilisation and bring children out of work and into schools. So far twenty-four MVF volunteers have worked in 16 Mandals in 8 districts.

Another example among many requests is the instructions of the District Collector and Chairman of DPEP Khamman to organise a bridge course training programme for 120 volunteers and classes at the Divisional Resource Centre Khamman. In addition MVF is requested to deploy its volunteers to strengthen the Residential Camps in two areas.

9.8 Vision for the future - the elimination of child labour

The most recent development took place when the team was still carrying out the review in Hyderabad. On March 14th, 2001 School Education Minister Kariam Srihari of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Legislative Assembly, announced that the Government will organise a cross-department and cross-political workshop with the aim of making a state-wide action plan for eradication of child labour by the year 2005. Sending children to school and putting an end to the practice of hiring children as domestic workers are stated as important strategies to reach this goal. This means that the Government has finally moved its perception of child labour away from the narrow definitions related to what is hazardous work for children and taken on a broader view that incorporates non-going school children in general. While not giving the credit for this only to MVF, there is no doubt that MVF has been a major actor to make these policy changes happen.

9.9 Influencing the teachers' unions

The five different teachers' unions agreed last year for the first time to take on a common issue in their Annual Conference. This issue was child labour with a focus on non-school going children as working children.

9.10 Influence at the level of National government

Central/National government policies have not yet been really influenced by MVF - there is no systematic involvement in processes related to the CRC or the coming World Summit on Children.

10. Collaboration with NGOs/other agencies

MVF has entered into partnership with a number of NGOs working on the child labour issue. The primary criterion for entering into such partnerships is that there should be a consensus on the 'non-negotiables'.

The partnership with NGOs is of two kinds:

- One is where MVF joins hands with specific NGOs and larger networks of NGOs in the campaign against child labour and children's right to education.
- The other is where the target groups of MVF for social mobilisation are NGOs and small community based organisations (CBOs).

While the former is achieved through networking and advocacy, the latter is achieved by training other NGOs and CBOs in building their perspective as well as capacities to initiate social mobilisation against child labour and for education in their own areas of work.

Campaigns

MVF is a part of the National Campaign for Fundamental Right to Education (NAFRE), which is a conglomerate of over 1500 organisations spread across the country. As a part of this campaign, MVF has been raising the demand for making universal and free elementary education for all children up to the age of 14 years a fundamental right.

MVF's involvement in some of the national level campaigns must increase. If the idea is to get more and more people to think alike, MVF will have to make more serious attempts at joining in campaigns that raise pertinent issues concerning or linked to child labour. Some of the other national level campaigns of which MVF can be a member are

the Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) and Forum for Child Care and Services (FORCES).

Networking and Advocacy within Andhra Pradesh

MVF has been networking with several rural and urban based organisations in various districts of Andhra Pradesh to lobby for policy changes at the State level. Bala Jyothi, Divya Disha, Krishi, Reddy Foundation and Child and the Police are some of the Hyderabad based organisations with whom MVF works in close partnership to seek government's attention on important issues affecting children. In the rural areas, some typical partner organisations are Homo Sapiens, Jyotiba Phule Education Society in Nalagonda District, Shramik Vikasa Kendra and CONARE in Mahaboobnagar District, Sadhana in Medak District, and Praja Shakti Vidya Kendra in Krishna District.

Social mobilisation through training on perspective building and capacity building

MVF has come to be seen as a training ground by many NGOs and CBOs across the country. In Andhra Pradesh, their presence is being sought in more and more areas. But, instead of expanding geographically, MVF is today thinking along lines of supporting some of the CBOs in the various districts of Andhra Pradesh through small grants, which can be used by them to build their capacities, to link with local volunteers, the government and other important groups for social mobilisation on the child labour issue.

MVF has supported fellowships for a number of people in Andhra Pradesh, who have now set up organisations to work on the child labour issue.

The number of NGOs and CBOs visiting MVF from all over the country has increased over the years. Their exposure to the MVF model has helped them carry out similar initiatives in their own States. Some of the NGOs which have followed the MVF approach to child labour and/or replicated the bridge course programme of MVF in their own area are CINI-ASHA in Calcutta, PREM in Orissa, PRATHAM in Mumbai, Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan and the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board in Chennai.

UNICEF- UNICEF Hyderabad looks at MVF as a very critical partner in the child labour issue. In 1993, UNICEF funded MVF's pilot project in Shankarpally District and that set off a fruitful relationship between UNICEF- Hyderabad and MVF. About four years ago, UNICEF, MVF and the Police Department got together to sensitise the police towards children. Today, UNICEF is running a bridge course based on the MVF model in a Juvenile Home in Hyderabad city.

10 Why channel funds through UNDP?

10.1 Influencing the government

There are several dimensions, which need to be brought forward in this context. One is that among the UN agencies in India, UNDP is by far the largest, with a huge country programme. This gives the organisation unique access to the government and departments in all sections. Norway, on the other hand, is a very small donor to India. The hopes pinned on UNDP in this context were based on the assumption that as a UN organisation, UNDP was in a better position to strategically influence government policies and actions. UNDP's country programme at the time did not include any major child labour initiative and partnership between UNDP and NGOs was therefore considered as of particularly strategic importance.

While it is true that child labour is high on the Indian political agenda, the central Indian government has been very ambiguous with regard to the question on how to deal with child labour issues. By using its central position in the UN system in India, UNDP could capitalise on its experiences from the NGO's to influence the UN Position Paper on Child Labour (1998). The UN says:

- child labour cannot be tolerated in any form and must be eliminated, with the highest priority being given to the most exploitative forms of child labour.
- rejects the notion that poverty is the main reason for child labour but that there are many other factors at play.
- states that all children outside school are child labourers or potential child labourers and the flow of children into work can only be stemmed by realizing universal and compulsory primary education.
- that education, and particularly elementary education, is a principal means of protecting and eliminating child labour in the country.

These are issues which UNDP elaborates in its interaction with various government departments. Its concern has been that from time to time the government has launched many programmes and passed laws to control and ameliorate the plight of child labour. But these initiatives have not changed the situation much. Information continues to pour in that children live and work under devastating circumstances and that children's rights are violated and neglected in all possible ways.

UNDP is convinced that protective laws must widen beyond the few sectors which the government has defined as illegal because they are seen as hazardous. As the responsible ministry for law enforcement, UNDP has targeted the Ministry of Labour to change this narrow definition of child labour. Directly related to MVF, is dissemination of reports to the Ministry. This has brought about favourable comments from the Ministry to UNDP, who have forwarded these to the Norwegian Embassy. There are, however, no signs of legal changes at present. What appears to have altered is a change in discourse in the

Ministry itself. It has become more common to find reports and papers from the Ministry with references to child labourers as doing paid and unpaid work, incorporating sectors such as domestic work and street work. A conceptual change is therefore on its way. This may be the first step to more profound legal changes, but so far the children suffering in these occupations are still as unprotected as before.

Another strategy for influencing government has been to broaden the understanding of the causal relationship between poverty and child labour. Using examples from a film production financed under the MVF agreement, UNDP has shown to large audiences that from the onset it is not poverty per se that forces young girls into cotton seed production. They and their families are actually lured into production by employers using a whole range of clever methods to convince people that this is a suitable occupation for girls. As a result of these tricks, girls end up in bonded arrangements. But it is not poverty that drives the girls; they end up in this vicious poverty cycle because of the quest for better profit margins on the part of the employers. The film seems to have put a certain pressure on the Ministry of Agriculture to take a second look on what is really happening in the cotton industry.

10.2 Mobilising resources

Another indicator is UNDP's ability to mobilise resources for child labour programmes. Under its country programme UNDP had not before been able to convince the government to focus on child labour. This has changed. Today there are examples such as:

- The Janashala, the GoI/UN System Support for Community Based Primary Education (SCOPE) was launched in 1998. Janashala is a unique programme as it is the first ever collaborative initiative of the UN agencies in the world. Prevalence of child labour in its broadest sense is one of the criteria for location of the projects.
- The South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme, which has been implemented in many states, including Andhra Pradesh from 1994, has shifted much of its focus to child labour issues and builds much of its experiences on MVF.

Other donors have started to show interest in funding programmes related to child labour. The Embassy of Japan has mobilised support to UNDP to construct schools in Uttar Pradesh, AUSAID is supporting community - based organisations to take on MVF strategies in Mahabubnagar and Kurnool districts in Andhra Pradesh. USAID is helping CREDA to scale up its activities in Mirzapur. The Project TEAM, an acronym that stands for Town Enrichment Action Movement, works in slum areas in Gurgaon. UNDP and the British High Commission in collaboration with the local industries fund the project.

10.3 Assessing different approaches

Gathering of information on different approaches has taken longer than initially expected. This is mainly due to the time needed to mobilise resources.

Presently, UNDP works with 10 different NGO partners that have programmes to get children out of work and into school. In addition to the two financed by NORAD funds, there are organisations focusing on street children, sex workers, organisations working towards release of bonded children (especially in brick kilns), working children among rickshaw pullers, migrant labour etc. The aim of all these NGOs is the same, but their strategies differ. In the Indian context, for example, there seems to be a general agreement that street children need specially designed approaches, that tribal migrant families are confronted with special problems which need to be addressed etc.

Whereas all of these initiatives build upon strong ideologies of participation and empowerment, the circumstances under which children work and live are highly diversified. Some programmes have replicated strategies such as bridge courses from MVF experiences. Others, such as Sankalp in Allahabad District, have developed an approach assuring work /income security for parents as a prior condition for eliminating child labour. This organisation believes in a more confrontational approach than MVF and is first of all running non-formal education programmes for children of the miners. The organisation trains parents to demand better conditions, better wages and better livelihood. In return they have to send their children to school.

UNDP does not determine what the NGOs in question ought to do. UNDP does, however, bring information from other projects onto the discussion tables with staff discuss what sort of experiences have been gained from other projects etc.

The most recent step is the establishment of a web site on children and poverty. Here all organisations, those with relations to UNDP and without are free to present their projects. Relevant research findings are made accessible, government policies presented and UNDP's own views and approaches put forward. Both MVF and CREDA, the two Norwegian supported projects feature prominently in the system.

Success in presenting such a variety of documents and views on cyberspace may to some extent be attributed to UNDP's neutrality. Also for NGOs working on the issues, child labour is politically and ideologically sensitive. NGOs in India do not agree easily on which approaches to pursue. This sometimes creates an emotional battlefield. The call for an international organisation that blends the features of neutrality among contending parties seems actually quite constructive under these circumstances. UNDP should take even further care to invite the whole range of different organisations into its mode of documentation.

10.4 Assistance during implementation

A motive for channelling funds through UNDP was also to ensure that financial and management requirements were met.

UNDP has been a great source of support to MVF in its work. Worth mentioning is the critical turning point in MVF's approaches to focus much more sharply on girls' education and gender relations in general, which largely can be attributed to UNDP's influence. This brought women's organisations at village levels significantly into the forefront of the social mobilisation process.

UNDP has also helped MVF in streamlining financial management and reporting routines so that they now comply with international standards. This backstopping was initially quite time-consuming and did take a good part of UNDP's time and resources put into the project. Yet there is an underspending by UNDP (some 29.72%). UNDP has stated in every annual review that they tried wherever possible to use other resources rather than the NORAD budgets for travel, consultants, etc. UNDP only used those budget lines when necessary. Further, during the life of the project, other funds for holding workshops became available as well and participants offered to pay for their own travel costs. Thus costs to NORAD were significantly reduced.

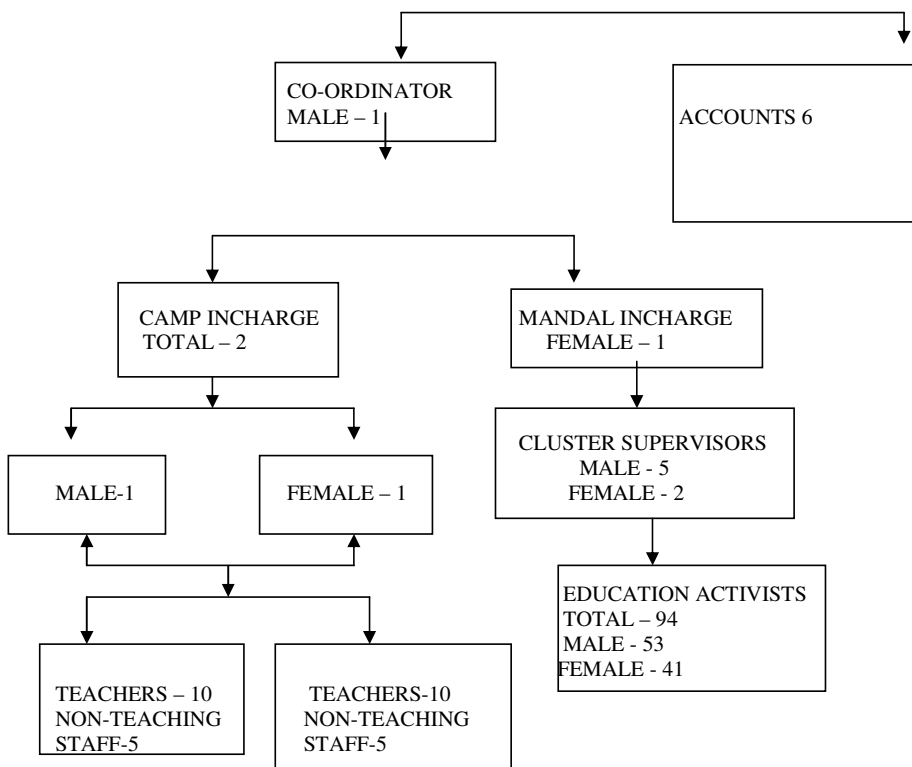
MVF commends UNDP in particular for its advocacy work which has brought MVF's experiences to a wider forum, not only within the state of Andhra Pradesh, but in India in general and indeed to global attention:

- A staff member of MVF attended a UN conference in New York with support from UNDP.
- UNDP has introduced MVF to several agencies, both donors and otherwise. It has also helped MVF network with the officials in the State. MVF's inputs are sought by UNDP for collaborating with other NGOs. UNDP has linked up with MVF to provide training for the staff engaged in the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP), undertaken by it in one of the 6 districts to be covered in Andhra Pradesh.
- UNDP has encouraged MVF to charge a 10% overhead for perspective building training provided by the organisation for UNDP partners and to invest the money for use as a revolving fund.
- UNDP has given visibility to MVF in its publications and national level newspapers. MVF finds a mention in *The State of the World's Children 2001*.
- MVF's documentary film on girl children working in the cottonseed farms as bonded labourers has been used by UNDP extensively for purposes of advocacy. The Children's Day was used as an occasion to screen the film at the India International Centre. UNDP has sent copies of the film to all Departments in the Government of India and the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. About 100

copies of the film have been circulated. The national TV channel (Doordarshan) selected it for the National Film Festival Award for Documentary films.

11MVF as an organisation

11.1 Organisational chart



The chart above shows the UNDP/NORAD-funded structure related to Nawabpet only, not to the organisation as a whole. The staff establishment numbers 135, but they have 141 actual staff in post.

11.2 Personnel

MVF has developed its own recruitment procedure for its entire staff, which is something unique in itself. A brief summary of the procedure as explained by the Secretary Trustee is given below:

1. The **education activists** participate as volunteers in the campaigns through rallies, padayatras, door-to-door surveys and so on. The more active and committed among them emerge as candidates for serving the project on a full time basis. Those with aptitude for mobilisation would join the stream of organisers and those who have an aptitude for teaching will join the schools as teachers/education activists in regular schools. In both cases the community mobilisation aspect of their job is not compromised.
2. The community organiser starts functioning at the village level. He/she is given training in two spells to build their capacities as animateurs in the programme. Depending upon their effectiveness in doing so, they are given responsibility to take up more than one village. In one to two year's time some of them gain the competence to become cluster supervisors.
3. As cluster supervisors they undergo training in 2 spells on job description; decision-making; leadership and team building relationship between delegator and delegatee and community mobilisation with focus on democracy, participation and gender discrimination.
4. Additional responsibilities as trainers, resource persons, unit managers (often called 'in-charges') and campaign managers are assigned to some of them. In the process they are identified as Mandal in-charges.
5. The education activists in the day school are trained as para-teachers and given pedagogical training to conduct bridge courses. The senior education activists join as teachers in the bridge course camps, and are also trainers. They are recruited by the SECs.
6. On the whole the process of recruitment is a self-selection process where the candidates emerge as acceptable persons for the job defined for them at their level of competence. Inputs to improve their qualifications are constantly given.

At the end of each year there is a self-assessment of all the staff through an agreed format. The staff at a senior level is also required to evaluate the candidates reporting to them. Based on these two reports the staff are given new responsibilities for the next year.

11.3 Gender issues within MVF

An evaluation report of 1998 expressed concern at the lack of gender awareness among MVF's own staff, and in particular among the males. Since then, MVF has tried to address this. The following steps have been taken:

- Inviting resource persons to advocate on women's issues.
- Girls' and gender issues have become a compulsory part of the agenda at every staff meeting, regardless of level in the organisation or other topics that are to be discussed.
- Women volunteers, organisers and staff have separate monthly meetings, in which they discuss problems and possibilities.
- Female staff have been exposed to how gender issues are dealt with in other organisations. A visit to the Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan was designed exclusively for this purpose.
- All meetings now close at 5-6 pm and not 8-9 pm as it used to be, in order to ensure safety for the female staff in returning home.
- Training in legal aspects has incorporated issues such as domestic violence and gender relations in the household.
- All male staff have been encouraged to take more care of their own families and children. It was discovered that many got so absorbed in their work that they gave too little attention to their own family members.
- Youth rallies against child marriages have helped the organisation to focus on girls' rights issues.
- MVF is clear, however, that this part of its operation should not move the organisation into a women's agenda. It should be noted on the other hand, that the HIVOS supported programme of MVF is entirely designed as a women's programme.

Women staff in general are encouraged to move upward in the system. But there is a difference between men's and women's work. Women organisers have 2 villages to mobilise whereas men have 5-6 depending upon size and other characteristics of the village. One of the reasons for this is that working with the *mahila sanghas* (the women's groups) is very time consuming. During a large meeting with more than 40 female volunteers/organisers, it was, however, revealed that the women staff felt that they are not given the same opportunities for upward promotion and responsibilities as men. To become a cluster organiser a certain amount of moving about to different villages is required. Women feel that if they too could learn to ride a moped, they would be able to move around. The women felt that their male colleagues were against this on the grounds that women would not be taken seriously if they organised larger meetings. None of the women agreed with this argument.

11.4 Training and skills enhancement

Overview of the training programme

The training programmes of MVF can be divided into three categories:

- In-house training for the field staff. This includes general orientation programmes for all field staff, specific and separate programmes for the different levels of field staff as and when required, general as well as subject specific training for MVF's para-teachers, training course on certain basic principles of management.
- Training for visitors coming from outside. This includes NGOs and other professionals as well as government functionaries.
- Training and orientation programmes for the youth volunteers, Gram Panchayat members, SEC members.

Training methods

Earlier evaluations of MVF have pointed out the lack of structured training programmes. The organisation has tried to address this critique. While much of MVF's training is experiential, the experiential learning is now becoming structured in as much as the trainees are sent out to the field with a checklist of things they need to see and do. Nonetheless, training provided by MVF is still partly tailor-made and ad-hoc, and partly structured. Modules and written materials are not used for all training programmes conducted by MVF.

- Training programmes for outsiders are largely to help them understand the various dynamics of social mobilisation and advocacy, the strategies that can be used and to learn how to run a bridge course. These training activities are based on the methods of experiential learning and hence the trainees are exposed to field situations.
- Orientation of youth volunteers, the Gram Panchayat members and/or the SEC members, by and large lasts for two to three days. These orientation programmes aim at building a perspective on child labour and education, building a child rights perspective, orienting the youth and the Gram Panchayat on how to carry out surveys. Discussions, games and some practical exercises constitute some of the training methods.
- Peer reviews have been encouraged by MVF as training cum evaluation methodology over the last two years. Not only the field staff, but also the SECs and Gram Panchayats have been initiated into peer reviews, which enhance assessment of one's own work vis-à-vis others' and helps people learn from each other.
- A training programme on basic management principles – a 10-day module is used which focuses on team work/group work, individual contribution and its importance, what a job description has to be, what does it mean to delegate work, relationship between delegator and delegatee, what goes into decision making processes,

recognition of talent, giving space to others to grow, soul-searching, coping with stress. This is basically for field staff.

- The issues touched upon in the training programmes for the field staff aim at widening their perspectives, equipping them to understand the social issues within the context of larger economic and political developments at national and global level, helping them make linkages with what is happening around, helping them with information that can be used to negotiate with the literate society. Social transformation, the feudal and the capitalist society, what does independence mean, politics of caste and class, what does the nation invest on children's education etc. have been some of the topics for discussion during the training for field staff.
- A book reading session is an integral component of the training module for the field staff. Some selected readings like the PROBE report on education by Dr. Amartya Sen and Jeane Dreze, State of the Child in India by Myron Weiner etc. have been translated into the local language-Telegu, for the field staff to go through in the course of their training. Some of these readings form a part of the discussions during training.
- The para-teachers are primarily trained to work as the link between the community and the school. For this, the basic orientation module is used. But as para-teachers also fulfil the role of being subject teachers, especially those at the upper primary level of education, they are provided with specific subject training also.
- In addition, the para-teachers are encouraged to enhance their level of qualification by registering for degree courses through the Open University or institutions offering distance learning programmes.
- Subject training is also provided for teachers in the bridge course camps of MVF.

The head of the organisation, Dr. Shantha Sinha, and the two project co-ordinators, Mr. Venkat Reddy and Mr. Raju, design training modules for the field staff. Inputs from the field staff are taken into account while designing the modules. Initially MVF had a permanent training staff, but they found those trainers completely detached from the ground realities. The organisation then trained some of its own staff members to become trainers.

If required, MVF does seek training inputs from professionals from outside in terms of both designing the modules or the curriculum and also for training their field staff.

MVF's field staff also come for training to the National Resource Centre on Child Labour (NRCCL) at the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute in Noida, U.P.

Those visiting MVF for training are from all parts of the country and include people from all ranks - field officers to project co-ordinators and directors of various organisations. In the year 2000, MVF had three professors from Missouri Southern State College and 10 co-ordinators from ECTA, an organisation in Nepal visiting them for exposure and training. The two government programmes - DPEP and DPIP send a large number of their project functionaries for training and exposure to MVF. The UNDP has also been sending its partners to MVF for perspective building on child labour.

MVF has come to be seen as a training cum resource centre and the demand for training is increasing every day. In the week in which this evaluation took place, the organisation had 1000 visitors for training. The DPEP is in fact sending large groups of its functionaries (as many as 60 people) on a regular basis. Moreover, MVF has started sending out its volunteers to other areas in response to demands coming in from other districts and Mandals in Andhra Pradesh, and this demand is also increasing. According to Dr. Shantha Sinha, MVF has 200 senior staff members who can go anywhere within the country at a week's notice. Besides, the organisation has identified 10 Gram Panchayat heads (Sarpanches) to provide training and some of the Girl Child Rights Protection Committee members can also go out as trainers.

At any given of point in time MVF requires a set of trainers who can go out to other areas to train and share their experience with others, a set of trainers who can train those coming to MVF from other areas and a set of trainers who will be available for training and orienting the field staff and other community mobilisers. MVF needs to do some serious thinking on how will they meet this requirement in the years to come.

Increased demand for training implies not just a requirement for human resources but also material and space and financial resources. At the moment MVF has access to only two training centres, of which the one situated in Chevella is the only permanent one. The Chevella training centre is actually an old abandoned government building, which has been brought into use by MVF. It needs some major repairs to make the place conducive for training purposes. For example there is an immediate need to replace the tinned roof with a tiled or concrete roof. All this calls for substantial investment in the training component of MVF.

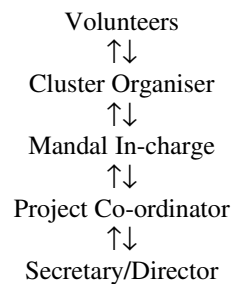
MVF does not charge any fee for training. While all visitors coming to MVF are required to bear their own travel expenses, many smaller organisations cannot even afford that. The boarding and lodging costs are in any case borne by MVF. Training places a substantial financial burden on MVF. UNDP has suggested the organisation should charge a 10% overhead on perspective building training programmes for its partners. But MVF should now also think of charging some fee from every visitor coming in for training and exposure, and establish some criterion for subsidising the fee for smaller CBOs. If the community can be asked to make contributions for payment of salaries to para-teachers and construction of classrooms, visitors coming to MVF should also be asked to pay for training that actually benefits them.

11.5 Management structure

MVF has introduced a system of participatory management that delegates true management and administrative responsibilities to the various sections in the organisation. Emphasis is put on personal growth and instilling individual self-esteem for the work carried out.

11.6 Reporting system

The reporting system follows a two-way procedure as given below:



Anything between 4-7 villages forms a cluster to be covered by the cluster organiser. Every month there is a cluster meeting. Every second Saturday of the month, entire MVF staff from all 36 villages meets at the Mandal level. The Mandal in-charge has to compile the minutes of all the meetings and also has to compile all reports/information into one report.

Approximately 30% of the time of the field staff goes into planning and 70% into actual work.

11.7 Peer Reviews

The management fulfils the essential criteria for decentralised management. An important element of this takes the form of performance control through peer reviews and self-evaluation. On a regular basis a group from each Mandal pays visits to another Mandal where they review the performance of the other group. This gives each group a chance to see activities and performance in all Mandals on a continuous basis.

11.8 Self-evaluation

MVF has developed a format in which all activities are given a specific code accompanied by grades from A-D. Each staff member uses the grades to evaluate his or her own performance according to the activity. The result is checked with grades given by their superior in the organisation. The results are consolidated both at Mandal and at headquarters levels. The intention is to discuss jointly and to spot areas in which the staff members would need additional training to assist in developing their skills. MVF is confident that involving the staff in reviews and self-evaluation and report writing are

essential components in building the staff's capacity and in developing the organisational performance further.

One important feature of MVF is its ability to retain most of its staff and volunteers over a considerable period of time. This is partly a result of the many opportunities for upward mobility and promotion in MVF. With very few exceptions all staff in Nawabpet Mandal have been there since the project started up in 1995/96. The female Mandal in-charge of MVF, for example, started up as a volunteer in 1994 and was gradually promoted to become a cluster organiser and then finally to being in charge of the entire Mandal.

11.9 Monitoring and evaluation

All meetings within MVF have an agenda, which is known to all participants. Careful minutes are taken from all meetings and consolidated on a regular basis by the Mandal in-charge or at higher level. Reports are communicated on a regular basis both upstream and downstream in the organisation. This has greatly helped the organisation to have a good overview of all activities and what sort of problems different people face in their own communities. All details regarding project activities are reported carefully.

Perhaps one of the more innovative aspects of MVF is its effort to mobilise the community in checking enrolment, retention, drop-outs and any other school-related issues. Thus, all teachers, School Education Committee members, girls' committees and youth committees are mobilised in the important task of keeping track of any child who is reported as being away from school. Any child missing from school in the MVF project area is immediately checked and persuaded by peers or members of other committees to go back to school. In addition all women's committees and youth committees are actively engaged in monitoring girls' issues, in particular child marriages.

Efforts at mobilisation result in establishing forums, committees and pressure groups, which are systematically reviewed in the project. Facts and figures are easily available at all levels due to a good reporting system (upwards and downwards) that exists within the organisation.

When piloting approaches and activities, it is very important to document results and evaluate experiences. Both UNDP and MVF have taken a number of initiatives to review progress, achievements and problems. It appears that lessons are widely shared and that they become part of the collective experience of MVF as a whole. In this sense the MVF's programme develops in a spiral fashion from one stage to the next. The review team feels that MVF has established a very conducive atmosphere for learning from experience and understanding from the innovative exercises among the staff. This enhances the potential for replication.

11.10 Research and documentation

MVF's capacity to monitor and evaluate has also greatly enhanced its capacity to document and conduct research. A number of themes¹⁵ are in the process of being finalised and MVF has concrete plans to publish the results in hard-copy versions by the end of 2001.

A recently conducted study has attempted to find out how MVF compares with a neighbouring district (Mahaboobnagar). Unfortunately, due to highly unreliable data in the other district, no conclusions can be made. The study does, however, indicate that the teacher -pupil ratio is more or less the same (Ranga Reddy¹⁶ 38.7:1 and Mahaboobnagar 37:1). Two aspects should be taken into consideration:

- At the time when the project started up, Ranga Reddy actually had a ratio of 76.5:1 compared to Mahaboobnagar's 49.5:1. Provision of para-teachers and teachers from Government, MVF and the community has brought the ratio down.
- Mahaboobnagar has not experienced similar enrolment drives and school based data has not taken existence of child labour into consideration.

12 The financial review

12.1 Administrative Structure and Routines

M.V. Foundation is a Registered Educational and Charitable Trust registered on 7th March, 1981 to carry out the objectives as set out in the Trust Deed. It is headed by a Board of Trustees which comprises a Managing Trustee, Secretary Trustee, Treasurer and 9 other members totalling 12 trustees (though clause 20 of the Trust Deed states that the minimum number of trustees should not be less than 14). The Board of Trustees further has a Programme Advisory Committee consisting of the Managing Trustee, Secretary Trustee, Treasurer Trustee; 3 Coordinators and the Administrative and Finance Officer which meets periodically to assess the working of the organization and provide leadership and guidance to the various programmes being implemented by the Trust. Further there is also a Finance Committee comprising the Managing Trustee,

¹⁵ "Girl child bonded labour in cotton seeds fields". Dr D. Venkateshwarlu
"M.V. Foundation - Education as Empowerment", Sucheta Mahajan
"Profile of school going and non-school going children, Mominpet Mandal". Research and Development Services
"A study on enrolment and retention pattern" Research and Development Services
"Impact on girl' child's enrolment on work sharing and distribution pattern in families". Research and Development Services.

¹⁶ Data from Ranga Reddy District is based on a sample of the 16 Mandals in which MVF operates, and should therefore not be generalised to the whole district. Data from Mahaboobnagar is collected from 16 Mandals, which are believed to be comparable with the MVF Mandals on most socio-economic indicators.

Secretary Trustee, Treasurer Trustee, Coordinators, Assistant Coordinators, Administrative and Finance Officer, Financial Consultant and Field Accounts Incharge which meets every 15 days to assess the financial position, exercise budgetary controls and review all expenditures.

12.2 Accounting and Budgetary system

The organization follows the mercantile system of accounting. However the interest income on FDR with banks is being accounted for at the time of realization. The accounts are being maintained on computer at the Head Office using the EX package and were found to be in order. Further manual documents are being maintained at Nodal office at Shankarpally. These were also reviewed and found to be in order.

Budgetary controls and review of expenditures is done both at Field and at Head quarters by the Finance Committee.

13.2.1 Project Development Accounting & Reporting

Under the present system of reporting, the annual budgets and disbursements are approved in the Annual Meeting between NORAD and UNDP.

All contributions are administered by UNDP in accordance with UNDP regulations and directives applying to their normal procedures for the execution of its projects. Project management and expenditures are also governed by the regulations, rules and directives of UNDP (*vide Article III to main agreement between the Government of The Kingdom of Norway and the United Nations Development Programme, India*).

UNDP has further entered into a service contract No. SC/97/001 dated 14th January, 1997 with MV Foundation to implement work plans as approved in the Annual Review meetings. The project has been aligned with UNDP reporting systems whereby MVF is required to submit Disbursement Reports (DRs) in respect of expenditures incurred in the previous quarter by the 15th day of the first month of the next quarter and request for advance of funds in the UNDP prescribed format. The MVF staff has been provided with training to maintain the accounting system, as prescribed by UNDP.

Since UNDP maintains its records (both receipts and payments) on a US\$ basis, MVF is expected to submit DRs both in Rupees and US\$ equivalent on a quarterly basis.

Observations

It is observed that though the original service contract dated 14th January, 1997 was for a period of 5 months this was further extended by another seven months and subsequently extended up to 31st March, 1999 (*vide amendment No. 2 dated 3rd March, 1999*). The amendment No. 2 also stated that UNDP was making efforts to sign a long-term

agreement for the full duration of the project, which would supersede this service contract and its amendments.

No such agreement was available on record at the time of review neither any amendment extending the period beyond 31st March 1999 was available on record.

The organization has been submitting disbursement reports to UNDP which have been reviewed by the Management Auditors and no major irregularities have been observed.

13.2.2 Internal Control/Procedures

MVF does not have any formal accounting manual. The system of transfer of funds and reporting from the field has been worked out over a period of time and is in place.

At the Mandal level indents are made in duplicate for groceries, stationery and cash by the Mandal In-charges and forwarded to the Shankarpally Nodal office. At the Nodal office these are reviewed by the Coordinator and approved in consultation with the Field Accounts Officer. Consolidated indents for all 18 Mandals are prepared and sent to the Secunderabad Head Office for approval of the Finance Committee. Upon approval amounts are released in instalments to the Nodal office.

Procedures at Shankarpally office

- 1) There is a register for Bank receipts and Bills submitted which the Chief Accountant maintains.
- 2) Cash withdrawn from bank is entered in a Petty Cash book and advances are issued to Mandals against advance receipts, which are entered in individual ledgers.
- 3) When bills are submitted for advances these are taken into the bills received register chronologically and simultaneously notings are done in the individual advance accounts. These are also initialled by the giver in the bills register.
- 4) After scrutiny and checking by the accounts staff they are taken into the bills submitted to head Office register, which is maintained project wise.
- 5) Project wise list of bills are prepared in duplicate from the bills submitted to Head Office register and along with supporting documents submitted to Head Office for accounting entries.

Observations

- It is observed that all the above entries in the registers are cross-referenced and were found updated on the date of visit.
- The Management Auditors have commented that the internal controls are generally adequate in the light of the extent of reliance placed thereupon.

13.2.1 Purchase Policies

Purchases are made after obtaining required indents and are from reputed suppliers. The purchases for provisions are made from standard suppliers who have been supplying for several years and take the responsibility of supplying all materials to site. For this purpose they are given a copy of the various indents of supplies, which are received by Store Keepers at the various sites. These are enclosed as supports for bills, which are made indent - wise to allocate amounts to various projects for accounting purposes. We were further informed that the suppliers are usually given a month's credit and all payments are made through account payee's cheques.

Observations

- It was observed that as the suppliers are known no quotations are required in advance. We are informed that the accounts department at Head quarters does market surveys regularly. It is recommended that this system be formalized by obtaining quotations and preparation of comparative statements to ensure reasonable and competitive prices for various supplies.
- As required under Article V of the main agreement, ownership of equipment, supplies and other property financed from the contributions shall be under the custody of UNDP during project implementation and shall be handed over to the project authorities at the end of the project. It is observed that the following Assets have been purchased by MVF as recorded in the Fixed Assets Register.

Furniture & Fixtures	INR 205,549.00
Computers	INR 468,041.99
Vehicles	INR1,282,201.21

TOTAL INR 1,955,792.20
=====

All the above assets are in the name of MV Foundation as they have been purchased locally. This is not in conformity with the agreement and any benefits from export prices have not been realized. Although they have been entered in the Fixed Assets register complete details such as asset numbers are not recorded. Further, of the above assets a Computer and Printer which were not insured were stolen in the year 1997. Though an FIR with the local police has been lodged and UNDP was informed about the loss, no recovery on this account could be made. As the equipment was not insured no insurance claim could be lodged. The case is remains pending. Subsequently all assets have been insured by the organization.

13.2. 4 Banking Arrangements

MVF maintains one FCRA account No. 4945 at Bank of Baroda, Marredpally Branch for all foreign contributions received.

Besides the above there are separate accounts project wise for the various projects being implemented by MVF at Bank of Baroda, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank.

For the UNDP grant a separate bank account is maintained as A/c. No. 9273 at Bank of Baroda, Marredpally Branch. All contributions received from UNDP are deposited to this account. It may be noted that UNDP is not treated as “Foreign Source” for the purpose of The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 wide notification No. S.O. 125(E), dated 23rd. February, 1999, hence the provisions relating to the above Act are not applicable for reporting to The Ministry of Home affairs, Government of India.

Funds Transfer Mechanism:

The bank accounts at Secunderabad are operated under the joint signature of any two of the following:

- Managing Trustee, Secretary Trustee & Treasurer Trustee
- At the field office at Shankarpally the bank account is operated jointly by the field accounts in-charge and one Trustee.

12.3 Audit Practices

13.3.1 Statutory

The organization is subject to statutory audit as per the provisions of the Indian Income Tax Act, 1961, The Indian Trust Act, 1882 and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976. Besides as required by Article VI of the main agreement of this project it is subject to internal and external auditing procedures provided for in the financial regulations, rules and directives of UNDP.

The annual statutory audit is conducted by M/s.Ramanathan & Rao, Chartered Accountants, Secunderabad who have been the auditors from the inception of the Trust and their appointment is renewed every year by the Board. We have observed that the necessary resolution for their appointment for the financial year 1999-2000 was available on record.

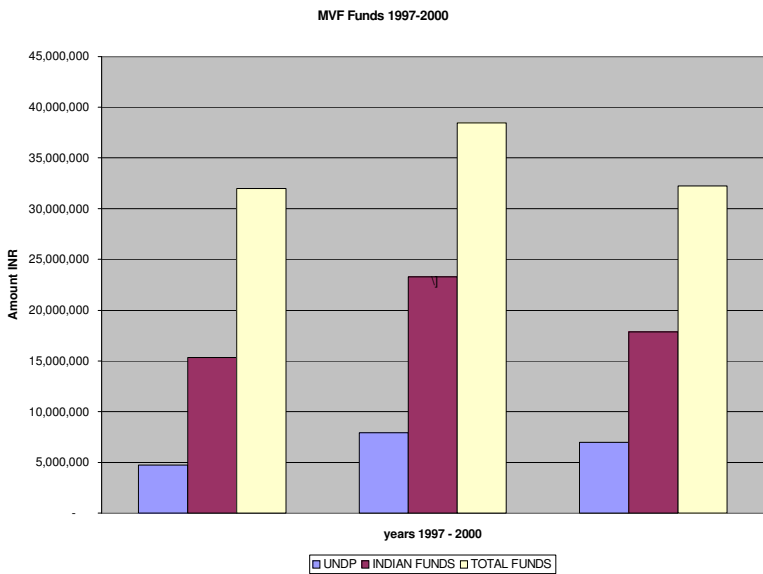
UNDP has conducted a management audit of the project on a yearly basis by professional firms of Chartered Accountants. The Management Audit Reports for the years 1997, 1998 & 1999 were produced for our verification and no major adverse remarks were to be found.

13.3.2 Internal Audit

The organization proposes to introduce a system of Internal Audit with effect from 1st April 2001. Presently M/s. Shankar & Raja, Chartered Accountants, Secunderabad have been engaged as consultants for MVF Foundation since 1991. They are involved in formulation of accounting procedures, internal control systems and checks, overseeing the actual accounting, participating in budget/expenditure meetings, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements like Income Tax , FCRA etc. monitoring compliance with reporting requirements of the funders and preparation of annual financial statements.

12.4 Funding pattern

An overview of MVF over the years 1997 to 2000 during the year1997-98 reflects MVF’s dependence on Foreign Contributions to the extent of 52.05% of its total receipts whereas the Indian sources were 47.95%.

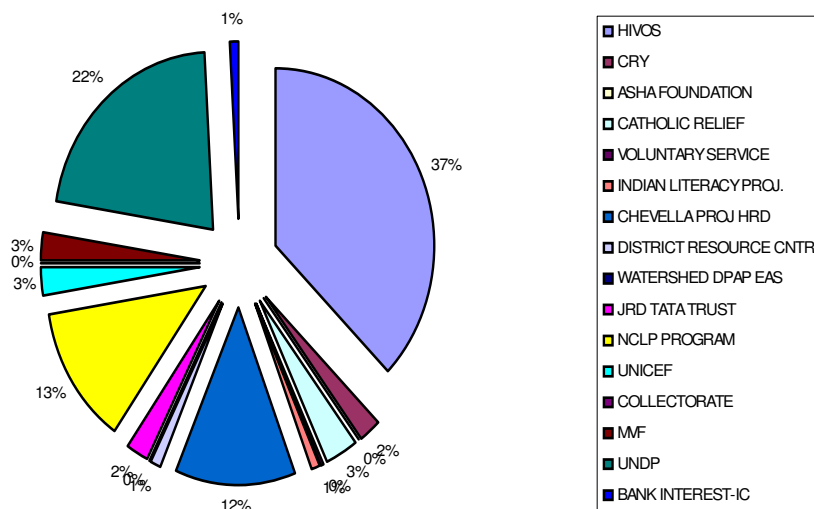


There has been a decline in this ratio whereby during 1999-2000 Foreign Contributions comprised only 44.57% against the Indian component of 55.43%. It is observed that in all three years the major foreign funding was from HIVOS i.e.92.13%; 91.26% & 83.84% respectively of the total Foreign Contributions received during the three years. Amongst the Indian donors UNDP funds comprised

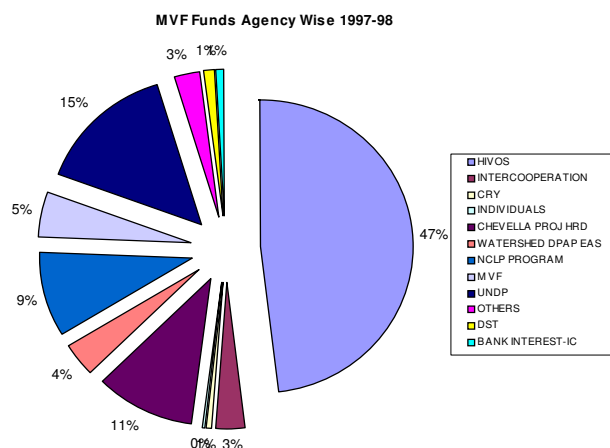
30.78%; 34.01% & 39.11% of the total Indian Funds received during the years 1997-98, 1998-99 & 1999-2000 respectively.

The total funds received by MVF during the years 1997-98 to 1999-2000 exceeded 30 million Indian rupees of which the UNDP contributions comprised only

MVF Agencywise 99-00



14.76%; 20.63% and 21.68% respectively.



The four major funders during the 3 years were HIVOS; Ministry of Human Resource Development; NCLP and UNDP. As can be seen the number of funders has increased from 12 to 16 between the years 1997-2000. The number is expected to increase even further, as more and more donors are interested in supporting projects that combat child labour.

12.5 Utilization

Consolidated Statement of Funds Disbursed and Utilized in Indian						
Rupees as on 31st. March, 2000						
Year	Funds Recd.	Funds Transfd.	Expenditure		Balance	
	by UNDP	to MVF	MVF	UNDP	MVF	UNDP
1996	4,032,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
1997	6,500,000.00	5,004,060.00	5,004,061.59	257,887.17	(1.59)	5,270,052.83
1998	1,529,912.00	-	-	-	-	-
1998	5,000,000.00	4,483,600.00	4,235,559.05	395,377.00	248,039.36	6,920,987.83
1999	4,500,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
1999	1,900,000.00	8,587,875.89	8,679,392.23	306,754.52	156,523.02	4,426,357.42
2000	6,499,997.00	5,787,097.29	5,916,624.56	960,554.67	26,995.75	4,178,702.46
	29,961,909.00	23,862,633.18	23,835,637.43	1,920,573.36	26,995.75	4,178,702.46

The total approvals for the project including addendum is as under:

Main Agreement	INR 27,522,497.00
Addendum I	INR 5,000,000.00
Addendum II	INR 1,900,000.00
Total	INR 34,422,497.00

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Total Funds transferred to UNDP INR 29,961,909.00
 Total Expenditure by UNDP & MVF INR 25,756,210.79
 Total Balance with UNDP & MVF INR 4,205,698.21

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COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED AGAINST BUDGET				
UNDP				
Account Head	1997-Dec.2000			
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Utilization %
National Consultants	335,000.00	251,504.00	83,496.00	75.08
Travel National Consultant	59,000.00	43,863.30	15,136.70	74.34
Board & Lodge	371,500.00	47,501.00	323,999.00	12.79
Admin. Support (Part time)	493,500.00	163,068.30	330,431.70	33.04
Official Travel	448,000.00	14,410.00	433,590.00	3.22
UNDP Monitoring Mission	218,568.00	356,989.32	(138,421.32)	163.33
Evaluation	58,500.00	25,000.00	33,500.00	42.74
Audit	50,000.00	-	50,000.00	0.00
Grassroot Consultation	1,234,716.00	30,010.00	1,204,706.00	2.43
Miscellaneous	533,500.00	363,928.44	169,571.56	68.22
Equipment	-	49,299.00	(49,299.00)	
Baseline Survey(MVF)	725,000.00	-	725,000.00	0.00
Total Main Agreement	4,527,284.00	1,345,573.36	3,181,710.64	29.72
Addendum II	575,000.00	575,000.00	-	100
Grand Total	5,102,284.00	1,920,573.36	3,181,710.64	

Observations

- Amounts directly incurred by UNDP as given above have been based on statements received from UNDP in this regard.
- It is observed that UNDP utilized only 29.72% of its component in the main budget during the four years 1997-2000. In most cases there is gross under-utilization except for the Monitoring Mission where there was over - utilization to the tune of 163.33%
- Under Article II para 2 any interest income attributable to the contribution shall be credited to the UNDP New Delhi account and shall be utilized for the project in consultation with Norway.
- As regards interest earned by UNDP, based on calculations at Headquarters, the interest earned on this project was to the tune of US \$ 511 and US \$6267 during the years 1996 and 1997 respectively. The figures for subsequent years are not available within the UNDP office in New Delhi. We are informed that part of this interest was utilized for conducting Logical Framework Approach (LFA) training to NGOs as approved by NORAD in the annual meeting held on 25th February, 1998. The exact amount spent by UNDP was not readily available at the New Delhi office of UNDP.

COMPARITIVE STATEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED AGAINST BUDGET			
MVF			
Account Head	1997-Dec. 2000		
	Budget	Actual Exp.	Variance
Retention of Children	5,643,456.00	5,618,846.28	24,609.72
Bridge Course	8,455,954.00	8,100,039.84	355,914.16
Campaign & Advocacy	1,160,250.00	1,223,992.85	(63,742.85)
Film	550,000.00	526,805.34	23,194.66
Administration Cost	1,923,528.00	2,601,615.13	(678,087.13)
Contingencies	354,664.00	355,527.92	(863.92)
Sub Total	18,087,852.00	18,426,827.36	(338,975.36)
Addendum I	5,000,000.00	4,923,722.00	76,278.00
Addendum II	1,325,000.00	485,088.07	839,911.93
Total	24,412,852.00	23,835,637.43	577,214.57

12.6 Analysis of costs

Particulars	Projected	Actual	Variance
RETENTION OF CHILDREN	INR 5,643,456.00	INR 5,618,846.00	
No. of Children not in school	1393	1401 put in school	+ 8
Cost per Child for Retention in Schools	INR 4,051.00	INR 4,010.00	INR 41
BRIDGE COURSE	INR 8,455,954.00		
No. of Children for bridge Course	1200	1265	+ 65
Cost per Child for Bridge Course	INR 7,046.00	INR 6,403.00	INR 643.00

Observations

- The above figures have been extracted from audited utilization certificates submitted by MVF to us and to UNDP.
- It is observed that though most expenses were within budget there was an over expenditure under Administration Cost due to certain non recurring expenditures during the year 1997. We are informed that the total expenditure under this project (MVF component) will not exceed the original allocation as given in the main agreement.
- On going through the management audit reports it was observed that in the years 1998 and 1999 there was a delay in submission of financial reports and requests for advances by MVF in all the four quarters. We recommend that quarterly financial reports should invariably be submitted in time so that the funds are released as per plan so as to avoid any bottleneck in the implementation of the project.

- Interest earned on the grant is dealt with under Article 10 to Amendment No. 1 to Service contract No. SC/97/001 dated 14th. January, 1997 viz., “Based on financial requirements on a monthly basis, MVF would be expected to park the funds in fixed deposits and remit the interest earned to UNDP in the form of a Demand Draft on a quarterly basis.”

It is observed that interest amounting to Rs. 926/- has been earned by MVF on their Savings Bank account. Also MVF had a Fixed Deposit account of Rs. 1,575,000/- made out of the funds provided by Addendum I under the heading of Institutional Support. The position of interest earned on this Fixed Deposit is not available in the project accounts. This institutional support proposal submitted by MVF was to take care of contingencies arising from more demands upon the MVF to deal with issued related to the adolescent girl child. This fund was envisaged to remain with MVF to use as a contingency grant to encourage additional resources from community, panchayats, donors & Government. Although this was a one time grant the manner in which it was used was to be reported throughout the life of the main project. It is observed that no report for utilization of this fund or the manner thereof has been submitted so far.

SUMMARY OF TOTAL BUDGET AGAINST PROJECTED SAVINGS UNDP COMPONENT

Account Head	Total Budget	Actual Upto Dece.2000	Funds Available	Budget 2001 Proposed	Projected Savings
National Consultants	350,000.00	251,504.00	98,496.00	80,000.00	18,496.00
Travel National Consultant	45,000.00	43,863.30	1,136.70	42,000.00	(40,863.30)
Board & Lodge	490,000.00	47,501.00	442,499.00	45,000.00	397,499.00
Admin. Support (Part time)	450,000.00	163,068.30	286,931.70	222,000.00	64,931.70
Official Travel	696,000.00	14,410.00	681,590.00	50,000.00	631,590.00
UNDP Monitoring Mission	233,920.00	356,989.32	(123,069.32)	90,000.00	(213,069.32)
Evaluation	117,000.00	25,000.00	92,000.00	-	92,000.00
Audit	100,000.00	-	100,000.00	-	100,000.00
Grassroots Consultation	875,000.00	30,010.00	844,990.00	200,000.00	644,990.00
Miscellaneous	600,000.00	363,928.44	236,071.56	180,000.00	56,071.56
Equipment	-	49,299.00	(49,299.00)	-	(49,299.00)
Baseline Survey(MVF)	-	-	-	-	-
Baseline Survey(Media & Adv.)	-	-	-	1,226,300.00	(1,226,300.00)
Policy Studies	-	-	-	475,700.00	(475,700.00)
Total Main Agreement	3,956,920.00	1,345,573.36	2,611,346.64	2,611,000.00	346.64
Addendum II	575,000.00	575,000.00	-	-	-
Grand Total	4,531,920.00	1,920,573.36	2,611,346.64	2,611,000.00	346.64

It is observed that though UNDP could spend only INR 1,345,573/- during 1997-2000 out of the allocated budget of INR 4,527,284/- (29.72%), UNDP proposes to spend INR

2,611,000/- during the year 2001 (the entire unspent budget) subject to approval of the annual meeting. Out of this INR 1,280,300/- has already been spent during the first quarter 2001 on a Baseline Survey for Media & Advocacy (1,226,300/-) and Secretarial Services (54,000/-)

Summary of Total Budget against Projected Savings MVF Component

Account Head	Total Budget	Actual upto Dec. 2000	Funds Available	Budget 2001	Projected Savings
Retention of Children	7,423,802	5,618,846.28	1,804,955.72	1,780,346.00	24,609.72
Bridge Course	11,082,549	8,100,039.84	2,982,509.16	2,626,595.00	355,914.16
Campaign & Advocacy	1,526,275	1,223,992.85	302,282.15	366,025.00	(63,742.85)
Film	550,000	526,805.34	23,194.66		23,194.66
Administration Cost	2,520,881	2,601,615.13	(80,734.13)	259,241.56	(339,975.69)
Contingencies	462,070	355,527.92	106,542.08	106,542.08	-
Sub Total	23,565,577	18,426,827.36	5,138,749.64	5,138,749.64	
Addendum I	5,000,000	4,923,722.00	76,278.00	76,278.00	-
Addendum II	1,325,000	485,088.07	839,911.93	839,911.93	-
GRAND TOTAL	29,890,577	23,835,637.43	6,054,939.57	6,054,939.57	-

Observations

Though MVF had exceeded budget utilization during the year 1997, the budget has been readjusted and hence will not exceed the originally sanctioned budget under the main agreement.

13 Sustainability

13.1 Programme sustainability

The sustainability factor in MVF's programme relies on the fact that MVF has encouraged institution building to ensure that these institutions carry the programme further in a systematic and structured manner as their own programme. The other factor is that MVF has effectively tapped existing government structures and resources to meet some of the important requirements of the programme.

The community has made significant contributions to the programme as the goal of the programme to withdraw children from work and ensure education for all has become the community's own agenda. There is a promising aspect in the shape of community funds and contributions.

MVF has always functioned with the conviction that the government belongs to the people and is an instrument of the people. Therefore, linking some of the programme elements to the government's existing schemes ensures sustained support to these elements. Programme elements like the use of abandoned government buildings for camps and bridge courses, utilising government hostels to ensure education for children belonging to the SC and OBC communities, has not only been cost-effective, but has put the system in place for the future. MVF has to continue influencing government to change its policies and make them pro-children and to use its infrastructure and resources more judiciously and optimally.

The organisation has not created any fancy structures for programme management and this goes to show that the programme can be sustained with minimal investments.

The Bridge courses have become a part of the formal school system in Andhra Pradesh. MVF has created a demand for education. However, unless the demand is met with an adequate supply in terms of access to schools, adequate numbers of teachers and quality education, there is every likelihood of meeting a set back. At the moment, MVF is meeting the need for more teachers in the formal schools by providing para-teachers. But how long will it continue to do so, where will the resources come from and can this really be sustained? In other words, MVF has to make concerted efforts at ensuring that the government takes on its responsibility to meet the requirement of improving the school system. The question of access and quality will have to be addressed by MVF with greater focus.

While the organisation continues to play an important role in strengthening and streamlining the various committees working towards elimination of child labour, it has to ensure that these institutions are empowered to manage on their own and link up to the government.

Organising people through institution building and creating empowered and decentralised institutions are essential mechanisms that ensure sustainability and accountability. However, too many forums and committees can lead to several complexities and as these institutions grow there will be complexities within the group. MVF must keep in mind that it cannot stay on to deal with these complexities.

13.2 Institutional sustainability

It should be noted that this review team has only looked at those institutional aspects that are relevant to assessing the UNDP/NORAD funded project. But MVF activities are not limited to this. There are other donors involved in addressing child labour issues and there are other projects, which are not so focused on child labour issues, but which still operate under the same institutional framework. The review has not had the opportunity to address the linkages between these or to look at MVF as a whole.

The fact that MVF is operating different projects, one women-focused and one with a focus on child labour, receives funds from a number of donors for different activities, gives a somewhat unclear picture of the complexity of the organisation.

MVF seems to have an ability to institutionalise lessons and experiences while maintaining the momentum of continuous expansion. The in-built organisational mechanisms for collaboration with others, networking and advocacy have enabled MVF to reach a large number of villages in Ranga Reddy district. The strength of the organisation lies in its organisational abilities to deal with advocacy and social mobilisation at all levels of the political and administrative system as well as with the communities at large.

MVF has demonstrated an ability to implement its objectives based on a transparent and inclusive-oriented decentralised management structure. The organisation has, to a great extent, the required skills to carry out its operation. It is not dependent upon external assistance, but it welcomes and has access to resource persons who can help in training, mobilisation and advocacy. MVF has not moved into new areas in which it has little competence, but has instead expanded its operations by sending volunteers to other programmes where they can assist others to do what they are doing. MVF has now reached a position where it can send 200 volunteers, 20-30 leaders of Gram Panchayats, cluster organisers etc. to other areas at a week's notice.

The decentralised management system has led to the development of good managerial and administrative capacities at all levels of the organisation. Thus, staff does not need to be told what to do, but can take action and be quite confident that they are doing the right things. There is also a lot of sharing of experience and horizontal and vertical communication mechanisms, which help staff feel a part of a larger organisation and that they share the same missions and goals.

13.3 Financial sustainability

MVF has not built up any expensive infrastructure. Abandoned government houses and facilities are always used. MVF does not pay any rent for these

houses, but undertakes rehabilitation and maintenance equivalent to the cost of an estimated rent. MVF hands over buildings to the government according to requirements. The absence of costly investments has reduced running costs and with the inputs from the government, MVF's effort has been financially sustainable.

14 Replication

The empowering management approach characterising MVF should in principle be transferable across states and to other organisations. Diffusing responsibility and decision-making to the operating levels and autonomy and control for the individual, for staff and volunteers alike are necessary qualities if the goal of eliminating child labour is to be achieved. At the same time the organisation is extremely transparent and open to new ideas and suggestions.

Other organisations might find things to learn from the manner in which MVF is interacting with the bureaucracy. It has not set up any parallel structures. It has invariably utilised funds available under normal government programs, government schools and other institutions. Again, it has gone out of the way to involve government teacher groups and has been particularly successful in establishing a government teachers' forum against child labour.

The messages conveyed throughout the organisation are not complex. MVF simply states that it is possible to get children free from work and into school and that there are ways to do it. This does not mean that the complexity of the reality, the poverty situation, gender relations and caste prejudices are denied. The organisation just tries to convince people that it is possible to make changes in one area without having to deal with all aspects of the complexity of the world simultaneously. Up to now, at least, this has worked well and could also be transferred to other organisations.

It should nevertheless be noted that the review team does not conclude that the project automatically can be implemented in urban areas (cities) or in other states. A number of factors come into play. Of particular concern to the team is the absence of a clear focus on the quality of education offered. Both in Nawabpet and in the other 16 Mandals, there are few children who pass on to higher classes. To use Prof. C.J. Daswani's terminology, the "pull-out", "push-out" and "stay-out factors" remain a problem. While MVF has taken the community in Nawabpet a large step forward in recognising the need for education, there is still a long way to go before these efforts are sustained at all levels and within all Mandals.

UNDP reports¹⁷ that in the case of MVF the principles of a non-negotiable agenda have been more effective than in for example Uttar Pradesh¹⁸. In that state, lack of

¹⁷ UNDP's response to Lexow's queries

political commitment, caste prejudices, lack of sufficient school infrastructure, and a very large proportion of the school age population who are not in school, have made it difficult to use the MVF approach of getting children mainstreamed into the formal school system. In Andhra Pradesh the government has been more responsive, and Andhra Pradesh also has a system of Social Welfare Hostels for children, which has been effectively utilised for mainstreaming children. This is one of the reasons why children could be mainstreamed so quickly. What is feasible in Andhra Pradesh may not be feasible elsewhere. One precondition is to have unutilised strength in the formal school system.

15 Future scenarios

There are some very different options available for the development of a future programme within MVF. The critical choices relate to the needs for expansion, replication and developing new models or pilot initiatives.

Geographical expansion is the preferable option from the point of view of the Government of AP, as expressed by the DPEP programme in-charge. By setting up a similar programme the Government might get assistance in activities where it considers itself incapable of cope with the demand; social mobilisation, advocacy and changing community perceptions of the school system. The government acknowledges that it has a bad record in reaching out to the community. This is part of the political- administrative dilemmas in which top-down bureaucratic structures seldom are found to be conducive for social mobilisation in its real sense.

At the same time DPEP is to be expanded both geographically and in scale. The plan is to upgrade DPEP from the existing Class I to V to encompass also Class 7. The success of DPEP is highly dependent upon a high level of community involvement, and therefore the Government wants NGOs such as MVF to take on this role.

But there are also strong arguments against this option. It should be kept in mind that MVF indeed wants its approaches and ideologies to expand all over the state of Andhra Pradesh and for that matter to other states in India. The question is how, and with what methods. MVF does not see itself as an organisation whose only aim is to help the government implement its own programmes. Its goal is not to become just another wing of the government system. While MVF works along the lines of ensuring equity in access to elementary education, it alone cannot take upon itself the role to make sure that this happens everywhere. MVF is already involved in a total of 500 villages. To set up a similar project in other districts would not only be costly and resource demanding, it would necessitate a huge management and administration that MVF feels is counterproductive.

¹⁸ CREDA

Instead MVF sees its organisation as a movement where the ideas and approaches can be spread from Ranga Reddy district to other places through the training of others who can take up similar initiatives elsewhere.

Furthermore, MVF does not intend to follow just in the footsteps of the government's strategies to develop DPEP into a Class I to Class VII programme. It wants to be ahead of the government. Through its work, MVF has shown that there is a model that can be replicated by others, and now the organisation wants to move forward in a dynamic process and develop models that can reinforce and consolidate existing results and at the same time expand its activities into higher levels (Class I-X).

The approach MVF envisages is to establish some nodal high schools (Class VII-X) to which several primary schools will be linked as satellite schools. The intention is to ensure that children will pass from primary levels to higher levels of education. In India, Class X is the benchmark for all future options in terms of further education and job opportunities. It is at this stage that children can make choices for future education, whether it is in academic or vocational fields. In the majority of cases it is Class X that is considered a minimum qualification level for applying for the lowest positions in the government system. It is Class X that would give a person some status in the community.

A critical element in MVF strategies would be to strengthen school management committees and enhance further collaboration between schools and parents. This is seen as one way of ensuring accountability of the school to the community and to improve quality in the education.

The organisation has to concentrate more on girl child issues. Girls have traditionally had extremely few opportunities to move over to higher classes. Just providing them with a limited number of years of schooling would not change their low status in the society in any significant ways. In view of the profound social transformation that is needed in India, MVF believes that access to education is one of the few effective means that eventually can change the situation for girls and women.

Keeping girls in school also keeps parents from marrying them off at an early age. Even after finishing Class X they would be too young (14-15 years of age) to be married under the Indian Minimum Age for Marriage, which is 18 for girls. Staying longer in school can prevent them from being married at the age of 10 or 12, and gradually more alternatives would also be open to them in terms of further education or occupations.

Another option is to become more focused on training. Expansion of the approach would still be the centrepiece of MVF's work. Already today there is a great demand from people all over the state to be exposed to MVF's programme and to take part in the training offered there. In the month of February MVF received more than 1000 visitors to the programme. The DPEP alone sends a couple of hundred of its staff to MVF every week. There is great demand for MVF to send its volunteers to other parts

of the state and strengthen programmes implemented by others. The number is increasing every week. MVF welcomes them all and does not feel that this is stretching the capacity of the staff too much. Much of the reason for this is that this sort of training is very field-based. There is a concern, however, that the training centre facilities must be strengthened and physically expanded.

At the same time there is a need for expanding the concepts, approaches and operations to facilitate other NGOs to take up relevant elements of MVF's work. According to the organisation, there are already many grassroot organisations or community based organisations (CBOs), which have the potential to play a vital role in social mobilisation in other areas. A tricky question is whether it is possible to conduct social mobilisation without any projects at all. Both MVF and UNDP feel that there must be some linkages to smaller feeder camps as platforms for helping children to be mainstreamed into the formal school system. The concern is to find an appropriate funding mechanism for these smaller organisations. For MVF to become a "mother" organisation for all of them might be one solution. However, this might also cause some unfortunate dependency relations which in the long run may distort the positive interaction MVF has with all its partners at present. For UNDP to take on additional responsibilities to provide funds for CBOs would probably be to take on too many practical responsibilities which could compete with UNDP's real additional comparative advantages which are advocacy and influencing policies at large.

Another option is to move into a broader agenda. Many MVF staff felt that there is a need to look closer into gender discrimination and issues such as girl child marriage. The issue of pursuing strategies with explicit aims to improve the quality of education in the classroom was also discussed during the review. So far MVF has not been much involved in direct quality improvements of teaching-learning aspects. For MVF, it is a question whether they have necessary competence to be involved in such matters. MVF feels that its competence lies in community-school relationship and social mobilisation. In MVF it is a concern that moving into broader community development issues and a women's agenda would easily divert the attention and focus away from the importance of getting access to formal schools. It is felt that the single-minded approach of dealing only with school-related issues is greatly contributing to the success the organisation can see today.

Yet there is a comprehensive planning context, which involves more than a few individuals. Activities are well co-ordinated although there is not always a strict precise path that everybody has to follow in a pre-determined manner.

Appendix 1 List of people met

M. VENKATARANGAIYA FOUNDATION

1. Dr. Shantha Sinha
Executive Director,
M.V. Foundation.
2. Mr. R. Venkat Reddy
Co-ordinator,
M.V. Foundation.
3. Mr. Raju
Co-ordinator,
M.V. Foundation.
4. Anantha Laxmi
Mandal Incharge
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
5. Ms. Krishna Veni
Mandal Core Group Volunteer,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
6. Ms. Rama Devi
Mandal Core Group Volunteer,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
7. Mr. Chandram
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
8. Mr. P. Prakash
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
9. Ms. Suvarna

- Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
10. Ms. Durga
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 11. Mr. Kishtaiah
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 12. Mr. K. Malesh
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 13. Mr. Johnny
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 14. Mr. E. Narasimmha
Cluster Organiser,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 15. Mr. Ramulu
Documentation Incharge,
Nawabpet Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 16. Mr. Swamy
Camp-in-charge,
Buys' Residential Bridge Course Camp,
Vikarabad Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.
 17. Ms. Shantha
Camp In-charge,
Girls' Residential Bridge Course Camp,
Village Alur,
Chevella Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.

18. Met over 50 women's group organisers from all the 17 Mandals in which M.V. Foundation works, during the Mahila Organisers' Core Group Members meeting held in Vikarabad Mandal, District Ranga Reddy, Andhra Pradesh.
19. Ms. Usha Shriram
Administration and Finance,
M.V. Foundation.
20. Mr. J. Raja
Financial Chartered Analyst – Consultant,
M.V. Foundation.
21. Mr. Rangannathan
Field Accountant,
M.V. Foundation.
22. All Accounts Staff at M.V. Foundation Head Office and Shankarpally District Office.
23. Mr. Bharat
Administration In-charge,
Chevella Training Centre,
Chevella Mandal,
M.V. Foundation.

Youth committee

24. Mr. Prakasham
25. Mr. Yadaiya
26. Mr. Prabhu
27. Mr. Bhaskar
28. Mr. Sangamesh

Mothers

29. Ms. Shantamma - I
30. Ms. Anusuya
31. Ms. Laxmi
32. Ms. Nagamani
33. Ms Shantamma - II

Gram (Village) Panchayat Leaders

34. Ms. Chandramma
Sarpanch (Head) - Gram Panchayat,

Village Meenapally Kalan,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.

35. Mr. Kalyan Rao
Sarpanch (Head) - Gram Panchayat,
Village Nawabpe,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.

School Education Committee (SEC)

36. Mr. Vema Reddy,
SEC Member,
Village Meenapally Kalan,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.

Parents Teacher Association (PTA)

37. Mr. Anantaiyah
Ex-PTA Member,
Village Meenapally Kalan,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
38. Mr. Shiva Kumar
Head Master,
Government Upper Primary School,
Village Meenapally Kalan,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
39. Mr. B. Janardhan
Present School In-charge,
Zila Parishad (District) High School,
Village Nawabpet,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.

40. Mr. Anantha Reddy
Teacher,
Zila Parishad High School,
Village Nawabpet,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
41. Mr. Ananthaiaya
Para Teacher,
Zila Parishad High School,
Village Nawabpet,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
42. Mr. K. Sudhakar
Para Teacher,
Zila Parishad High School,
Village Nawabpet,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
43. Mr. M. Bhaskar
Para Teacher,
Zila Parishad High School,
Village Nawabpet,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
44. Mr. K. Praveen Kumar
Para Teacher,
Zila Parishad High School,
Village Nawabpet,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
45. Mr. Vijay Acharya
Para Teacher,
Zila Parishad High School,
Village Nawabpet,

Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.

Bal Karmika Vimochana Vidhayak – Teachers’ Forum for Liberation of Child Labour

46. Mr. Janardhan

Headmaster, Government High School.

47. Mr. Sheikh Hussain

Headmaster, Government Upper Primary School.

48. Mr. Bhaskar Rao

Teacher, Government Primary School.

49. Mr. Venkataiya

Teacher, Government Primary School.

50. Mr. Anjaiaya

Teacher, Government Upper Primary School.

51. Mr. Varakumar

Headmaster, Government Primary School.

52. Mr. S.R. Ray

Principal Secretary,
Panchayat Raj & Rural Development,
Former Principal Secretary – department of Social Welfare,
Government of Andhra Pradesh.

53. Mr. M. Nagarjuna

State Project Director, DPEP,
Ex-Officio Secretary to Government Education Department,
Government of Andhra Pradesh.

54. Mr. T. Vijay Kumar

State Project Co-ordinator,
Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty,
District Poverty Initiatives Programme (DPIP),
Government of Andhra Pradesh.

55. Mr. Srikant Reddy

Mandal Development Officer,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.

56. Ms. Jyoti
Political Leader,
Telugu Desam Party,
Village Meenapally Kalan,
Nawabpet Mandal,
District Ranga Reddy,
Andhra Pradesh.
57. Ms. Sudha Murlu
Project Officer,
Child Protection,
Unicef, Hyderabad,
Andhra Pradesh.
58. Mr. M. Rajesh Kumar
Director (Admn.),
Research & Development Services,
Hyderabad,
Andhra Pradesh.
59. Dr. Neera Burra
Assistant Resident Representative,
UNDP,
New Delhi.
60. Dr. Vasudev Rao
Consultant
UNDP,
New Delhi.
61. Mr. Radha Krishnan
Programme Officer,
UNDP,
New Delhi.
62. Mr. G. J. Pinto
Programme Officer,
Child Protection,
UNICEF,
New Delhi.

Appendix 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW

OF IND 059

(Social Mobilisation for getting Children out of Work and into School)

Background

On 6.12.1996, an agreement between **NORAD and UNDP** was signed regarding support to the project "Support for Social Mobilisation for getting children out of work and into School" for a period of five years for NOK 5.119.184. On 14.12.1998, addendum 1 to the Agreement was signed for NOK 880.000.

The overall objective of the project is getting children out of work and successfully integrating them into school through a process of social mobilisation for poverty alleviation.

The project has two main objectives.

- To support community mobilisation efforts through a NGO to get children out of work and into school.
- To evolve through grassroots consultations, other models of Social Mobilisation for getting children out of work and into school.

The project is being routed through UNDP. Objective one is being implemented by MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh and objective two is implemented by UNDP, New Delhi.

The M.V Foundation has been supported by NORAD/UNDP to bring children in the age group 5-14 out of work and into school in 36 villages in Nawabpet Mandal of Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh.

The project is designed to build a community consciousness and acceptance of a **child's right** to education, and at the same time to design academic interventions to enable the working child to join the mainstream formal education system. The strategy is to involve the community at every level in getting children out of work and into school.

From a small beginning in 1991, the M.V Foundation has grown into a complex organisation employing wide range of **strategies** to achieve its twin objectives of eradicating all forms of Child labour and universalising education. The programme has expanded to over 500 villages.

To develop a critical awareness on the issues of child labour, bonded labour and the rights of children and to facilitate mobilisation of the community, a host of strategies are used like campaigns, padayatras, street theatre, motivating and

organising youth parents and community to participate in enabling children to go to school and focussing on the girl child.

As children get mobilised to join the school, a range of enabling options are made available-bridge courses at the school to facilitate the child's entry into the class appropriate to his/her age, short and long term camps, accessing Govt. schools and hostels. In order to retain children in school, the strategy involves strengthening the school system by providing trained youth as para teachers, construction of additional classrooms and mobilising resources to improve the school infrastructure.

Besides monitoring the MVF project, UNDP has also identified similar initiatives like CREDA, Cini Asha, Vidhayak Sansad, GVBS, Jodhpur Lok Drushti. All are being supported from various sources. UNDP has the monitoring responsibility of all these projects.

According to the Agreement an evaluation will be conducted in the fifth year of the project.

A team of three consultants comprising of one Norwegian expert on Child Labour and one Indian, preferably with the knowledge of the local language shall conduct the review. Financial review will be conducted only of MVF by the financial expert already engaged in reviewing similar projects for the Embassy.

Purpose

1. The main purpose of the project review is to ascertain achievements compared to plan and objective.
2. To assess the role of the organisation in the broader context of advocacy work for the rights of the child, elimination of child labour and basic education.
3. The purpose of the review is also to assess the replicability of the model.

Scope of Work

I Project Review

- The team shall study MVF's and UNDP's approaches in achieving the project objective as set out in the Project Document, the Agreement and the Addendum between the Norwegian Embassy and UNDP, as well as in the Contract between UNDP and MVF.
- As the project is considered to have the characteristics of a pilot project, the team shall examine to what extent the project is suitable for replication on a

larger scale. Sustainability of financial arrangements including mobilisation & advocacy shall be considered.

- Collaboration with the government authorities at state, district, village and school levels in reaching the project objectives shall be assessed. Complementing/duplication of efforts shall be discussed.
 - *regarding interaction with the government authorities, the team shall also explore to what extent MVF is being asked by the State Government to provide advisory services to the government related to child labour and education. Also to assess the commitment of the Government in providing education facilities*
 - *regarding the bridge courses, the team shall assess what makes the teaching resources, syllabus and the methodology so effective to teach the children the syllabus of five years in one year*
- The review team shall assess the role of MVF as "advocacy agent" in the field of Child labour, rights of the child and quality education, creating awareness among people in general and employers and policy makers in particular.
- The project's possible impact on policies in the relevant fields shall be looked into.
- The organisation's capabilities in the areas of documentation, monitoring and evaluation and research shall be looked into and models for useful collaboration with relevant research organisations/institutions shall be explored.
- The organisation's and project's sustainability shall be assessed; including policy support, institutional, financial/economic and socio-cultural/gender aspects.
 - *the assessment of the financial/economic sustainability shall include to what extent MVF/UNDP has been able to mobilise additional resources, both from other donors as well as from the community*
- Partnership and collaboration with other NGOs/institutions shall be examined.
- On the basis that the funds are channelled through UNDP, the review team shall look into the role of UNDP and the organisational set up to accommodate the interaction/collaboration between UNDP and MVF and the other samall NGOs under the project, as well as between UNDP and the Norwegian Embassy.
 - *to look into the administrative structure between NORAD, UNDP & MVF and between various partners and also proceedures related to reporting and Disbursement*
- The gender issues need to be kept in focus during the review.

Slettet: .

II Financial Review

1. The Financial consultant will address the following aspects of only **MV Foundation** part of the financial Review:

Slettet:

- administrative structure and routines
 - examine accounting and budgetary systems and assess the correspondence between the two and mention any variation that might be present
 - project development, accounting and reporting techniques
 - internal controls/procedures and their relevance/adequacy to meet project goals (e.g. purchasing policies, banking arrangements, travel policies etc.)
 - audit practices-qualitative assessment of auditing practices and statutory audit systems which includes routines linked to internal, external as well as government requirements
1. The consultant will assess the utilisation of the funds routed through UNDP by analysing and assessing whether the utilisation of the grant is according to the objectives and budgets of the project.
 2. The consultant will, on the basis of the review done, provide a report covering the following:
 - determining the compliance with the standards of control and accountability agreed to by the organisation
 - assessing to what extent the organisation has developed appropriate and effective tools to enhance efficient economical management
 - if needed, identifying relevant areas of human resource development enabling the organisations to strengthen their financial management and institutional capacity

Implementation

Sources of information/methodology: Reference documentation in the form of project proposal, appropriation document, agreement/addendum, project reports as well as other relevant documents on child labour will be handed over by the Embassy to the consultants.

Methodology will be agreed upon by the review team, but study of secondary data (ref. the above mentioned documents) and interviews with representatives of the target group, MVF, UNDP, the Embassy and relevant partner organisation/institutions, including the labour/education authorities and relevant departments/authorities in Andhra Pradesh are considered necessary for reaching the objectives of the review within the set time frame.

Time frame: The meetings in New Delhi and field work in Andhra Pradesh shall be conducted during the period 5.3.2001 to 20.3.2001.

A briefing shall take place at the Embassy on **5.3.2001**.

A debriefing shall take place at the Embassy on **15.3.2001**.

Draft report shall be submitted to the Embassy on **20.3.2001**.

The final report (5 copies) shall be submitted to the Embassy on **5.4.2001**.

Team composition: The review team will comprise of the following members:

1. Ms. Janne lexow, NCG-DECO, Oslo
2. Ms./Mr India
3. Mr Martin Pinto, Pinto M.P&Associates.

Reporting

On the basis of the review done, the consultancy team shall provide the Embassy with a Review and Recommendation Report for the project.

The report shall include an executive summary summarising the objectives of the study, major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Agnete Eriksen
Counsellor (Dev)

New Delhi, 8.2.2001