

Small Steps Lead the Way





Small Steps Lead The Way

THE LEARNING AND MIGRATION PROGRAM (LAMP)
OF THE AIF

A REVIEW

BY
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PHOTOGRAPHS:

Front cover & above: Students of migrant brick kiln workers at a seasonal hostel run by LAMP partner, Lokadrusti, in Salabadihi village, Nuapada district, Orissa.

Back cover: Mohan, son of migrant workers engaged in sugarcane harvesting at a camp beside the highway, on their return to their village from a sugar factory in Maharashtra.

Title page: Children returning from a non-formal education school run by LAMP partner Yusuf Meherally Centre for the Machhimaar community at Luni Bunder, Kutchh, Gujarat.

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Preface

“I will give you a talisman. Whenever in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man (woman) whom you may have seen and ask yourself:

If the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him, will he gain anything by it?

Will it restore his control over his own life and destiny?

In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.”

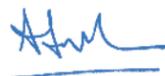
— MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

In the year 2003, AIF started its first education project with children of sugarcane migrants in Maharashtra, to provide access to out-of-school children in difficult circumstances. At that point we did not contemplate setting up a large migration-focussed education program. We ourselves had no idea of the extent of the problems associated with seasonal migration! But in our search to identify unique, unaddressed issues to fruitfully invest our limited resources in as we traveled to different parts of the country, we realized the expanse of seasonal migration in varied forms, in multiple sectors, in almost every backward region of the country. Within the next year we started work in Gujarat and Orissa also and realized that seasonal migration is an universal yet invisible phenomenon, which is wreaking havoc in the lives of poor rural families—putting both their present and their future at stake. We also realized that like us, almost everyone in the development space was ignorant of the issue and its enormity.

AIF began to focus specifically on education of children of seasonal migrants in differing contexts, and went on to build a portfolio of projects covering multiple sectors and geographies. We called this program LAMP—Learning and Migration Program. LAMP was essentially an exercise in dealing with the constant, unpredictable mobility of migrant families, and trying to see how their children could still be retained in the school net, enabling them to complete their schooling cycle without dropping out. Over five years AIF worked with 19 NGO partners and touched 1.1 lakh migrant children (cumulatively). We also engaged with the government system to multiply these numbers, and reach out to maximum possible migrant children under SSA.

In 2009 AIF called for an external review of LAMP. The objectives of this review were to:

- **Bring about an improved understanding of the metrics of problem and scope for interventions in the context of UEE goals.**
- **Identify the basket of responses and their effectiveness**
- **Identify areas of improvement, responses and facilitation within constraints**
- **Highlight effective strategies in different sectoral and state contexts.**



SANJAY SINHO

Chief Executive Officer, American India Foundation



Bahadur Sabar, one of the students at AIF's partner NGO Lokadrusti's seasonal hostel, who has worked in a brick kiln before. Nuapada district, Orissa, April 2009.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIE	Alternative and Innovative Education
AIF	American India Foundation
AKESI	Aga Khan Education Services, India
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BTF	Banyan Tree Foundation
CFT	Cohesion Foundation Trust
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
FCRA	Foreign Currency Regulation Act
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
KARMI	Kalahandi Organisation for Agriculture and Rural Marketing Initiative
LAMP	Learning And Migration Program
LD	Lokadrusti
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OBC	Other Backward Classes
RCC	Residential Care Centres
RTDA	Rural and Tribal Development Agency
RTE	Right to Education Act
RTI	Right to Information Act
PARDA	People's Awareness for Rural Development Agency
SC	Scheduled Caste
SH	Seasonal Hostel
SHG	Self Help Group
SS	Site School
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UEE	Universalization of Elementary Education
VEC	Village Education Committees
YMC	Yusuf Meharally Centre



1 | Methodology

This report is a review of the Learning and Migration Program (LAMP) of the American India Foundation (AIF), carried out at the request of AIF. The American India Foundation has, since its inception, been supporting India's goal of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) through innovative programs which focus on improving access and quality of education and which can be mainstreamed into large-scale government interventions. Its Learning and Migration Program (LAMP), in which AIF and its partners educate children of seasonal migrants, is an important component of AIF's activities in India.

This review is based on extensive fieldwork at project sites in three states (Maharashtra, Gujarat and Orissa) between March and May 2009, where AIF and its partners are implementing the LAMP. The locations were selected carefully so that all site schools and hostels which had been in existence for a year or more could be covered. Although we had divided most of the sites to be visited between us, in each state some common locations were chosen to help triangulate the findings. A check list of questions was developed with the help of AIF and with feedback from its partner NGOs.

The field visits involved discussions with members of the NGOs, non-formal teachers, staff, children, parents of students, local government officials, teachers of formal schools, panchayats and community members and visits to site schools, seasonal hostels and government schools. The extensive documentation maintained by AIF and its partners was examined and several discussions were held with AIF staff. AIF and its partners also provided additional information on request during the course of the review on several aspects of the program, such as the organisational matrix, the planning cycle of partners, advocacy carried out by AIF and so on. The entire review which included the field trip, a feedback meeting with AIF and its partners, and follow-up questions and clarifications, lasted for about six months.

While we are satisfied with the insight we got into most aspects of the program, both the timing of the review, which coincided with India's General Elections, and the limited time at our disposal did restrict interaction with State officials who oversaw programs implemented under LAMP. AIF and its partners are currently piloting an initiative focusing on imparting quality education to children in the residential hostels. Since neither of us have claim to any expertise in pedagogy it is not possible to comment on the methodology being followed in this pilot initiative.

The report submitted to AIF in September 2009, comprised separate reports on each of the partner organizations in the LAMP program and an assembled main report with emphasis on the parent organization. The present report is an edited version of the 'main' report submitted to AIF. Reports on the activities of the partner organizations may be accessed on the AIF website (www.aif.org).

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2 | Introduction

The Significance of Distress Seasonal Migration of the Rural Poor

Human migration is as old as human history and the pattern of human development is integrally linked to the pattern of migration. But migration encompasses different streams, and has very different causes and consequences for different groups of people and for different regions. Most migration is internal to countries. The UNDP's Human Development Report of 2009 estimates that approximately 740 million people are internal migrants, almost four times the number that move across international borders. In India, the 2001 Census estimates that there were 314.5 million migrants. However, a large percentage of these are women who had moved after marriage.

The Census, or for that matter the National Sample Survey Organization, which carries out surveys of migration registers those persons who have stayed in their new destinations for six or more months as migrants—these are permanent or semi-permanent migrants. The characteristics of these migrants (typically following a bi-modal distribution in terms of wealth or education characteristics) have been analysed in a number of studies. These migrants are key to understanding processes of rural-urban migration and growing urban concentrations. However, short duration migrants are not captured by these sources. But a number of studies show that such migrants, often described as seasonal or circular, exist in very large, and perhaps growing numbers. They form a significant proportion of laborers in a number of industries such as construction, brick manufacture, fish processing, quarrying, salt-pans, and in some states, even agriculture.

According to estimates, seasonally migrant labor could well constitute 10 to 15 per cent of India's present estimated workforce of 480 million. They belong to the most poor and deprived sections of society typically comprising the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). Living in discrete

settlements on the outskirts of the main village, SCs/STs occupy the lowest rung in the hierarchy of the caste system and are treated as social outcasts and untouchables. Even in post-independent India, atrocities like sexual abuse, murder and arson against SCs/STs remain unabated. Discrimination, which is an all-pervading character of the caste system, is not confined to production relations alone; it shapes and affects access to economic and social resources like children's education.

These migrants are a product of individual and household livelihood deficits (generally due to absence of assets) and regional resource and livelihood deficits. Migration provides subsistence to the workers and their families but exposes them to a harsh and vulnerable existence with difficult working and living conditions.

In the process of such migration not only are families uprooted from their homes year after year, they also end up disenfranchised. Families lose the benefits of State welfare, forego the facilities of the public distribution system and the public health system in the villages; and fail to access the immunization drive for young children that takes place during the migration season. A large proportion of migrant labor do not have statutory entitlement papers like caste certificates, election cards, BPL cards, old age pension cards and so on. Most migrants do not even exercise their voting rights because elections are held, as it happened in 2009, during the migration period.

In the entire process, children's lives are adversely affected. They are forced to drop out of school, or never enrol in one. One has to remember that a child out of school is an important indicator of child labor in the country. Seasonal migrants



Seasonally migrant labor constitutes 10 to 15 per cent of India's present estimated workforce of 480 million. They belong to the most poor and deprived sections of society. Migration provides subsistence to these workers and their families but exposes them to a harsh and vulnerable existence with difficult working and living conditions.

◀ Growing up at work sites, migrant children face a life of hardship and neglect right from infancy. They have minimal access to clean drinking water, nutrition, proper clothing and hygienic conditions—all of which affects their development.

When migration takes place as a family unit, each part of the family unit, excluding infants, contributes to family subsistence in one way or another: in work or as part of the household 'care' economy.

migrate alone (male only, female only, or child only) or quite often in family units (husband, wife, children). When migration takes place as a family unit, each part of the family unit, excluding infants, contributes to family subsistence in one way or another: in work or as part of the household 'care' economy. For children, the work environment means unusual harshness and deprivations.

Despite its magnitude and its significance vis-à-vis human development goals, seasonal migration is little understood and rarely focused upon in the Indian policy discourse. This is in contrast to the situation in China, where research and policy debate has paid much greater attention to the nature and implication of labor migration. But there can hardly be any doubt that this migration centrally affects the lives of millions of poor families and hence also India's performance in achieving Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), of which the second aims at achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015.

Seasonal Migration and Its Impact on Children's Education

Since Independence, in accordance with the Constitutional commitment to 'ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years', provision of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) has been a salient feature of the national policy. The National Policy on Education, 1986, assures that 'free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality' will be provided to all children up to 14 years of age before the turn of the 21st century.



► In some sectors like brick kilns, jobs are assigned starting from the youngest children. Migrant children from Orissa working at a kiln in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

The Indian government has been committed to the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) by 2010 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). And now the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, has been put into operation. This has strengthened the resolve to deepen efforts and create alternative and innovative options to achieve UEE for children below 14 years of age by 2010. Promoting and strengthening structured teaching—both formal and informal—is an area of particular concern. The poor have the right not only to read and write and acquire information but also for entertainment and engagement with a world beyond their own. UEE is being critically impacted upon by seasonal migration. However, Indian data are not attuned to capture either the extent of this migration or its impact on child education, on which we dwell below.

All studies show that seasonal migrants are in their prime working age (18-45 years). Since migrants come from the poorest and economically the most vulnerable sections of the working population, their own educational attainment is nil or negligible. A majority of those who are married in this age group have young children. Migration of either one or both the parents has the potential of reducing the child's probability of being educated. Whenever both men and women migrate, more often than not, migration takes place as a family unit also involving children.

The diversity of migration situations needs to be emphasized to ensure that interventions confront the specific contexts. Migration cycles range from a few weeks to a few months (7-9). From an out-migrating point of origin, even though modal patterns of migration exist, one may come across considerable diversity, on aspects such as, say, whether the migration is individual or family based; the extent to which migration is organized through recruiters; the type of destination (proximity, rural/urban, intra/inter-state, and type of work); and so on. From the destination areas point of view, once again different types of diversities exist depending upon issues such as whether the migrants originate from neighbouring or distant areas; their cultural/linguistic commonalities with these areas; the type of work that they do; the extent to which children are an essential part of the labor process; the degree of isolation, fragmentation, and segmentation that the migrant labor force is subjected to and so on.

Studies show that virtually all types of migration from poor households affects child education and child development, although the severity of the impact may differ. The focus of AIF interventions has been on family migration i.e. situations where migrant laborers migrate with children. But the context in which this occurs in different geographies varies. This is briefly described here and in greater detail in the partner reports (available at www.aif.org).

At any point of time, school-age children of migrants fall into two categories:

- those who are out of school (these children may never have enrolled, or may have enrolled and dropped out)
- those who are nominally enrolled.

All studies show that seasonal migrants are in their prime working age (18-45 years). Since migrants come from the poorest sections, their own educational attainment is nil or negligible. Most of those who are married have young children. Migration of either one or both the parents has the potential of reducing the child's probability of being educated.

Seasonal migration affects the lives of millions of poor families and hence also India's performance in achieving Millenium Development Goals, of which the second aims at achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015. Despite its magnitude and its significance vis-à-vis human development goals, seasonal migration is little understood and rarely focused upon in the Indian policy discourse.

► At a site school for children of a migrant fishing community in Kutchh, Gujarat.

Due to continuous interruptions in schooling, the latter eventually drop out at some stage or another. During fieldwork to review LAMP, we encountered both types of children in the project states. In rural Maharashtra, Gujarat and Orissa, a number of children (more girls than boys) were out of school or never enrolled. In Gujarat, in the destination areas especially in the salt-pans, a number of children were nominally enrolled during the government-sponsored enrolment drive but their schooling was disrupted for several months during the migration period. In Maharashtra, in the villages visited, most of the children were nominally enrolled but were compelled to accompany their parents to the sugarcane fields in the cutting season, which could last from November to April. During exam time, if distances permitted, these children were shepherded to their villages to sit for the examinations, which would be no more than a farce for them; farce, because they are out of touch with studies at the work sites. If exams were not possible, the probability of dropping out of schools became high. Similarly in Orissa, most children were initially enrolled but could not continue with education once they entered the migration cycle. Although annual examinations were held in schools, these children (who usually migrated long distances to other states) could not take exams. Since the system ensured automatic promotions till class 7, these children could still find their names in the school registers in the next class, but eventually dropped out.

Nominal enrolments are convenient for several parts of the existing system. Teachers and officials can claim high enrolments which are a sign of success. The corrupt can lay claim to the benefits and entitlements which should accrue to school-going children. Even parents may not mind being on the right side of the system, and their children occasionally receiving some of the 'benefits'. But such a state of affairs does not provide genuine schooling to the migrant children who eventually drop out.

There are two important issues which flow from this:

- First, there is little awareness in India that the migration cycle of its vulnerable workers could cause serious disruptions in the education of both nominally enrolled and non-enrolled children.
- Second, the data system which deals with categories such as 'enrolled' and 'dropped out' provides no information on the large body of children who are irregular attendees and effectively non-enrolled. The government, however, recognizes the problem and includes in the definition of 'drop out' those children who, while enrolled, are unable to attend school for fairly long stretches.

In conclusion, an account of dropped out children (including both the nominally enrolled and the non-enrolled) reveals that the access to education for children of an overwhelming proportion of seasonal family migrants is adversely affected. The impact is less severe for children of migrant households with single adult migrants.



3 | Objectives & Strategies

The AIF Mandate and LAMP

The American India Foundation is a non-profit organization set up by Indian Americans in 2001 with the goal of supporting accelerated social and economic change in India. One of AIF's key mandates is to support the objective of universal basic education in India through its focus on the dimensions of access, retention and quality of education for children. AIF's approach to grant making in the area of elementary education is premised on the principle that it is the State's responsibility to fulfill its constitutional mandate of free and compulsory education for all children between 6 and 14 years of age. AIF's education grants program, therefore, focuses on complementing and supplementing State efforts in meeting the above commitments.

The Government of India's efforts have led to increased enrolments in school but the key issues of universal access, retention and quality still remain important especially with respect to 'hard-to-reach' or 'left out children'. AIF focuses on the 'left-out children' and works with partner NGOs to find ways to ensure that such children have access to quality education, and are able to successfully complete the primary and the elementary cycle. AIF works with the following broad categories of children who are excluded due to a complex combination of physical and social reasons:

- children of seasonal migrants
- deprived urban children

In these groups, the focus is on the girl child and ethnic/religious minorities. Through its efforts, AIF works to improve the quality of education and strengthening government schools.

The Learning and Migration Program (LAMP) of AIF, which began in 2003, focuses on the category of 'left out' children of seasonal migrants. Since seasonal migration has not been an important part of policy discourse, it is not surprising that issues of education of migrant children have remained largely unaddressed. The *ashramshalas* (hostel-schools) supported by government in tribal areas indirectly addressed this issue. Some State-level programs also made provisions for hostels for migrant children. The major Central government program for supporting universal education, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) did not initially factor in the special requirements of these children. This, however, has been a major focus of AIF advocacy. Given the inadequate attention paid to seasonal migration, the large number of children who are affected (AIF estimates these to be more than 9 million), and the important links between migration, poverty and development, we consider AIF's intervention to be extremely well founded.



Through AIF's LAMP, its partners now directly educate more than 30,000 children every year in three states and their concerted advocacy efforts have moved the State governments to support and scale-up these models of education. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of such children being educated.

The SSA framework now supports the education of these children at work sites as well as through seasonal hostels. These measures have been followed up in some states. Persistent advocacy by AIF and its partners has played a role in grounding these initiatives. Further, other funding organizations have also got involved in supporting these initiatives.

▲ Ethnic and religious minorities are one of the focus groups of AIF interventions. A site school in Saurashtra, Gujarat.

Through AIF's LAMP, its partners now directly educate more than 30,000 children every year in three states and their concerted advocacy efforts have moved the State governments to support and scale-up these models of education. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of such children being educated.

► In all AIF's education initiatives with 'left out' children, special attention is given to the girl child. A site school for Jait nomad children, Jamnagar district, Gujarat.

Program Strategy

The education initiative by AIF works through collaboration with partner NGOs. The choice of states in which LAMP is currently grounded is an outcome both of identification of large seasonal migration streams and of NGOs who would be willing to work with AIF in the program. The current intervention states are Maharashtra, Gujarat and Orissa, with some activity in the state of Karnataka. Once NGOs are identified, goal posts are set out through a partnership framework in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Till 2008, AIF support to its partners was based on an annual MoU. With Setu, however, AIF had a three-year MoU from the start. In 2008, a three-year MoU (2008-2011) has been formalized with all the partner organizations. The MoUs specify the activities to be undertaken by the partners, the reporting and monitoring requirements and the level of support to be provided by AIF. AIF supports the core activities of the partners i.e. setting up of site schools and seasonal hostels with a small amount of additional support provided to cover program overheads. Unit costs are generally pegged at the level of SSA benchmarks (with the exception of salaries). In recent years, the AIF also required partners to scale up support levels from government with the objective of providing an incentivized 'matching' support, with variations from partner to partner.

It must be pointed out that AIF support is not restricted to funding alone but extends to technical support, specifically, developing and strengthening all program features including training and advocacy.



Program Interventions

Support of the education of migrant children by AIF and its partners is carried out through three main types of interventions:

SITE SCHOOLS:

AIF's partners set up and run site schools for migrant children in the destination areas. These children are otherwise involved in multiple tasks to support household subsistence, leaving them no time for leisure or schooling. This includes working at work sites in some capacity as well as support to domestic chores and taking care of infants, especially in the case of girls. The work sites covered under LAMP include salt-pans, brick kilns, tile factories, location for herdsmen, temporary settlement sites for fisherfolk in the case of Gujarat, and in the catchment cane-growing areas in the case of sugar factories in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Southern Gujarat.

SEASONAL HOSTELS:

These have emerged as a preferred intervention for AIF since children in the hostels stay away from the harsh work environment in the work sites and continuity of education can be maintained at all times through the local formal schools. One major strength of the hostels is that they are located in the village, thereby fostering trust and assurance in the community; the villagers and families have easy access to the children and children are free to visit their homes or the homes of their relatives. However, seasonal hostels are naturally administratively more complex, are more expensive to run, and require a greater degree of community support as well as closer and more regular interaction with formal schools.

BRIDGE COURSES:

LAMP also supports bridge courses for dropped out children at its seasonal hostels during a part of the migration cycle when children who migrate with their families remain in the villages (usually about three months during June to September). These courses are designed to assist these children re-enter schools and retain their enrolments. Their success depends upon retaining these children in the hostels during the next migration cycle.

The support given for the education of migrant children by AIF and its partners is through three main types of interventions.

1 SITE SCHOOLS

2 SEASONAL HOSTELS

3 BRIDGE COURSES



4 | LAMP Partners

AIF's idea has been to expose as many interested NGOs as possible in these migration prone geographies to the issue of seasonal migration and the education program so that a critical mass is created for work to sustain in the long run. The following NGO partners have been involved in the LAMP activities:

GUJARAT

- Cohesion Foundation Trust (CFT), Kutchh
- Centre for Social Knowledge and Action (Setu), Saurashtra
- Yusuf Meherally Centre (YMC), Kutchh

MAHARASHTRA

- Janarth, Aurangabad

ORISSA

- Lokadrusti, Nuapada, and its consortium partners that include:
- Rural and Tribal Development Agency (RTDA), Nuapada
- People's Awareness for Rural Development Agency (PARDA), Nuapada
- Kalahandi Organization for Agriculture and Rural Marketing Initiative (KARMI), Kalahandi.

While the above partnerships have sustained, not all that were built have remained. Over the last five years, AIF made partnership with six other NGOs (four in Bolangir, Orissa, two in Gujarat) which lasted for short periods due to issues like lack of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) clearance and unsatisfactory performance.

The partner NGOs have different histories of involvement with the issue of education of migrant children. In the case of Janarth, its engagement through *shakharshalas* predates its partnership with AIF. YMC was also involved in site schools in collaboration with CARE since 2002. The other NGO partners were involved with issues pertaining to migrants' rights and rural livelihoods but became specifically involved with the education of migrant children after discussion and partnership with AIF.

The focus of the education initiative has been on primary and middle education, which in Gujarat and Maharashtra is for grades 1 to 7. The migration environment which each of the NGOs faces has its own specificities and partly dictates the specific nature of intervention. Each of the partner NGOs carries out a portfolio of activities and has its own set of objectives and regional coverage. These include rights based campaigns (YMC and Setu), sustainable livelihood and environment initiatives (CFT), agricultural marketing support (Janarth), employment and livelihoods (Lokadrusti), awareness drives (RTDA), and health and livelihood (PARDA).

There is some overlap in the past and present activity matrix of some of the organizations. For example, for Setu, CFT and YMC, their post-earthquake rehabilitation work in Gujarat cemented their rapport with the community in some of the villages. Lokadrusti's migration related activities overlap with its livelihoods and self-help group formation activities in nearly 60 per cent of the villages. For PARDA, there is a significant overlap between its group formation (SHGs and youth groups), promotion of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) program and LAMP. Wherever this has been the case, the NGOs have derived considerable advantage. As education providers, the partners have tried to dovetail this with their other activities, the most successful example being ICDS in the case of Janarth.



Maharashtra

JANARTH, which is located in Aurangabad district in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra has focused its efforts on labor migrants in one sector viz. sugarcane harvesting. The migrants who are landless or marginal and small farmers come from the arid and semi arid districts of Maharashtra which grow only a single crop at best, and migrate for sugarcane cutting to sugarcane growing districts in Maharashtra (principally, Western Maharashtra), neighboring districts in Karnataka, and Southern Gujarat.

The migrant cutters are stratified into three groups.

- **'Tyre centre' workers:** This group has the ability to own or hire bullocks which they take to work sites. Their bullock carts have rubber tyres that are provided by factories.
- **'Gadi centre' workers:** This group takes its own bullock carts with wooden/ metal wheels to migration sites
- **'Doki centre' workers:** They have no bullocks or carts.

The number of migrant workers from an area depends upon the conditions in the source and the destination areas. Recruitments are mediated by labor contractors who pay the worker families an advance before the beginning of

According to Janarth's estimates, sugarcane related migration in Maharashtra alone involves about 650,000 adult workers of which 200,000 are children in the 6-14 age group.

Sugarcane settlements are in open unprotected spaces where animals and humans live together in close proximity. Men and women cut the cane. The children remove the sugarcane tops. The cane is then bundled and carried on the head by the adults to the carts, that are used to transport it to the sugar factories. The state has 186 sugar factories each hiring 4000-6000 migrants.





▲ Children of migrant tribal workers going to Janarth's *shakharshala* (school run at the work site). The project covers around 12,000 children.

each cutting season, which starts around November and ends sometime between March and May. The amount of advance depends upon the number of workers in each family unit, including the migrant children. The labor migration system in Maharashtra is relatively formalized and organized and the cane-cutting rates for the three categories of workers as well as the contractors are fixed on a year to year basis.

► Life at a Janarth-run seasonal hostel for children of migrating sugarcane workers at Sanghavi village, Beed district, Maharashtra.



At the cane-cutting sites, the workers live in shacks. Those that operate tyred carts tend to live in larger congregations and in stable locations closest to the factory sites, often on factory land. Those who bring wooden carts live in smaller settlements farther away from the factory on public or private land which decreases their access to public services. Workers belonging to the *doki* centres, without any assets, do not settle at all but move in the smallest congregations from place to place throughout the migration season, making the provision of public services to them nearly impossible. Given the context of these sites, and the cooperation needed from other stakeholders (factories, government and community), the program has focused on the larger worker congregations (tyre centres) near the factories.

Janarth, which began its work among labor in-migrants has gradually extended its work across 13 districts in Maharashtra, two neighbouring districts in Karnataka, and more recently to two districts in South Gujarat. It has been able to map the flow of migrants in this sector and has now extended its work to several important source districts. According to its estimates, sugarcane related migration in Maharashtra alone involves about 650,000 adult workers of which 200,000 are children in the 6-14 age group .

In its work outside Maharashtra, the challenge for Janarth has been to develop from scratch local networks and contacts and interact with local government officials, although in Gujarat, Setu (another AIF LAMP partner) has been able to support Janarth's work in this direction. The Karnataka experience has been particularly harrowing because of the simmering tension between the two State governments on the language issue. This has affected the work of the NGO. In Gujarat, the students in the *sakharshalas* run by Janarth are tribals whose parents have migrated from the tribal regions of central Maharashtra. The challenge is to get teachers from the tribal belt who can speak the local language and understand the culture of the tribals and also be conversant with Marathi because the texts and teaching-learning materials (TLMs) are all in Marathi.



Gujarat

▲ **The working conditions in the salt-pans are unbelievably harsh. Workers live in temporary shacks, in inhospitable conditions, and work without any protective gear. The salt-pan work involves both the young and the old.**

The three Gujarat-based NGOs work in contiguous blocks in Rajkot, Jamnagar and Kutchh districts of the state. Each of these organizations was involved in relief and rehabilitation work in the area after the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 and later turned their focus to other areas of work.

Setu's work in LAMP is in two blocks (Maliya and Morvi) of Rajkot and one block (Jodiya) of the Jamnagar district of Gujarat. Morvi town in Rajkot is an important industrial cluster for roof tiles, ceramics and clocks. The migrants in these industries and close by brick kilns are principally intra-state migrants from neighboring districts but a small percentage are also from other states. Setu also works with migrants in two other sectors: workers in salt-pans (both in source and destination areas) and fisherfolk (who are displaced persons rather than seasonal migrants). Workers in these two sectors are intra-district or inter-district migrants.

CFT's work under LAMP again covers two blocks (Rapar and Bachhau) in Kutchh district. It focuses principally on workers in salt-pans called Agariyas and pastoralists called Maldharis.

YMC carries out its activities in Mundra and Gandhidham blocks of Kutchh district. Like the other two organizations, it also focuses mainly on fisherfolk, salt-pan workers, nomadic grazers and charcoal makers.

Thus each of the three organizations in Gujarat covers four types of migrant labor: salt-pan workers, fisherfolk, nomadic grazers and charcoal makers, each involving family-based mobility rooted in different communities and of different types. Setu additionally covers labor in-migration to Morvi town, one of the largest roof tile manufacturing hubs in India. Each of these migrations take place principally within the state (intra-district or inter-district). Interventions are comparatively the easiest if the migration is intra-district. In the case of inter-district migration, interventions have to deal with some distinct issues such as language (the residents of Kutchh who migrate to neighboring districts speak Kutchhi and not Gujarati).

The salt-pan workers constitute the largest group among the seasonal migrants. The traditional salt-making community are the Kolis, also categorized as an Other Backward Caste (OBC). Over time, other communities, including charcoal makers have also become involved in salt making. The salt-pan workers belong to two principal categories: lessees and wage workers. There is also a third, smaller category of owner-workers. Salt-pans are either marine or inland (where the brine water is pumped out). As in the other cases, the salt-pan workers rely on advances from salt traders that are used both as consumption loans and working capital and sell the produced salt to them at pre-fixed rates. The credit-product interlocking works to the severe disadvantage of the salt workers leaving a large proportion of them in a debt trap.

The working conditions in the salt-pans are unbelievably harsh. Workers live in temporary shacks, in inhospitable conditions, and work without any protective gear. The salt-pan work involves both the young and the old, male and female workers in different processes right up to the sale of the crude salt. Setting up site schools is most difficult in inland salt-pans given the temporary nature of the work sites, which shift once the salt is over. As a result, getting teachers for inland work site schools is a major challenge. Often the teachers themselves are part of a migrating unit.

Each of the three LAMP partners in Gujarat covers four types of migrant labor: salt-pan workers, fisherfolk, nomadic grazers and charcoal makers.

▼ **The conditions in the coastal belt of the Gulf of Kutch are so harsh that the only sustainable solution for childcare and education is to prevent children from migrating to these sites through retaining them in the village in seasonal hostels.**





▲ A site school run by Setu for Jait nomad children at Jodiya Taluk, Jamnagar district, Gujarat, where they have settled. The Jait are traditionally a community of nomadic grazers who do not belong to any particular state.

▲ Boys at a seasonal hostel in Kutchh, run by Yusuf Meherally Centre at Bhadreshwar (left) and Ranmal Ramji with his drawings of salt-pan work at a seasonal hostel run by Setu in Solanki Nagar, Jamnagar, Gujarat. (right)

▼ Children from Setu's seasonal hostel for migrant brick kiln workers, going to the village school in Amaran, Jamnagar district, Gujarat.

▼ Khaleda and Afsana at a YMC-run site school for the Muslim Maachimaar community at Luni Bunder, Kutchh, Gujarat.





Orissa

▲ Migrant workers from Orissa working at a brick kiln outside Hyderabad. Children not only work as many hours as their parents, they also suffer the same verbal and physical abuse.

Lokadrusti's activities under LAMP are in three blocks of Nuapada district, Khariyar, Boden and Sinapalli; two of its consortium partners, RTDA and PARDA work in the remaining blocks of that district, viz. Komna and Nuapada; whereas its third partner, KARMI works in Golamunda block of Kalahandi district. Recurrent droughts over decades have necessitated out-migration from these districts, but organized recruitment and migration to brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh, as well as other districts of Orissa, which is now the predominant form of family-based migration from these areas, is a more recent phenomenon, dating back to the mid-1990s.

Migration to the brick kilns is almost entirely based on organized recruitment by labor contractors. Over time, a chain of labor contractors has emerged with those at the lower ends belonging to the villages and often hailing from the same communities as the migrants. Most of the area in Nuapada and Kalahandi is single cropped, as irrigation levels are very low. Before the harvest festival of Nuakhai held in early September, the contractors from Andhra Pradesh step in to recruit labor by offering advances for a family unit, called a *patri*. The division of labor in the brick kiln demands child workers along with male and female workers, and the presence of at least one child in a team fetches a higher advance, while the absence of a child, could lead to workers not being recruited for the kilns. Many of the brick manufacturing operations—like making balls of wet clay, walking on dried bricks to flip them and sorting coal—are left to the young children because of their tiny hands and light bodies. They even carry loads of bricks.

Once advances are paid, workers wait for the final word from the contractor and leave at very short notice as soon as required. Usually, out-migration begins immediately after Nuakhai and workers start returning with their families towards the end of May or in early June.

The brick kiln workers, including children, work 12 to 15 hours a day in order to maximize their daily piece rate wages. Working and living conditions are extremely poor and workers rely on weekly advances to meet their daily requirements. Severe economic exploitation and sexual exploitation of women workers is not unknown at the sites. Loans/advances are adjusted at the end of the season, sometimes leaving a negative balance which the laborers have to work out in the next season. From the laborer's perspective, each additional hand counts, either at the workplace, or in meeting the family requirements at the living sites (cooking, taking care of infants).

Compared to the scenario in Maharashtra, the brick kiln migrants from Orissa face several additional disadvantages. They are not organized and have little bargaining power with the labor contractors, who are well organized, resourceful, and usually well networked with the local administration. The workers also work in an alien cultural/linguistic environment, subordinated to the employers and labor contractors.

The division of labor in the brick kiln demands child workers along with male and female workers, and the presence of at least one child in a team fetches a higher advance. Many of the brick manufacturing operations are left to the young children because of their tiny hands and light bodies.





◀ Lokadrusti's seasonal hostel, locally known as Residential Care Centre, at Khamtarai. Sufficient food, served hot to the children thrice a day, has made their gaunt faces chubby and unrecognizable for their parents!

▼ Locally recruited youth teachers may be less qualified, but make up for it with their enthusiasm and commitment towards the children. When fear is replaced with fun and friendliness, and interesting activities and TLM brought in, learning gallops.



▲ Ganesh Sabar, a student at Lokadrusti's seasonal hostel at his home in the village. His father, Dasrath Sabar, has returned from working at the brick kiln. His grandmother and sister stayed at home.



◀ Ganesh's fellow students enjoying themselves at the Khirmal hostel.





5 | Interventions & Challenges

A brief description of the main interventions and the challenges that AIF's partners face in the implementation of these interventions under LAMP.

Site Schools

Establishing site schools involves interaction with a number of stakeholders. Apart from the children and their families, these include employers and local communities (wherever these exist), formal schools in the destination and source areas, SSA authorities at all levels, and other government departments, especially those in charge of free mid-day meals and the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

Steps for setting up and running site schools

Need assessment: First, an assessment survey has to be done to determine the need for the site school.

Advocacy campaign: Immediate stakeholders (employers, adult migrant workers, and migrant children) have to be convinced that the children need to be in schools. While employers see a social and economic cost to this, even for parents, the opportunity cost of sending their children to school in the destination areas is high. For the children, by and large, the gains outweigh costs, but even this may not always be the case, especially for those who are earners.

Infrastructure support: In many situations, schools require employer support (where employers are present) in terms of land or structures and/or basic facilities such as water. In Janarth's case, the NGO has used persistent advocacy and different sets of strategies to persuade and involve the sugar factories to provide support to the schools. It has been able to evoke a positive response, with the factories often providing land, temporary structures, drinking water and electricity, and in some cases even accommodation for teachers. With whatever support that they can get, the NGOs have to set up suitable infrastructure for schooling, ideally involving adequate covered space, drinking water and sanitation facilities.

◀ Students at a YMC-run site school for children of a fishing community in Kutchh, Gujarat.

Teacher recruitment: Teachers with adequate qualifications and motivation to work in the harsh work site conditions have to be recruited. These conditions are very difficult to meet, especially as financial and other incentives offered under the program are low even though they are higher than those available under government benchmarks.

School facilities and incentives: Ideally, NGOs would like to see these children receiving the same entitlements as local school-going children in terms of facilities and incentives (uniforms, text books, scholarships, mid-day meals). For this, an institutional arrangement has to be developed in conjunction with the government department, so that the site schools are treated either as schools or adjunct schools (with the children's attendance being transferred to the local schools). This requires a large measure of coordination with the local schools, the education system (cluster and block level, as well as district level) and advocacy at the State level in the first instance, as well as support from the Village Education Committees (VECs) which are mandated to monitor the performance of schools under local jurisdiction.

Student enrollment and records: Children at site schools (if of the school-going age) may or may not be enrolled in schools in the areas of origin. Girls, in particular, are likely to have dropped out on approaching puberty. For the children who are enrolled in schools in the areas of origin, a modality has to be developed by which their enrolment and attendance records can be transferred between the schools in which they are enrolled in the areas of origin and the local formal schools near their destinations. This is quite a complex procedure, more so when the students are inter-district, or even inter-state migrants. Here coordination needs to extend across district or state boundaries, involving the support of the systems in those areas, as well as at higher levels. Maintaining linkages with the village schools is nearly impossible in such cases.

▼ **A shakarshala run by Janarth for the children of migrant sugarcane workers in Maharashtra.**



SITE SCHOOLS RUN BY LAMP PARTNERS - DEC.2008			
NGOs	State	Work Site Schools	Children
Janarth	Maharashtra	120	11500
Setu	Gujarat	74	2409
CFT	Gujarat	32	1053
YMC	Gujarat	27	882
TOTAL		253	15844

Uptil 2008 December, the AIF partners had been able to educate 15,844 children in 253 site schools, of which the lion's share was achieved by Janarth (11,500 in 120 site schools).

* Lokadrusti and its partners have not been directly involved with running site schools, although as part of an Action Aid initiative supported by AIF (not financially) for two years, they have set up Makarkheda Samitis in their areas and have facilitated site schools at the Andhra brick kilns.

Creating a proper teaching-learning environment: This involves, training, monitoring, providing moral support, provision of teaching-learning material etc. It needs to be noted that site schools do not necessarily deal with the same set of children year after year as parents change sites and the pattern of migration varies. Dealing with new children at different stages of education can make the task of teachers quite difficult.

These general measures have been incorporated in the work sites by the NGO partners in somewhat different ways and with different degrees of effectiveness and innovativeness. For instance:

- Janarth has focused on providing a minimum level of benchmarked facilities and infrastructure at its site schools, with the support of factories, which includes classrooms, toilets, electricity and a demarcated area which can serve as a play ground.
- CFT has been able to provide solar panels for electricity at its remote site schools.
- Setu has tried advocacy successfully with employers' associations in Morvi and individual employers have extended support by providing classrooms and basic facilities for the site schools.
- YMC has involved a local welfare trust to help with the hostel facilities for older children.

Seasonal Hostels and Bridge Courses

Currently, all AIF partners are involved in running seasonal hostels for the children of migrants, who would have otherwise accompanied them to the work sites. However, due to a shift in policy in Orissa, since February 2009, Lokadrusti and its consortium partners are providing support to the hostel residents which are now being managed by the Village Education Committees (VECs).

Seasonal hostels are set up by the NGO partners in the areas of migrants' origin, to provide staying facilities for migrants' school-age children during the period that the parents migrate for work. This could be 6 to 8 months in different locations. Seasonal hostels, therefore, impose higher opportunity costs on the parents and require a much greater degree of understanding by the NGOs of local social structures, as well as a high level of community support. Bridge courses, run by CFT, Setu and the Lokadrusti consortium, serve the purpose of easing the re-entry of migrant children into schools.

Steps for setting up and running seasonal hostels

Need assessment and advocacy: As in the case of the work site schools, the first phase of setting up a seasonal hostel has to be a needs assessment combined with patient advocacy amongst the stakeholders (migrants and local community) which can ensure that migrants are willing to leave their children behind in the hostels, and they and/or the local community would be willing to support the hostels in multiple ways.

► **Students of Lokadrusti's Kampur seasonal hostel on an awareness march in the village to get children to school. Nuapada district, Orissa.**



◀ **The hostel coordinator is the fulcrum of a seasonal hostel. Hiraben Acharya with the residents of a seasonal hostel for girls run by YMC in Bhadeshwar, Kutchh, Gujarat.**

Hostel infrastructure: Once it appears that there is sufficient need for such a hostel, the space to run the hostel is a prime requirement. This can be either homes of migrants or other residents or community structures which can be subject to single or dual use (say, a school or a panchayat building doubling up as a hostel). The proportion of public buildings in use as hostels varies between states and partners. In Orissa, the hostels (called Residential Care Centres or RCCs) are necessarily located in school buildings. But both public and private buildings have minimal space and facilities, sometimes a single hall, with a curtain demarcating the spaces for girls and boys, and sometimes no bath rooms.

24-hour care: Unlike the site schools, the seasonal hostels require 24-hour support and heavy responsibilities which include providing protection to the hostel inmates and taking measures in contingencies such as illnesses or accidents. This can be a serious issue and the responsibility on the coordinators is heavy. Lokadrusti and its partners have developed a model to help minimize some of this risk by mooted a general insurance coverage for the inmates. This, however, at best, takes care only of the financial side of the risk. The hostels are looked after by coordinators and helpers/cooks. The coordinators also double up as tutors/instructors. Normally two persons (one male and one female) are expected to be with the children during sleeping hours.

Hostel Coordinators: The hostel coordinators are the fulcrum of the hostels. Each of the NGOs makes an effort to recruit teachers from backgrounds where they can easily cohabit and build rapport with the inmates. But finding those with requisite qualifications and social backgrounds is not easy, and the gender balance is almost always tilted in favour of male recruits.

Hostels increase regular attendance in schools and also raise the demand for better teaching. NGOs have been involved with enrollment drives and hostel inmates participate in activities that draw the attention of the village community towards schooling.

Hostels provide facilities which include meals, hair oil and soap, supplementary instruction as well as sports/games. In a poor community, these opportunities are often not available to the non-inmates. The need to bridge this disparity is acknowledged across the board by the partner NGOs.

Responsibilities placed on these coordinators are multi-faceted and extraordinarily heavy, even if some are partly shared by the supervisory layers. Those that are resident have duties that literally span the clock and include almost continuous interaction with the students, except when they are at school, at which time, activities such as purchases of supplies and record-keeping take over. During school hours coordinators also double up in some of the areas as teachers to help the primary teachers with their work load or fill in when they are absent. The coordinators have to manage the relationships mentioned above, participate in all the activities with the students, and also engage in tutoring them. This last activity has grown more demanding in the case of hostels which have been specially selected under the program for upgradation of learning quality.

Relationship between the seasonal hostel and the local school

The hostel children are necessarily enrolled in the local government formal schools and the partners try to maintain the hostels as an active hub for promoting education more generally in the village. This leads to a complex relationship between the hostels (and the partners running them) and the formal schools, which also necessitates that certain steps be taken to nurture a healthy complementary relationship between the schools and the hostels. Some of the issues underlying the relationship between the SH and the schools and the strategies developed under the program to address them are as follows:

- The mandate of the hostels is to encourage regular and possibly better teaching in schools. Hostels increase regular attendance in schools and also raise the demand

► A coaching class in session, attended by children from the hostel run by Setu as well as children from the village. Karchiya, Rajkot district, Gujarat.



for better teaching. NGOs have been involved in enrolment drives and hostel inmates participate in activities to draw the attention of the village community towards schooling. Students in the Lokadrusti hostels participate in *prabhat pheris* (morning parades) singing songs regarding the importance of schooling. Hostel students are given supplementary instructions, which could set a benchmark for teaching-learning in the schools (there are instances of hostel students in Gujarat, from very deprived backgrounds doing extremely well).

- The increase in demand for schooling puts greater pressure on teachers in formal school to be regular and to perform well. In LAMP project areas in Orissa, teacher absenteeism is said to have declined from 60-80 per cent to 20-40 per cent. While this obviously has a healthy implication for schooling, it could meet with some resistance. This is more the case because hostel coordinators have lower formal qualifications and both the coordinators and the hostel residents belong to socially deprived backgrounds.

- To counter this, NGOs have tried to work on improving the supply side situation by putting pressure on governments to fill vacancies and increase recruitments. This has worked partially in both Orissa and Gujarat.

- Some of the NGOs (YMC in Gujarat and Lokadrusti in Orissa) have tried to alleviate the pressure on teachers (especially where schools are short-staffed as in

Some NGOs have ensured a larger participation by allowing non-inmate children to take supplementary instruction and participate in the games so that the hostels are not seen as separate enclaves where privileges are being bestowed on a group of children.

The increase in demand for schooling puts greater pressure on teachers in formal schools to be regular and to perform well. In Orissa, teacher absenteeism is said to have declined from 60-80 per cent to 20-40 per cent.

Western Orissa) by asking their hostel coordinators to assist in teaching. This, however, raises the possibility that formal school teachers who are already used to hierarchical relationships within the school (with head teachers, assistant teachers and contract teachers) may see the hostel coordinators, who generally have lower formal qualifications as yet another level in the hierarchy and try to subject them to a relationship of subordination, and may even assign other duties to them in the formal school. In Orissa, hostel coordinators had now received instructions from Lokadrusti not to assist teachers with their teaching duties.

- NGOs have also pressured governments to improve school infrastructure. Particularly, where school buildings are in use as hostels, pressure has been used to improve infrastructure, especially toilets and provision of drinking water.
- Hostels provide a certain benchmark level of facilities to the students, which include meals, hair oil and soap, supplementary instruction as well as sports/games. In a poor community, these facilities/opportunities are often not available to the non-inmates, both young and old. The need to bridge this disparity is acknowledged across the board by the NGOs. One way that has been addressed is to allow non-inmate children to take supplementary instruction and participate in the sports, games and competitions so that



SEASONAL HOSTELS & BRIDGE COURSES RUN BY LAMP PARTNERS – DEC.2008					
NGOs	State	Seasonal Hostels	Children	Bridge Course	Children
Janarth	Maharashtra	40	1887	–	–
Setu	Gujarat	37	1113	27	812
CFT	Gujarat	46	1466	22	660
YMC	Gujarat	12	314	–	–
Lokadrusti's Consortium	Orissa	52	1301	52	1736
TOTAL		187	6081	101	3208

the hostels are not seen as separate enclaves where privileges are being bestowed on a group of children.

In order to improve the relationship with the schools, NGOs like Setu have located library resources in schools so that these are available to the larger community of students.

Some NGOs have ensured a larger participation whereas others may not have done so actively. But wherever other children participate, the parents are happy for the extra inputs for their children and do not mind supporting the hostel. The considered view is that this has helped. But still, problems do emerge. In very poor areas, food is coveted not only by the young but even by the adults and hostel coordinators have to evolve methods to keep such adults away. In Orissa upper caste families found the migrant children being fed better than their own children. In many villages there was a protest against this and pressure to allow other children to be fed in the hostel. Lokadrusti has allowed two orphans to stay in the hostels, but pressure to keep other children continues.

▲ Villagers watch their children play at a seasonal hostel run by the Cohesion Foundation Trust in Kutchh, Gujarat. The villagers' access to the hostels helps foster trust between the village community and the NGO.

On the whole, the seasonal hostels have definitely brought the attention of the village community to education, activated the SSA officials to ensure greater monitoring and set a benchmark for improved child care and education. Despite possibilities of friction, the relationship between the local school and hostel in a village has evolved from one of indifference to a more positive one of give and take.

Relationship between the NGOs and migrant community

The relationship and rapport of NGOs with migrant workers needs to be carefully nurtured. The migrant community is not always socially homogenous. Where migrants belong to more than one community with distinct cultural differences (for example with respect to vegetarianism), asking children to eat, live and sleep under one roof may not be culturally acceptable to the concerned communities. When faced with this situation, NGOs have responded in different ways, more often than not by catering to the main migrant community, or setting up (if numbers permit) more than one hostel on a socially segregated basis. Only Setu has consistently followed the principle of one hostel to cater to all communities, which requires much more social mobilization.

Support of the village community

Hostels cannot function without support of the local communities. Local community leadership, particularly the leadership of the village bodies (*panchayats*) more often than not, rests with dominant communities/households in the village while the seasonal migrants come from the most vulnerable and weak communities. The village leadership has no natural stake in the hostels or in bringing the children of the migrant workers to school. Again, persistent mobilization is required to create such an interest and stake. But there may always be sources of conflict, as for instance in cases where the village bodies can theoretically seek funding to run the hostels under government programs (in these cases permission/approval is required from the VEC before the NGO can set up a hostel, which may not be forthcoming). Apart from the minimum support levels which are in any case required, the NGOs also try to involve the community in providing other levels of support, for instance for drinking water and electricity.

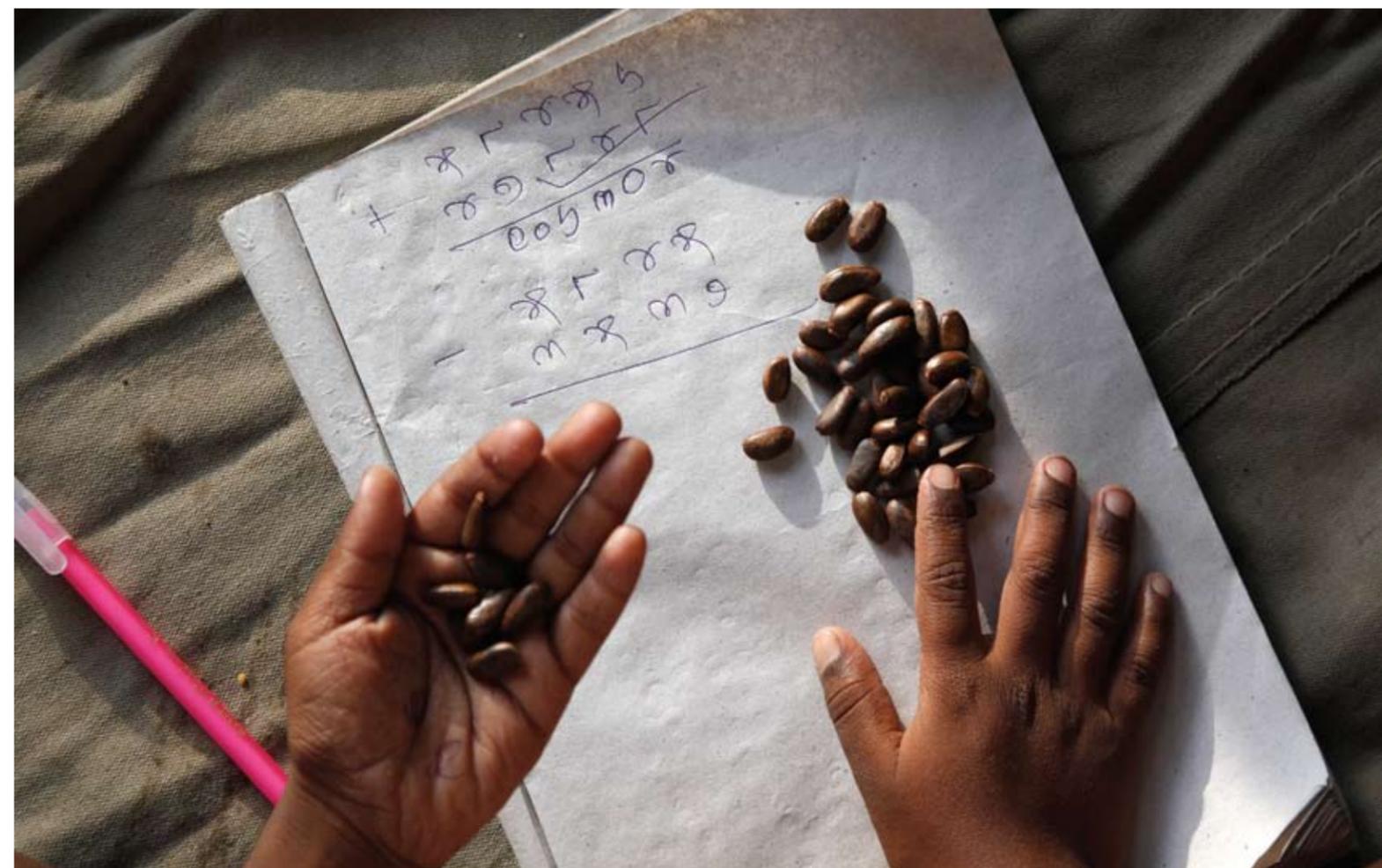
We found the role of the community to be stronger and more meaningful in villages where the NGOs had a history of organization-building and group formation. For example, in Orissa, Lokadrusti and PARDA have self-help groups, Makharkheda (drought mitigation) committees, and youth organizations in some of the villages in which LAMP is being implemented. The active members of these groups/committees provide a strong group of core support to various aspects of the program, including mobilization and advocacy among the migrants, support in running the hostels, and updating the village migration register.

On the whole, the hostels have definitely brought attention of the village community to education, activated the SSA officials to ensure greater monitoring and set a benchmark for improved child care and education. Despite possibilities of friction, the relationship between the local school and SH in a village has evolved from one of indifference to a more positive one of give and take.

6 | Assessment of LAMP

Programme Management and Supervision

The program organizational structure in all cases is as follows: There is a program-in-charge, who may also have some other concurrent responsibilities in the NGO. The program-in-charge manages the education program supported by AIF and is supported by the chief executive of the NGO (the nomenclature is different and varies between the NGOs) and office administration for record keeping, accounts etc. There are area coordinators, managing the program in a large jurisdiction such as a block, or as in the case of Janarth, districts or groups of districts. Supervisors work under the area coordinators and supervise and monitor the performance of a group of site schools or hostels. The hostel coordinators and the teachers in site schools have specific record keeping responsibilities and these records form the core data maintained by the organization.



In Gujarat, the site schools have a single class with 30 students and one teacher; the unit size of hostels is also the same with one coordinator and one helper. In Janarth the unit sizes are usually bigger. The site schools usually have about 100 students and 4 teachers, one for each grade, along with a helper to maintain cleanliness. The hostels too have 50-60 students with 2 coordinators and 2 cooks. Each of the partners provides for giving wider responsibilities (promotions) to well performing teachers/coordinators. These policies were most consciously pursued by Setu and CFT. As regards maintaining a gender and social balance among its staff, including senior supervisory staff, the record of Setu appeared to be most effective.

Records are maintained by all NGOs for internal purposes as well as to meet the requirements of the education department. Formats of the different partners were compared. In almost all cases these records were well maintained. The migration register maintained in the Setu site schools which contained specific migration histories, including cases of multiple migration, were particularly impressive. Equally impressive are the village migration registers maintained in Orissa, which in many cases were the responsibility of the Makharkheda (drought mitigation) committees. However, records examined in the case of YMC were not complete in some of the site schools visited.

The level of decentralization practised by each of these organizations varies. CFT has offices in each of its operational blocks. No doubt this has also been made possible because CFT is able to dovetail its education program with livelihood, environment and other programs in the same blocks. As a result, record keeping is also decentralized to the blocks. This clearly makes it possible for coordinators to use records to monitor activities in their jurisdictions and also develop local competency in handling information technology tools. Setu maintains a well functioning local office, but computerized record keeping is still done in its Ahmedabad office. YMC is a Kutchh-based organization and its records are maintained at its head office in Bhadeshwar village. Despite its large coverage, Janarth's activities are still centralized in its Aurangabad office. Lokadrusti's office is located in one of the three blocks (Khariar) in which LAMP is being implemented and the supervisory staff works out of this office.

Planning and Need Assessment

Large-scale surveys of migrant communities have provided the base on which the partners have planned their activities. But these are usually either general surveys or baseline surveys. Since migration varies from village to village and from season to season, each year the NGOs also carry out specific surveys. These are done in villages for seasonal hostels, and in work site areas for site schools for planning expansion. In existing areas of work the surveys are carried out to estimate the demand for activities. These surveys are generally carried out with the help of the teachers who are retained for this work under the coordination of the supervisory staff but in Orissa the Makarkheda committees also assist in the updating of the migration registers.

Although in principle, areas of expansion could be contiguous villages in a block or new blocks, such surveys have to initially rely on third party information and are difficult to implement. Secondly, planning could be hazardous as the base conditions which determine migration (for example, rainfall in the origin villages) could be different from the conditions visualized. This has been mentioned by Setu as one of the reasons the organization could not implement its planned expansion in 2007-08. However, given the large gap between the targets set by the organization and actual implementation, it is likely that there were also lacunae in the baseline assessments made by the organization.



Existing limitations notwithstanding, in most cases the surveys have provided a concrete input to the planning process, which help NGOs to take stock of their own outlay as well as external resources. However, in YMC's case, their expansion in far-off blocks appears to have occurred more out of a desire to cover a diversity of migration experience in Kutchh rather than out of a careful consideration of the marshalling of the resources at its disposal.

▲ A migrant family, who have just arrived at a sugar factory in Maharashtra.

Database on Migration and Affected Children

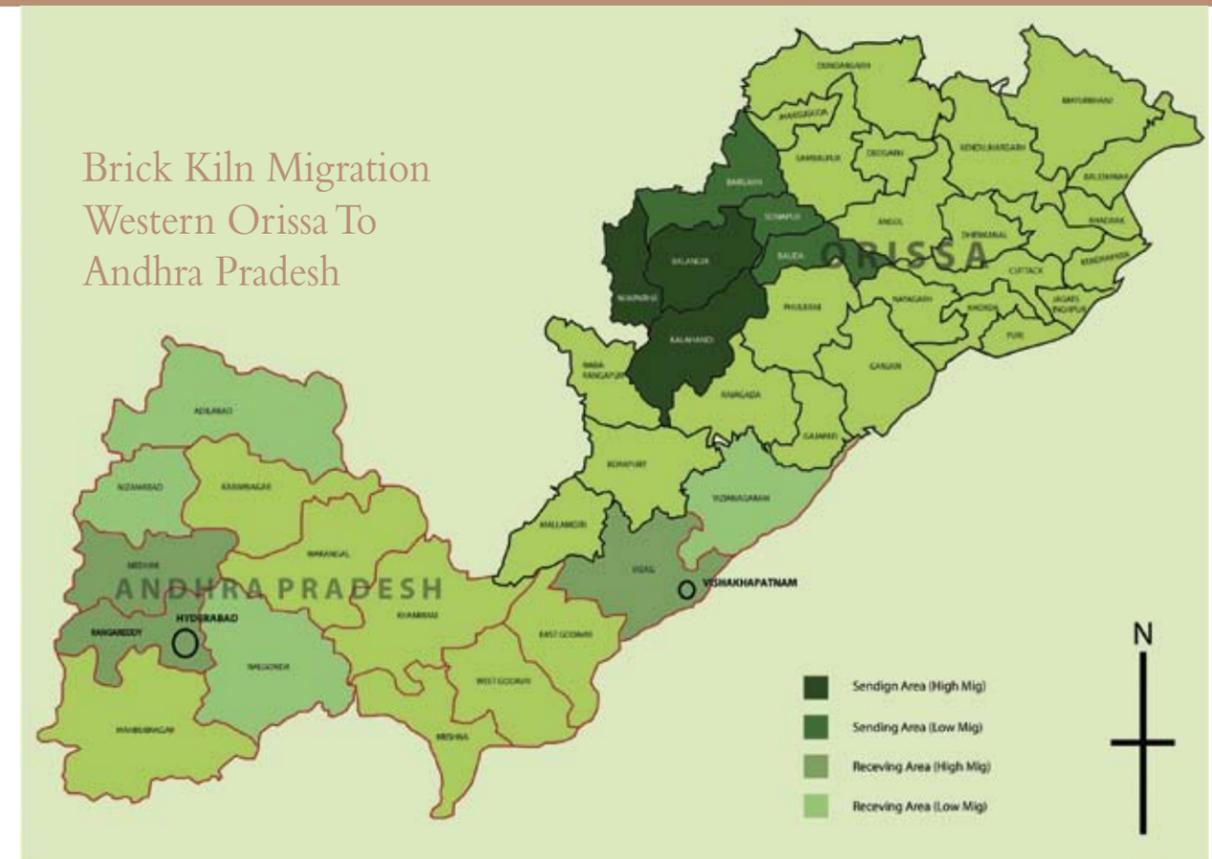
Migration surveys carried out by the NGOs or supported by them form a huge compendium of information on seasonal migration in each of the areas. Some of these are sector specific and some are designed as planning tools. The sector specific migration studies, notably of sugarcane cutters in Maharashtra and salt-pan workers in Gujarat are extremely important, providing valuable data and insights into these migrations. However, we do not have surveys dealing with aggregate migration inflows and outflows going beyond the sectors addressed by LAMP.

AIF's partner NGOs have marshalled a lot of information and the surveys carried out by them provide very useful information on the type of migration with which they are most concerned. But on a broader plane, except for Janarth to some extent, information on different types of migration, the relationship between migration and child education status, and a comprehensive database on the educational status of children in the selected villages is still lacking (or where some of the relevant information exists, has not been analyzed fully).

Further, with the exception of the village migration registers in Orissa, the smaller and more regular village surveys are focused on gathering data on the 'demand' for the site schools or the seasonal hostels and hence concentrate on the modal migration stream(s), often (as with YMC) of the one community which is most involved in seasonal migration. The surveys do not ordinarily provide an assessment of the totality of the problem i.e. what is the status of the school-aged children whether of migrants or non-migrants; who are the children currently out of school; what is the gender, social and age composition; how many individuals/households migrate; to what occupations/sites; what is the status of their children etc. **In other words, although the surveys are useful in the context of assessing the potential demand for the activity being planned, they offer a segmented and partial view of the problems at hand—children accessing education; and the totality of migration.** This problem is more acute in the case of hostels whereas work site surveys being confined to a group of migrant workers are more adequate. This is not to say that NGOs take an exclusive view. Some, like Setu, are involved in micro-planning and 'school chalo' (come to school) campaigns for all children.

However, the village migration registers in Orissa are an invaluable source of information. These registers carry a census of the village population, land size, caste, occupation, the persons migrating each year, the destinations and the industries to which they have migrated, information on labor contractors and advance taken; amount earned or remitted, and comments on migration experience. They are updated twice or thrice during the year—before, during, and after the migration season. The registers contain panel data on the households over several years. They show very clearly the extent to which migration in the village is male-only or family-based and whether the children participated in migration. Taken together with the hostel records, they allow us to quantify clearly the extent to which the residential hostels have been able to wean away the children from family-based migration. This wealth of information is yet to be analyzed. A quick analysis shows that in four of the five blocks in Nuapada the dominant family migration stream is indeed towards brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh, but in Nuapada block, adjoining Chhatisgarh, the family migration is principally to Uttar Pradesh. The registers also indicate that there is a high proportion of male-only migration from these areas towards Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhatisgarh and other districts of Orissa. Although family migration affects children directly, one would like to know which families and work sectors are prone to male-only migration and whether such migration also has some implications for the children's education.

AIF's partner NGOs have marshalled a lot of information and the surveys carried out by them provide very useful information on the type of migration with which they are most concerned. But on a broader plane, except for Janarth to some extent, information on different types of migration, the relationship between migration and child education status, and a comprehensive database on the educational status



of children in the selected villages is still lacking (or where some of the relevant information exists, has not been analyzed fully).

There is another data related issue due to which the impact of the program cannot be measured easily. As mentioned earlier, school-aged children in official records are usually categorised as 'enrolled', 'never enrolled' and 'dropped out'. But school records invariably mention a very high percentage of children as being 'enrolled' even when these children do not attend school for most months in a year or in some cases, do not even take examinations but are automatically promoted. Thus school records overstate enrolments and understate 'never enrolled' and 'drop outs'. The Government of India in its elaboration of programs on Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Schemes for Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) has used a wider definition of 'dropped out' which includes children who have not been attending school for a prolonged period of time. Consistent with this, AIF partners use the de facto status of the students to categorize them as 'never enrolled' or 'dropped out' but this differs from the official picture. While this is part of a larger issue, the more genuine distinction seems to be (on the input side) between 'regular attendees', 'irregular attendees' and 'non attendees' in a school year (the latter two being non-enrolled and dropped out children), for which indicators need to be developed and supplemented with performance based (outcome) indicators.

▲ The village migration registers in Orissa are an invaluable source of information. Taken together with the hostel records, they allow us to quantify clearly the extent to which the seasonal hostels have been able to wean away the children from family-based migration.



▲ At a Janarth-run seasonal hostel for children of sugarcane workers at Sanghavi village, Beed district, Maharashtra.

Meals are the highpoint for the children in the hostels. Wherever asked the children rated their meals as the most attractive feature of hostel life.

Physical Infrastructure in Schools and Hostels

The schools and hostels function in diverse contexts and it is not possible *a priori* to fix a minimum set of benchmarks which should be met by them. Nonetheless, at this stage of the program it is worth considering whether internal norms should be evolved. (The SSA has external norms in Maharashtra which according to the Janarth director were unrealistic given the ground reality.)

The basic requirements are of adequate physical space, availability of potable water, toilets, protection from inclement weather, separate sleeping arrangements, baths and minimum standards in served meals. While the NGOs have taken care to provide some minimum amenities such as drinking water, covered space, first aid kits etc, this varied from place to place and was barely rudimentary in some places. Some of the NGOs have specified their own minimum standards. CFT has tried to ensure that electricity is available in all locations (it has provided for solar based systems in collaboration with another NGO even in remote locations). Janarth, too has tried to provide all basic infrastructure in its *shakharshalas*. Nevertheless, there are gaps. Separate sleeping arrangements are not available for boys and girls everywhere, nor are female coordinators available for the female inmates everywhere, although a male coordinator is teamed with a female cook. (This has been addressed subsequently by AIF.)

Meals, however, are the highpoint for the children in the hostels. Wherever we asked the children, they rated their meals as the most attractive feature of hostel life.

Teaching Infrastructure

Compared to formal schools where teaching aids and books were available but rarely used, we found that site schools and hostels had a variety of teaching aids which were, in most cases, used more frequently by the students who also demonstrated considerable familiarity in using them. In some of Janarth's schools and hostels, laptops had been provided in 2009 and were a great source of attraction for the students. As was the case with the laboratories set up in the *shakharshalas*.

Teachers and Hostel Coordinators

The fulcrum of the teaching-learning process is the teacher. Recruitment of teachers with suitable qualifications, providing them with sufficient motivation, incentives and training and enabling them to engage the first generation learners meaningfully is undoubtedly a huge challenge in a project of this kind.

Janarth, as mentioned before, is an exception with larger site schools and hostels and has been able to place one teacher per grade in the SSs and generally two coordinators per hostels. But in the case of all other partners, the SSs and SHs have a single teacher typically catering to children of 5 grades and sometimes even 7. While there is an effort on the part of AIF to maintain the teacher-pupil ratio at 1:25, in a number of cases observed in both SSA and SSA/AIF-funded schools/hostels, the number of students was more than this norm. Almost all the partners feel that at least in the larger hostels the number of coordinators should be more than one, and perhaps their responsibilities could be split. The AIF norm is that beyond 30 students, a second staff may be considered.

The salaries for teachers and coordinators in the program fixed under the AIE or EGS schemes of the State governments are low, in some cases as low as Rs 1000 per month. However, AIF 'tops up' these salaries wherever necessary to ensure payment of a minimum of Rs 2500 as a salary to a SS teacher or a SH coordinator. These salaries are still low, on par with those provided to contract teachers (called para-teachers) in many states. And even the limited incentives which some State governments provide to their contract teachers cannot be provided by AIF (for example, the Gujarat government absorbs the contract teachers in the regular cadre after five years). Finding teachers with requisite qualifications at these salaries is difficult in most areas. The difficulty is compounded by the tough conditions under which these teachers/coordinators are expected to perform, and the temporary nature of their jobs. **The salary of the hostel coordinators, who perform multiple responsibilities and work very long hours, is not at all commensurate with their responsibilities. Moreover, alternative employment opportunities—quite high in some of the areas—also make the task of finding teachers with adequate qualifications, and then retaining them, more difficult.**

Finding teachers with requisite qualifications at low salaries is difficult in most areas. The problem is compounded by the difficult conditions under which these teachers/coordinators are expected to perform, and the temporary nature of their jobs. By the time a new recruit in October comes to grips with the work, it is almost time for the SS/SH to close in April-May.

While there is an effort on the part of AIF to maintain the teacher-pupil ratio at 1:25, in a number of cases observed in both SSA and SSA/AIF-funded schools and hostels, the number of students was more than this norm.

► Teachers undergo training at the Lokadrusti office at Kharia, Nuapada district, Orissa. There is a dire need for training teachers, and all the NGOs run periodic training programs for them.

The hostel coordinators are employed for 12 months as they are village based and work can be generated for them throughout the year. In contrast, site school teachers are employed for only 6-8 migration months, after which the schools close and there is no work for them at the sites. This pushes up their turnover rates. In Maharashtra the turnover rate is as high as 70 per cent. It is probably as expensive to re-recruit and re-train teachers every year as it would be to retain them for 12 months. But it is a no-win situation for NGOs. This is why AIF and its partners are keen that SS are attached to local schools with teachers appointed by the government and trained and monitored by the NGO.

The duration of the schools and hostels is the shortest in the case of Janarth (only 7 months), which is why they repeat the recruitment process each year. Different NGOs follow different recruitment priorities and norms. For example, while most of the NGOs prefer to recruit local teachers/coordinators, Janarth, as a matter of principle recruits non-locals. In making local recruitments, the NGOs give different weights to the preference of the local community and their own judgment. Lokadrusti and its partners in fact involve the local community in the selection of the hostel coordinator. Clearly the initial focus in Orissa was on managing the hostels, but since 2006-07, they advertise teacher-cum-coordinator positions for their hostels.

Initially some NGOs tried to recruit by advertising for the teachers' posts. They soon realized the difficulties. Janarth found that few in the tribal belt read the newspapers; they switched to handbill distribution during the weekly market. The other groups too felt advertising was ineffective because the candidates had no clue about the work conditions nor about the children they had to mentor. Some left the job within 2 days, the brave left after 2 months. It was at this juncture, that the NGOs decided to select candidates from the local community.



◀ A packed classroom of enthusiastic children of migrant sugarcane workers at a site school run by Janarth in Maharashtra.

After trial and error, now most groups insist on classroom teaching for the candidate before the final round of selection to ensure that the teacher is good at communicating with the young students. In Lokadrusti and YMC, candidates are observed for one week in the classroom to see how the trainee plans the lessons, handles the class and so forth. **The most desired qualification, held by all the NGOs, is whether the candidate understands and is sensitive to the specific situation of the migrant children and the local community.**

The transient nature of the job does not encourage commitment or lend depth to the work. By the time a new recruit in October comes to grips with the work, it is almost time for the SS/SH to fold up in April-May. It is difficult to get teachers in Kutchh, as after the earthquake there are new industries that offer many job opportunities, and the NGO cannot match the salary.

The difficulty in finding suitable teachers/hostel coordinators is reflected in the fact that some of them do not even have high school qualifications. This would make it difficult for them to provide proper education to students. However, this also points to the dire need for training the teachers. Janarth makes provision for a prolonged in-house training for 30-40 days for teachers from the tribal belt. CFT provides a short 5-day inception training, followed by subject training in Science and Mathematics, as well as on themes such as human rights and rights-based development. YMC provides for a month-long in-house training. In addition AIF connected all 3 Gujarat partners with Aga Khan Education Services, India, (AKESI) based in Rajkot, for training. Similarly, Lokadrusti and its partners were connected with Vikramshila, a NGO based in Kolkata.

All the NGOs also provide on-site support through supervisory staff and through regular meetings and peer interaction. There is undoubtedly a clear difference observable in the field between teachers who have undergone one or more modules of training and those who have not.

A questionnaire filled by the schools visited revealed that in most cases students showed a degree of confidence and improved learning. The performance varied across NGOs, and in the sample seen, appeared to be weaker in the Lokadrusti and YMC schools. The baseline of Lokadrusti areas is, however, significantly lower than other partner areas. In general, the situation is better off in Gujarat and Maharashtra, even in their backward districts as compared to tribal Orissa.

Gender Issues and Social Inclusion

Setu has worked in a principled way to overcome gender and social barriers at all levels of its work. Despite some success stories gender gaps in enrollment in site schools and hostels remain high across partners.

The extent to which NGO partners have addressed gender and social barriers varies. In Gujarat, Setu has worked in a principled way to overcome it at all levels of its work. On the other hand, YMC, partly because of its history of focusing on a single community (fisherfolk), appeared to make the least effort to provide socially inclusive hostels. Despite some encouraging success stories, and some improvement over the initial years, gender gaps in enrollment in SSs and SHs remain high. The figures show that these gaps are wider at higher stages of school. Cultural barriers were clearly more pronounced in Gujarat than in rural Maharashtra or Orissa. But other factors, such as the pressure to support families by taking up domestic responsibilities either at work sites or at home also contributed to this gap.

Gender gaps were pronounced not only for students but also for coordinators and teachers. Given that cultural barriers and availability of educated female teachers varied from area to area, it is difficult to separate out NGO strategy from the social context, but we did find that only some NGOs, noticeably Setu, strive to reduce gender gaps. In its case the percentage of women among teachers, supervisors and coordinators was 40 per cent, 25 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. In Janarth's case, 26 per cent of its teachers were women.

For the program to achieve its own objectives, gender outcomes need to be worked upon and improved.



► A seasonal hostel for boys and girls run by Setu in Kharchiya, Rajkot district, Gujarat. Cultural barriers were more pronounced in Gujarat than in rural Maharashtra or Orissa.

PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS IN THE PROGRAM – 2008 - 2009					
	JANARTH	SETU	CFT	YMC	LOKADRUSTI
SITE SCHOOLS	47	47.7	43.7	39.6	–
SEASONAL HOSTELS	43	38	31.6	11.1	34.6

A Pilot Initiative to Improve the Quality of Learning

Our assessment of the impact of LAMP on the learning ability of hostel students is positive. But AIF has been rightly concerned that education provided to the children in the program ought to meet higher quality standards so that students and their parents continue to retain an interest in schooling. AIF has started a new quality initiative under which children in selected hostels (five with each partner) are carefully graded in terms of their learning skills. The aim is to ensure that each student initially achieves grade 2 competency. The tests show that a fairly significant percentage of older children could not show even this level of competency. The coordinators in the SHs, with the support of supervisors assigned for the task are engaged in upgrading the educational abilities of the children through the methodologies imparted to them in training and they claim that repeated tests within a month have already begun showing positive results. Partners feel that the improved learning of the hostel children has begun to create a ripple effect even in the formal schools. Many of the partners, for example, Lokadrusti, have already undertaken measures to upscale this pilot and we are given to understand that AIF would like to retain a focus on the quality learning initiative.

Nonetheless, this approach needs to take cognizance of some issues which may need to be addressed.

- First, the hostels are an ideal site only for supplementary instruction, particularly if some instruction is not to crowd out other forms of learning/activity by the children. The children's daily time table allows only for a few hours of such instruction.
- Second, this puts exceptional demands on the coordinators' time and skills. At present, the quality checks are confined to grade 2 competency. As this moves to higher grades, there would be an enhanced demand on the coordinators whose own learning levels are quite limited. We have already noted that coordinators are overburdened and also

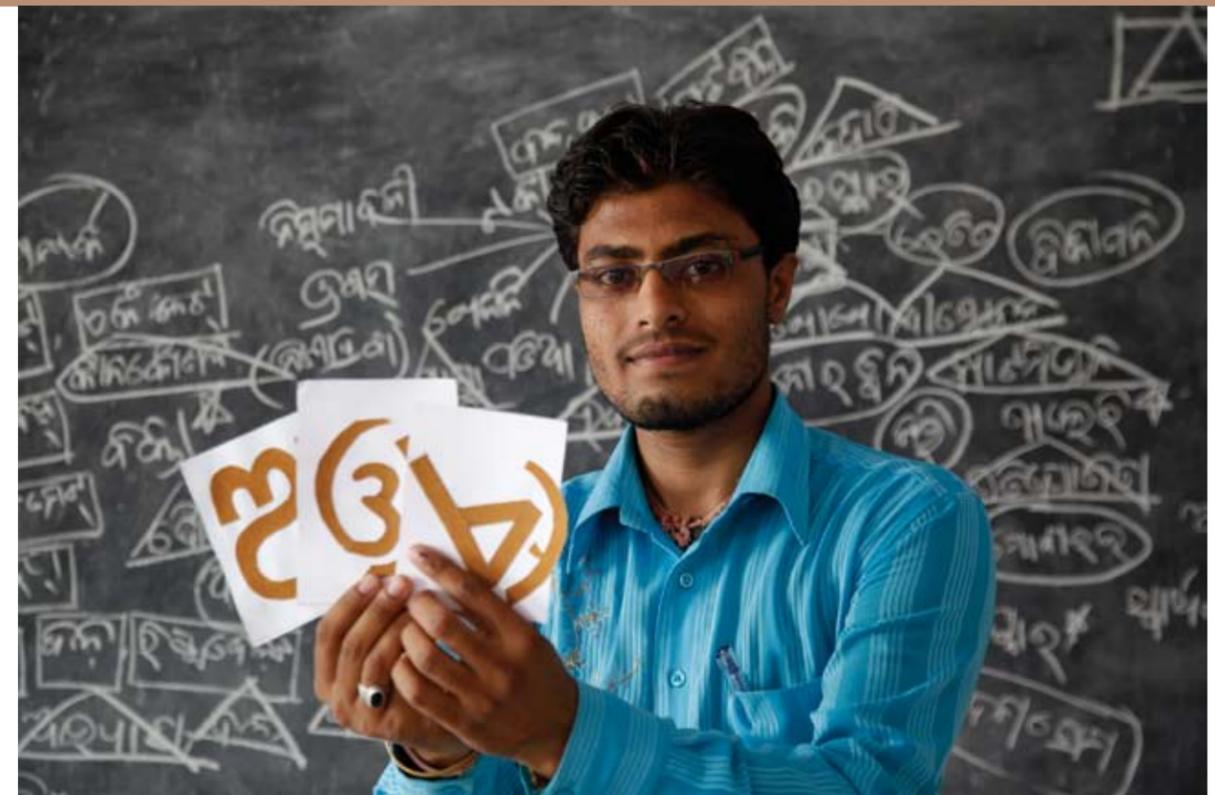
Under AIF's pilot initiative to improve learning, the coordinators in the SHs, with the support of supervisors, are now engaged in upgrading the educational abilities of the children through the methodologies imparted to them in training. Partners feel that the improved learning of the hostel children has begun to create a ripple effect even in the formal schools.

The present AIF initiative to improve the quality of education will be viable and sustainable if a way can be found to mainstream quality upgradation in the formal schools. Otherwise the formal schools will be abdicating their role and the entire pressure will be on the hostels for quality teaching. The teaching support given in the hostels cannot be a substitute for the regular and formal teaching of the primary village schools.

underpaid. Although the present initiative is supported by supervisors, the day-to-day operational burden lies with them. Different partners have followed different approaches in upgrading quality. While in YMC, support is being provided by the general supervisory layer, CFT, Lokadrusti and Setu have designated some supervisors as 'quality' supervisors and built a small team to assist with this task. Janarth has followed the same approach but has assigned three supervisors to assist with the new methodology. AIF proposes to take steps to strengthen the capacity of teachers in the next phase by providing different types of training. One of these will be to assess and strengthen the subject or content knowledge of the teachers, especially in mathematics and science, which may be low to begin with, or may need to be refreshed. One round of such training has been imparted to teachers in CFT and Lokadrusti with encouraging results. But these training initiatives will be subject to the constraints mentioned above.

- Third, the present initiative is being piloted in only a sample of schools, which were considered the most appropriate, as for example having better quality instructors and hostels close to the headquarters, so that monitoring could be manageable. Upscaling will be done in phases, every year. Setu and others plan to take 5 more new hostels as quality centres and concentrate on training. In Orissa, with recent takeover of hostel management by VECs, Lokadrusti consortium instructors can concentrate exclusively on instruction, and hence the consortium is trying to upscale the quality program to all their hostels. However, given the constraints in terms of the qualifications of the instructors, the varied experience and capability of the teachers, it is still difficult to envisage how the approach can take firm roots across all the hostels.

- Fourth, on the student side, the strategy does not presently fully factor in the discontinuous nature of the hostel residency in such a program. Although, our conclusions, based on figures reported by the NGOs show that in some areas a significant proportion of migrant children do not necessarily continue as hostel inmates on a year-to-year basis. For example, Janarth did a follow up survey in 2008-09 in 38 sending villages. It found that out of 902 children who had attended *shakharshalas* during 2005-08, 68 per cent had continued in schools while the rest had dropped out. The percentage of those continuing in schools was similar among boys and girls. Among the various reasons reported were continuous absenteeism, overage, pressure for work in fields and domestic work. In order to analyze hostel retention, Janarth analyzed data from 6 villages where it had worked in SHs for a continuous period of 3 years. The total number of students (cumulative) who had taken advantage of hostels was 597, of whom 10 per cent (59) had taken advantage for all three years, whereas 18.3 per cent had taken advantage for two continuous years. In Gujarat, where the migration is short distance, the figures reported to us by Setu and CFT are better, but show that 66 and 82 per cent respectively of the children enrolled last year were also in the hostels in the current year (including



a small percentage who have graduated from the system). The overall figures from Orissa show a low continuation rate of 31 per cent from the last to the current year in the hostels. We examined the oldest seasonal hostel in Nuapada which is also piloting the quality initiative. Only 18 per cent of the students who were in the hostel in 2004-05 were also inmates in 2008-09. While some graduated, the majority dropped out or re-entered migration. **Thus while the percentage of students that is retained from year to year in the hostels varies between hostels and regions, the retention rates are a cause of concern and only a careful assessment of their numbers and stability would provide a firmer basis for the initiative.**

Similar issues of stability also arise with respect to the teachers. As shown earlier, there is a problem of turnover of teachers, although variable between NGOs. While Setu reported that 93 per cent of its teachers were retained from last year, the figures were smaller for the other NGOs. In CFT there was a turnover of 41 per cent from the previous year. In YMC hostels, of the seven from last year, only two teachers remained whereas in the 12 site schools seven teachers remained. As discussed earlier, due to the pattern of recruitment, turnover rates in Janarth are high. In 30 hostels managed by Lokadrusti in 2008-09, only 10 teachers were continuing from the start. Overall, given the investment required in training, the strategy to retain teachers needs to be assessed in light of the substantial rate of teacher turnover in the field areas. (AIF has subsequently taken various steps to stem turnover problems which is between 10-20 per cent across NGOs now.)

It is not that the pilot initiative is not producing results. The results are perhaps even

▲ Arif Baig, a teacher at Lokadrusti's seasonal hostel in Orissa, who has undergone the quality training program as part of AIF's pilot initiative to improve the quality of learning under LAMP.

beyond expectations. But the main issues relate to sustainability and scalability. In our view, the present AIF initiative will be viable and sustainable if a way can be found to mainstream quality upgradation in the formal schools. Otherwise the formal schools will be abdicating their role and the entire pressure will be on the hostels for quality teaching. Moreover, the teaching support given in the hostels cannot be a substitute for the regular and formal teaching of the primary village schools. **The issue of quality learning needs to be discussed in the specific context of the program, involving issues of teacher qualification, recruitment, turnover, student turnover, instruction time, etc. AIF may like to have more consultation for its next phase, which will largely focus on the quality of learning.**

Integration of the Program with State and Local Governments

The national flagship program for elementary education in India, SSA, has recognized the need to have focused initiatives to educate migrant children. It has asked States to identify and include children whose education is affected due to migration and has suggested parameters under some of its existing program such as the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and the Scheme for Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) by which States could assist in setting up seasonal hostels or site schools. The guidelines for the AIE (which is more relevant for migrant situations) provides for support to site schools, seasonal hostels, bridge courses for dropped out children, and mobile teachers to accompany migrant families. The guidelines also provide for supporting AIE initiatives through voluntary agencies apart from being directly implemented by State agencies or local governments. There are ceilings in expenditure to be incurred for non-residential and residential children (Rs 3,000 and Rs 10,000 per child respectively) and on the teachers/hostel coordinators. The approvals are expected to be done through EGS and AIE societies created at the district and State levels. The schemes also provide for elements such as supervision and teacher training.

Despite this general framework, the uptake in States has been low, leaving a large gap between interventions on the ground (whether government financed or not). However, the governments of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa have supported seasonal hostels, site schools and other initiatives in the 2008-09 school year, and AIF estimates (Annual Report, 2007-08) that they are investing \$12.5 million to educate 145,000 children affected by migration. Some other State governments, notably Andhra Pradesh, have also taken similar initiatives.

The Maharashtra government has set out parameters of support for SHs either by VECs or by NGOs. The latter require the consent of the VECs if they set up these hostels with governmental financial support. The entire procedure of approvals is cumbersome, tedious and time consuming and has to be followed afresh each year. In Gujarat, the government supports a limited number of SHs through the NGOs and allocates the numbers to the NGOs. In both cases, the sanction for the hostels is for a limited number of months, shorter than the migration cycle and the financial release is almost always considerably delayed.

In the case of site schools, these can be sanctioned by the government under one of the available parameters in the SSA, that of Education Guarantee Schools i.e. schools which can be set up in locations where none are available within a distance of a kilometre, or by recognizing these children as 'hard to reach' children under AIE. In Orissa, the SSA has again supported the setting up of SHs (called RCCs) in several of its migration prone districts (Bolangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi and Nuapada). As in Maharashtra, these hostels could be set up under the

auspices of the VEC or by an NGO (again with the formal consent of the local community and the VEC). In actual practice, most of the successful SHs have been run by NGOs. However, in 2008-09, the Government of Orissa announced that SHs in the state would only be run by the VECs. This has caused a lot of flux in the situation on the ground in Orissa. (See page 59.)

The procedure for approvals, sanctions and financial releases is again an annual one, with all the features and delays described earlier. Further, as pointed out earlier, in the case of the site schools, an elaborate procedure has to be followed to first treat the child's location in the SSs as a 'transfer' from the parent school; then to maintain and transfer her attendance record to the local (destination area) formal school where she can write her examinations if necessary, and finally to transfer the record of attendance/ performance back to the parent school, and each step requires facilitation by the school and education department authorities, as well as approval of the local VEC.

Even the present level of government support to these initiatives has been achieved through persistent advocacy by the partners, supported in no small measure by good officials sometimes at the helm of affairs in the state or district, and supplemented (as in the case of Lokadrusti, Janarth and Setu) by use of Right to Information Act (RTI) and questions in the Legislative Assembly or council.

The governments of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa have supported seasonal hostels, and site schools in the 2008-09 school year, and AIF estimates that they are investing \$12.5 million to educate 145,000 children affected by migration.



◀ Children eat their mid-day meal at the government primary school at Morula village, Beed district, Maharashtra. Janarth runs a hostel here for children of sugarcane workers. The younger children attend the school, identified here by their badges.

The view that AIF should not put government financial support as a conditionality has been suggested most strongly. The alternative strategy proposed would be that AIF only supports the development of prototype site schools/ hostels through full financing and leaves the government to replicate these models through other channels.

The MoUs with AIF now build in government financial support for the programs, providing essentially matching support. This objective is to incentivize the partners to seek government support which clearly (for honest NGOs) is not easily forthcoming. Presently, partners have used AIF funds as bridge as well as supplementary support.

In the case of Gujarat partners, Setu uses AIF support to fund certain schools and hostels in periods when government support is delayed and not available. On the other hand, CFT designates schools and hostels as either government-funded or AIF-funded. In principle, in Maharashtra, government support can be available for all the schools and hostels but not always for the entire migration period, but there are delays and difficulties in achieving this, and external support from AIF (and Banyan Tree Foundation for site schools) allows Janarth to sustain the program at its present level. In the case of Lokadrusti and its consortium partners, all their schools received SSA grants. The proportion of AIF's share in total grant has declined in Orissa (currently about 30 per cent) but is vital to run the supervisory and training systems and to allow the NGOs some fall back options to cope with delays and cut backs in governmental funding. Some of the partners also receive supplementary support from other organizations as well—in addition to Janarth's support from BTF mentioned above, YMC got support for its site schools (till recently) from CARE, while Setu gets a small grant from Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Site schools have to necessarily adhere to a governmental regulatory system since the education they provide is expected to supplement formal school education, irrespective of whether they receive any governmental funding or not. The hostels, on the other hand, need not be government regulated unless they receive its support.

The view that AIF should not put government financial support as a conditionality has been suggested most strongly by the Janarth Executive Director. The alternative strategy proposed would be that AIF only supports the development of prototype site schools/hostels through full financing and leaves the government to replicate these models through other channels. On the other hand, AIF could also decide to finance specific components or activities, reducing the overlap with government funding, but this may reduce the cushion available to the partners and jeopardize existing interventions.

Careful lessons need to be drawn based on the partner's experience in working with government, and AIF should focus on the comparative experience of the three states (and others if information is available) in advocating models of government support which could work well in the different contexts. In doing this, the recent Orissa experience may be instructive.



Recent Experience of LAMP in Orissa

The LAMP in Orissa has possibly witnessed greater changes than in other states. The Government of Orissa's SSA program has been supporting the seasonal hostels through its AIE scheme even before AIF came on the scene. This is because more than any other state, the tribal areas of Western Orissa have been known for their out-migration. But the functioning of the RCCs has been less than satisfactory. (AIF wanted to model how a good RCC can be run.) The management of the RCCs has been mostly with NGOs but some RCCs have also been managed by the Village Education Committees. In Nuapada district, of the 199 RCCs, 50 were being managed by the VECs. As in all other cases, the NGOs make a proposal to government (District Project Coordinator of the SSA) through the VEC and the headmaster and on approval, the proposal is forwarded by the District Magistrate and receives government sanction. In 2008-09, the Government of Orissa took a late decision (in January 2009) after the migration period was half over, to run all the RCCs directly through the VECs. Lokadrusti and its consortium partners had already opened RCCs in 52 hostels on the basis of approvals given by the district administration. The government decided to reimburse the NGO costs for the period till February.

Orissa provides an opportunity to study a model which has emerged by default. The comparison of two models—one in which the VEC and NGO are cooperating and one in which the hostels are being run exclusively by the VECs—is also possible.

While the VEC is supervising and managing the RCCs, Lokadrusti and its partners are providing support for social mobilization, database creation, and learning processes and strengthening the systems they have set up.

Since February when this change occurred, Lokadrusti (and AIF) have continued to support the RCCs through the instructors who run bridge courses for dropped out students during June to September, and subsequently take supplementary classes of the residents for about four hours every day (as per the new methodology of AIF). They continue to support the surveys and community mobilization as before. The actual management is now provided by the VECs, which have an elected chairperson with the village school headmaster as member secretary. A new hostel coordinator has been appointed at the honorarium fixed by the SSA (Rs 1000 per month). Thus effectively, while the VEC is supervising and managing the RCCs, Lokadrusti and its partners are providing support for social mobilization, database creation, and learning processes and strengthening the systems it had set up. Orissa provides an opportunity to study a model which has emerged by default. Moreover, comparison of two models—one in which the VEC and NGO are cooperating and one in which the RCCs are being run exclusively by the VECs—is also possible. Our field observations indicate the following:

- In most cases, the headmaster effectively administers the RCC on behalf of the VEC. There were only a few cases where the VEC chairperson and a few other members were actively involved in the RCC.
- A number of children of local residents had been inducted into the RCCs, inflating the list of 'residents'. Only a few of these children came to the RCC for meals. Students and community members indicated that the quality of meals had gone down, and the earlier dietary variety was no longer available.
- The only activities in the RCC were those implemented by the NGO instructors, who were still involving the students in learning and extra-curricular activities.

► Children at the Khirmal Residential Care Centre (RCC) eating rice left over from the night before. Ever since the Village Educational Committees (VECs) took over the running of the hostels, students and community members indicated the quality of the meals has gone down.



- In a few cases, the RCCs had been closed down by the VEC secretary, even though very few migrant parents had returned.
- Over half a dozen RCCs run by the VECs without NGO support were visited. Except in one or two cases, where dinner was still being provided by the RCC all others had been closed down, although they were still operating on paper. Most of the enrolled children in the RCCs were children of non-migrants.

Although 2008-09 was an exceptional year since the RCCs were handed over to the VECs in February 2009, there are common trends in their mode of management, both in the case of VECs in which Lokadrusti and its partners are still involved and those in which only VECs are involved. These can be summarized as follows:

- VECs have been enrolling (on paper) both migrant and non-migrant children.
- Hostel activities are reduced to a minimum, principally being confined to providing meals to a subset of the enrolled children.
- RCCs have been closed down before the return of migrants while they continue to run on paper.

Meetings with the Collector and the District Project Coordinator were quite instructive. Both suggested that the shift in policy had taken place because some of the NGOs were inflating figures and not managing the RCCs well. But they also conceded that all was not well currently and that there could again be a policy change, allowing NGOs to manage the RCCs. This could be because the print and electronic media had been highlighting the negative impact of the change. Interestingly, the government had released full payments of NGOs on whose performance the media had put question marks in the earlier period while withholding payments to Lokadrusti and its partners. (Subsequently in 2009-10 Lokadrusti is again running hostels independently.)

There are question marks on whether the VECs could manage the RCCs efficiently, a considered view is that in the Orissa context, the VECs on their own cannot undertake the task of advocacy and weaning away the migrant children from labor migration. Can the RCCs work with VEC-NGO cooperation? The recent change, in some sense reduces some of the responsibility and risk which NGOs have been bearing in taking responsibility of the hostel children for several months. Shorn of this risk, there seems to be some scope for VEC-NGO cooperation and the ground rules for such cooperation need to be jointly formulated. This is a developing situation and the negatives in the Orissa situation can possibly be seized upon to evolve the contours of a new type of program.

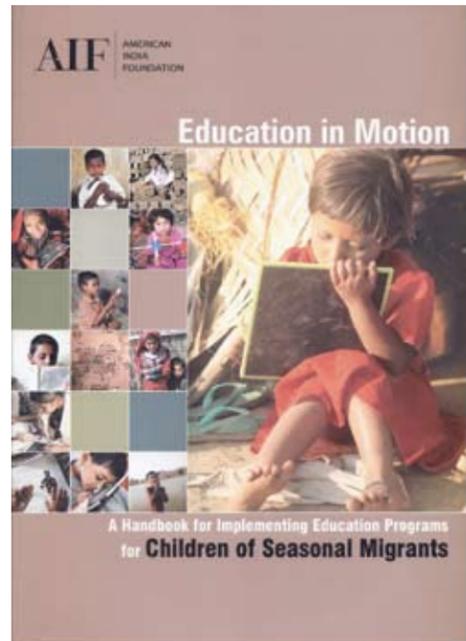
Going Beyond Elementary Education?

The partners in Gujarat are currently focusing on the elementary school cycle (Grade 1 to 7). However, there is some involvement with taking the children beyond the elementary school level and nurturing them through high school. As an experiment CFT has tried to get some 48 children successfully admitted to high school. YMC is supporting older children by providing hostel accommodation to them in Bhadrashwar and Khavada. It has also provided some support to elementary school children in its hostels and site schools to enrol in high schools by providing them with cycles. CFT is also supporting a limited number of migrants' children in high schools in similar fashion. It is also considering interventions to support skill training among the older children. The facilitation of first generation learners from deprived migrant communities can serve as a role model for these communities.

However, it has to be recognized that this type of support is still limited and falls far short of developing into a systematic strategy or a full-fledged program. Indeed, given the very different structure of secondary school education (mainly private and oriented towards general education), it is also not clear as yet what shape a possible program in this direction could take.

The Role of Advocacy

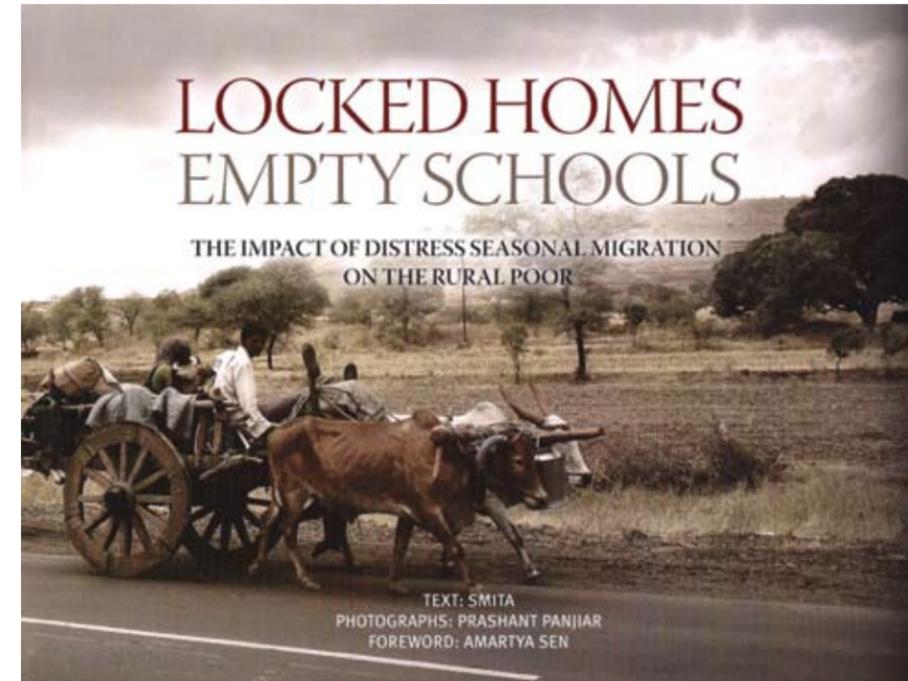
The foremost contribution of AIF and its partners has been to highlight and make visible the issue of education of children in the context of seasonal family migration and to demonstrate the feasibility and viability of basically sound approaches which have been a part and parcel of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, but on paper.



- **With Government Agencies:** One major aspect of advocacy has been with government officials in the Centre and States who are responsible for programs which have a bearing on child education. The AIF office has itself spearheaded this advocacy campaign with the support of the SSA program officials and the officials of the Ministry, who have from time to time, issued clarificatory orders to the States, and revised the per capita budgetary norms in line with actual requirements. Similar efforts have been taken up with State officials which has lent a profile and visibility to the issue within States and has facilitated the work of partners and others working with migrating children.

- **Through Publications:** The AIF has also distilled its experience of seasonal migration and its impact through the work of its partners in the various geographies that it has worked and has disseminated this widely in the form of a well-written book on seasonal migration (*Locked Homes, Empty Schools: The Impact of Distress Seasonal Migration on the Rural Poor* by Smita, Zubaan, 2007) released in Delhi in 2007 by Prof. Amartya Sen, who in his remarks candidly admitted that the book brought home to him the depth of the problem.

AIF has published an operational manual (*Education in Motion: A Handbook for Implementing Education Programs for Children of Seasonal Migrants*, AIF, 2009), which is an invaluable guide to the practitioners, both governmental and non-governmental. The manual approaches the issue at all levels and from all angles, beginning with a typology of migration and its impact on child education and then carrying the discussion to issues of State, district and block-level planning and implementation, NGO implementation, features and processes in the different types of intervention and field processes. It is a pity that this manual has not been co-sponsored by government making its circulation in governmental processes limited.



- **Through Other NGOs:** A third dimension of AIF advocacy has been interaction and collaboration with other agencies. For instance, it has interacted with UN agencies and other multi laterals for awareness raising, with academic institutions to encourage research on the subject and with the National Foundation of India for media awareness.

- **Advocacy by Partner NGOs:** Apart from AIF's advocacy initiatives, the role of its partners has been no less impressive. In Gujarat, Setu and CFT have carried out an impressive portfolio of studies on seasonal migration and its impact and which have been followed more recently by YMC. These studies are listed in the bibliography of this report. Setu has used various fora including the judicial process to focus on the rights of migrants and the children. In Maharashtra, Janarth has not only carried out impressive studies on the condition of sugarcane migrants in the destination and (more recently) in the sending areas, it has used many other channels, including media, Legislative Assembly questions and questions under the RTI to galvanize public action on this issue. In Orissa, Lokadrusti and its partners have not only highlighted migration related issues through the media, they have also taken up cudgels against human rights abuses in migration.

While a precise assessment of the impact of the approach to advocacy by AIF and its partners may be difficult and perhaps also premature, there is no doubt that this advocacy has made a significant contribution in maintaining a certain degree of momentum and visibility on the issue of education of the migrating children in the program states, and to some extent even at the national level.

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7 | Conclusion

Overall Assessment

Gap in coverage: There is a huge implementation gap at present relating to the education of children of migrating families. Even in areas where AIF partners are working, the unmet need for the education of migrant children is vast. For example, despite Janarth's vast and impressive intervention, only about 7 per cent of the migrant children were covered in the site schools in the sugarcane areas. There is no reliable estimate of the coverage in other migrant destinations such as brick kilns and mining sites. Rough estimates were made of the coverage in Gujarat. Although, in some cases (roof tile factories and salt-pans) the coverage was impressive, there was a vast gap in the coverage of children in other site schools. Similarly, the AIF partner initiatives in setting up seasonal hostels for children of migrating families, cover only a small percentage of migration prone villages in the selected districts in all the three states, and not all the affected children in the selected villages are able to benefit from the interventions. This is not unexpected given the scale and nature of the problem and reflects the enormous need for upscaled interventions. AIF supported interventions can at best aim to highlight the issue and work out possible solutions while helping the lives of the number of children they cover. An assessment of coverage by other NGOs and agencies is not available, but this too, is likely to be small.

The government's SSA program does take the needs of migrant children on board and addresses these both through support to voluntary agencies as well as more directly. In Orissa's Nuapada district the VECs have been managing several seasonal hostels. In Aurangabad district in Maharashtra, the District Collector has started 50 hostels for migrant children. But, effective coverage under direct government delivery systems is still small and not likely to improve dramatically under existing governmental initiatives. This is primarily because the visibility of migrants is low both at the macro level and within local communities (they belong to the most marginalized communities) and drawing the migrants' children into education requires heavy social mobilization and multifaceted initiatives. But there are other reasons, both organizational and financial, which make upscaling of initiatives purely at the governmental level difficult at this stage. Moreover, as observations in Orissa indicate, the quality of the government-run hostels can be a matter of serious concern, severely limiting the impact of such interventions.

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General Findings on LAMP

The general findings of this review are very positive. Briefly:

- **A well founded initiative:** The scale and the magnitude of seasonal migration, and its impact upon the livelihood of workers and upon India achieving the MDGs are highly underrated in the existing policy and academic discourse in India. Hence, the intervention of AIF and its partners, in seeking to bring education to the children of seasonally migrant workers is an extremely well founded initiative.
- **Positive impact on children and community:** The program is limited to some areas in three states and is currently the most extensive in Maharashtra. It focuses on some of the poorest areas and the most vulnerable groups of migrants. The quality of seasonal hostels and site schools run under the program is, given the context, quite impressive. The children that we met had advanced in learning, were engaged with the schools/hostels and looked forward to their continuance. So also their parents and guardians.
- **Advanced partners' experience:** The AIF and partners have, within a limited number of years, deepened their understanding and have advanced in their experience of the process. The partners, who did not have prior experience of working in elementary education, have 'learnt on the job'. The monitoring and implementation mechanisms that have been set up are quite rigorous in most cases. The partners have now acquired a wealth of experience in advocacy and in interaction with the community and different levels of government.
- **Created opportunity for intervention:** Persistent advocacy by AIF at the national and State level and the partners, at the State and local levels, has created the space within which the children of seasonal migrants can access education. However, since a great deal of social mobilization is necessary to make the programs effective one needs to know more about how they are working under alternative delivery mechanisms.

Program Strategy Related Recommendations

- **Redefine strategy within the framework of UEE:** The review suggests that despite valuable progress there is a long way to go in AIF supported interventions in order to ensure that the children of migrant workers (in the modal streams) are educated in the source villages or the destination areas. And that eventually all children living in these villages access education. Although this is not an objective for AIF or its partners at present, there has to be a careful consideration of AIF's key objectives at this stage in a wider social and cultural context, in order to analyze present constraints and formulate possible future strategies. In other words, AIF's broader goal has to be defined within the framework of UEE.
- **Expand the intervention to other areas/states.** For a small program in three states, AIF and its partners have been able to exercise important influence on national and State level programs. But the size of the intervention is not large enough to impress on the national and State governments the need and urgency of factoring in migration in education. AIF's own resources may not permit further geographical expansion of LAMP. Hence, there is a case for considering enlargement of similar interventions to more geographies in a few more states, using if possible a consortium approach.
- **Broadbase surveys and documentation:** Despite some excellent surveys/studies carried out by AIF and its partners on the pattern of seasonal migration in the areas of work, a number of questions remain, primarily because all these surveys have focused on modal migration streams and have thus tended to be segmented. In other words, despite excellent surveys and documentation, a full picture of either the patterns of migration or school education is still lacking. In Orissa, however, in villages and work sites where migration registers are well maintained, their analysis can yield a wealth of information. Overall, there is a need to define the context more comprehensively. For this it may be necessary to conduct surveys which are broad enough to cover the necessary ground.



- **More focused advocacy with Central/State governments:** Stronger evidence based advocacy for a bigger component of migration focused approach in SSA strategies is vital. This requires more learning from the experience of AIF and its partners, and better evidence on migration and its impact.

- **Pursue an integrated approach for upliftment of migrant's welfare at work sites and source areas:** Issues at the work sites and in the source areas are invariably linked. For example, improvement in working conditions, provision of crèches and small changes in labor processes at the work sites would dramatically reduce the opportunity cost of child labor and child work and make it far more feasible for the migrants to educate their children, conditions permitting. A strategy for improving the access of migrant children to education cannot be pursued entirely in isolation of the migrants' search for better and more dignified lives. At the work sites, Janarth's strategy of integrating early childhood care with education and health camps for children are significant beginnings. The lines pursued by CFT, Lokadrusti and Parada, and YMC are also promising. The two Gujarat organizations cooperate with the Agariya Hirkarni Manch and the Setu Information Centre to improve health, safety and social protection available to salt-pan workers. In the source areas, the Orissa organizations have taken to a rights based approach as well as to raising awareness among migrant workers and advocacy among the labor contractors to break the *patri* system. They have also focused on improving the local livelihood base and access to employment through the NREGA to reduce distress migration. The impact of these steps on distress migration has unfortunately so far been very marginal. The central issue is to consider those strategies which can be integrated to provide better livelihoods as well as educational opportunities for the children, both male and female, in the source areas as well as the destination areas.

- **Strategic innovation for seasonal hostels and site schools:** AIF as a strategy has favored intervention in source areas while supporting education of children at work sites, recognizing that for various reasons it may not be possible to reach out to children in the source areas. This report shows that AIF is correct in its approach in prioritizing support to source areas. At the same time it is difficult to follow an either/or approach at this stage, given the current level of total family migration and the limited coverage of overall intervention. However, it may be possible to innovate in terms of strategies, for example integrating site schools and local schools wherever possible.

- **Prioritize gender and social inclusion:** Gender issues and cultural barriers continue to keep girls out of school, particularly so in Gujarat where the age of marriage is still low, and the girl's role in household subsistence strategies very high. There is a sharp drop out from schooling among adolescent and pre-adolescent girls. There are also serious ramifications for girls in migration as they are very vulnerable to abuse. Dealing with girls in this age group in the residential context also presents special problems. There is a case for AIF and partners to document gender issues in the program at this stage and to reflect on why some girls are still not in the education net in the intervention areas. An approach to deal with girls not currently fully integrated in LAMP may require a separate special focus (for example for adolescent girls) or may call for strengthening other strategy elements.

- **Taking some part of the program beyond elementary school education:** It has been shown that AIF partners have facilitated the entry of students from migrant families into high schools which may become a role model for some children from these communities. And now as the Government of India gears up for universalization of secondary education through its Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), extending the program beyond elementary school stage will be an important strategy pursued by AIF and its partners.



- **Integration of AIF's pilot on quality learning in seasonal hostels with local schools:** The focus of AIF and its partners on imparting quality education to migrant children under very difficult circumstances is quite exemplary. These efforts have had a positive impact felt by the students and the community. AIF is now piloting a new methodology which it hopes to expand in the next phase. This report, however, sounds a cautionary note both in terms of the situational constraints in imparting quality to seasonal hostel residents and the need to integrate this initiative with the wider schooling initiative.

Program Implementation Related Recommendations

- **Decentralization:** Partners ought to encourage more decentralized management of information, thus building greater capacity among the supervisory staff.

- **Consolidation of interventions:** Though monitoring and supervisory systems are working reasonably well overall, they are weak in certain cases. YMC's planning and monitoring systems need considerable consolidation and strengthening. While a certain breadth of approach may be welcome, YMC has dissipated its work in too many directions.



- **Working with government:** This report examines the social and governmental context in which the program is operating. The situation is different in different states, but a common element is the difficulty faced by the partners in working with the different levels of government and with the educational administration. While the manual prepared by AIF gives details of an operational strategy, it does not bring out the existing constraints. It is suggested that AIF and its partners prepare a paper on the relevant issues through a consultative workshop and use it as a basis for advocacy. This workshop could also elicit the participation of other organizations working on this issue.

- **Delineation of responsibilities:** The report has suggested that teacher recruitment, salaries and training need to be examined carefully by all the partners. A careful delineation of the responsibilities of the hostel coordinators also needs to be made, taking into account their existing workload and nature of responsibilities. Inception training of all teachers is a necessity in all cases.

- **Instruction quality in formal schools:** While AIF and its partners' focus on quality of education is undoubtedly very welcome, it is unlikely to be sustainable unless the initiative is rooted in the formal schools where the children spend most of their instructional time. This would necessarily mean the involvement of AIF and its partners on quality issues, going beyond children of migrants and focusing on the formal school system. The hostel coordinators need also to go beyond the school syllabi and encourage the children to learn in multiple ways including more from their local environment.

- **Strengthening relations between hostel and community:** The NGOs encourage the participation of the community in the management of the hostel in some important ways: providing hostel space and related infrastructure and providing some supervision. These links can be further strengthened: some contribution by the migrant families for the upkeep of their children; non-migrant relatives providing support to the hostels and the wards; a rotation of duties among cooks/helpers etc. This is already being practised in some of the areas but the experiences could be taken forward more systematically.

- **Strengthening relations between hostel and school:** The relationship between the hostels and the formal schools and that between hostel wardens and formal school teachers is a variable one. An examination of the existing experience is required in order to strengthen this relationship.

Although the Government of India has shown a high commitment towards educating all children, its programs need strong supplementary inputs in various forms. AIF should continue to support LAMP through focused interventions which can translate the governmental and social intent into reality.

A Concluding Note

There are few other investments that can bring higher social returns than investing in the future of children from the most vulnerable families. Although the Government of India has taken steps to reduce vulnerability through programs such as the NREGA, in the areas visited for this review, the program has still not made a significant dent on the situation on the ground, and migration rates continue to be very high. Further, although the government has shown a high commitment towards educating all children—now with the Right to Education having been passed as an Act of Parliament, and increased funds committed—its programs need strong supplementary inputs in various forms. AIF, in our view, should continue to support LAMP through focused interventions which can translate the governmental and social intent into reality.

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