



Career Guidance training workshop in progress for counsellors from Delhi schools held between 19th-21st January 2011

MEGA-SKY's focus is to create educational and skill building opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth in four states of India (Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh). MEGA (Minority Education for Growth and Advancement) works to facilitate access to quality education and livelihood opportunities among Muslim children and youth. SKY (Skills for Youth) works at the policy level to incubate and replicate successful approaches to improving skill development for young people. MEGA-SKY is made possible through support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is implemented by Education Development Center, Inc (EDC) and International Youth Foundation (IYF). Please visit <http://mega-sky.edc.org> for more information.

About the SKY Program

Skills for Youth (SKY) is a program which aims to support the Indian Government in its efforts to improve skill development programs for India's young people. These efforts intend to increase the employability of young people in India to help them to fully participate in the global economy. It is led by the International Youth Foundation (IYF), an international NGO that works with local partners around the world to prepare young people to be healthy, productive and engaged citizens, with support from its local implementing partner, Quality Education and Skills Training (QUEST) Alliance.

SKY works in collaboration with NGO and governmental agencies to increase the relevance and effectiveness of existing skill development programs for youth between the ages of 15 - 29 years. Based on consultations and dialogue with key stakeholders, SKY is developing pilot interventions that serve as models for promoting program enhancements on a national scale. Sharing the knowledge and good practices that emerge from these pilot interventions is a key goal of SKY as well. The intention is that successful initiative can be disseminated and replicated around the country. SKY is piloting its approaches in conjunction with government skills development schemes in Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

WHY SKY?

It is projected that by 2020, 25% of India's population – and 65% of its labour force – will be between the age of 15 and 29. This concentration of young people will have a profound impact on the country's future economic growth. At the same time, the 2nd National Commission on Labour, reports that an overwhelming majority of India's work force does not possess any identifiable marketable skill. Currently, only 25% of technical graduates and 10 to 15% of general graduates have the necessary skills for immediate employment. Only 5% of youth aged 20–24 have undergone any sort of formal training, compared between 60% and 80% in industrialized countries.

Workforce development in India faces the changing realities of

globalization and competitiveness, on one hand, and the need for inclusive growth on the other. The low literacy rate and lack of skills of the vast majority of the Indian population pose a major hurdle for its journey towards a knowledge economy. In addition, most of the new jobs will demand that youth be equipped with technical and soft skills like critical thinking, communication skills, teamwork, problem solving, multi-lingual abilities and customer orientation. Studies on skill development from various ministries and international organizations confirm that career guidance and soft skills specific to the workplace are weak in existing training curricula. Better guidance to help young people identify and prepare for their careers along with the skills needed for the new economy are critical to preparing India's youth for a successful future.

Understanding SkY Themes: Life Skills and Career Guidance

Based on its research and consultations with key stakeholders, the SkY program identified a few cross cutting themes for its pilot interventions with Government Schemes and Institutions.

Career Exploration & Guidance	Life Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Oneself • Understanding the World of Work • Decision Making • Understanding Influences • Identifying Suitable Choices • Career Preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Skills • Interpersonal Skills • Attitudes and Values • Emotional Resilience • Work Readiness • Entrepreneurship Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I start my business? • What are the skills I need? • Where can I find financial support?

Life Skills

Life Skills curricula are an integral part of employability and vocational training programmes. The goal is to develop confident individuals capable of self directed growth and to provide them with the 'soft skills' they need to be successful, self-sufficient adults. Ideally, life skills education is delivered through experiential learning, which increases the engagement of learners and promotes learning as a continuous and a life long experience.

A good life skills programme provides a deeper understanding and awareness of self that helps individuals establish a good attitudinal foundation as well as a basis for long-term professional and personal development. It provides skills related to communication, teamwork, responsibility, decision-making and conflict resolution, among others.

Most of the students undergoing skills training are provided information on technical skills with limited guidance on how to start a small enterprise and earn livelihood using the skills they learnt. Students are often left on their own to figure out the way forward. There will be modules included on entrepreneurship with the objective to equip youth with basic entrepreneurial knowledge and know how so that they can start a small enterprise on their own or as

a group. The pedagogy for entrepreneurship module will be based on experiential learning with many in class simulations



Life skills Training session in progress using a digital tool.

Career exploration and guidance

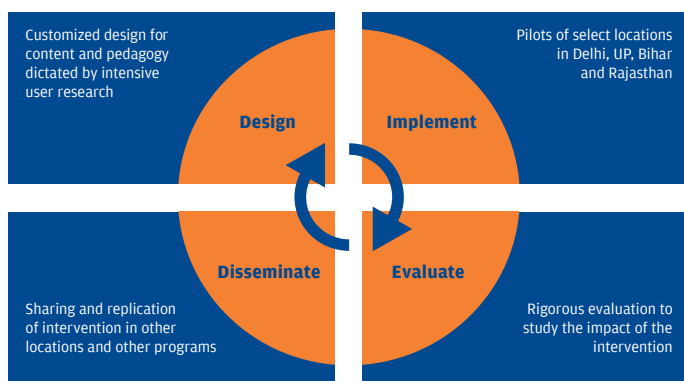
In order to thoughtfully and deliberately choose an appropriate career, a young person needs to have a clear sense of his/her life and career goals, interests and talents, and career options. Based on this information, a young person can take advantage of the educational and skills training options available to them to pursue their goals. Guiding young people in their choice of career and relevant training options increases the chances that they will end up in a job - and ultimately a career - that suits their interests, talents and skills and in which they will be successful. To facilitate the career development process of students, SkY plans to use two types of intervention:

Career Exploration: By introducing various careers and competencies within academic subjects, students can more clearly understand how what they study prepares them for a future career and helps them become more aware of the breadth of career options available to them.

Career Guidance: This intervention focuses on identifying the individual student's potential and helps students identify those careers that would best suit them. Students are guided to identify appropriate careers for them and are given tips on how to prepare for entering that career.

Introduction to SkY Pilot Interventions

We are excited to announce the first two pilot interventions being planned under the SkY Programme. SkY pilot interventions are carried out using the following process.



Career Guidance session in progress with SCERT school students.

Career Orientation for Delhi School Students

This pilot project, designed in partnership with the State Council for Education, Research and Training (SCERT) Delhi, aims to demonstrate good Career Exploration and Guidance for in-school (secondary and higher secondary) youth as a bridge to economically viable vocations. The pilot is being integrated with the existing life skills program in government schools in Delhi called the YUVA program in 15 Government Schools in Delhi in the current academic year 2010-2011. The project provides training for guidance counselors and teachers as well as follow-up support to assist them in working with their students.

Guidance counselors from these schools have been trained to implement a career guidance curriculum with students in Class 10 to help them make a more informed choice for the next stage of their education. Teachers will be trained on a model of how to incorporate career information into academic subjects for students in Class 8 and 9 to broaden their sense of career options.

Life Skills for the JSS Youth

JSS centres promote educational, vocational, and occupational development of socioeconomically backward and educationally disadvantaged groups, most of whom are women between the ages of 18-35 years. Most of the youth use skills learned at JSS centres to start a small business on their own or as cooperatives to provide them better livelihoods. In addition to vocational training, JSS

offers a Life Enrichment Education (LEE) program which provides training in aspects of life related to health, human and societal values, adolescent education, women empowerment, environmental education, etc.

The SkY pilot intervention aims to enhance the LEE program by including those facets of Life skills that would help these youth become more confident able to be successful in their small businesses.

The program will be piloted at 30 JSS across the states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi starting by training Program Officers and Assistant Program Officers at each JSS through an intensive four day training program.

An ICT based self learning tool to build capacity of program officers on understanding and delivering Life Skills has been prepared in Hindi which includes competencies like goal setting, understanding your strengths and weaknesses, managing money, communication and negotiation, and information on how to start and manage a small business. 60 young people will be trained at each JSS as part of the program.

Through its partnership with Jan Shikshan Sansthan (part of the Directorate for Adult Education/MHRD), SkY plans to demonstrate an effective Life Skills program model that can be expanded to other JSS centers around India.

Voices from the Field

First pilot training in Delhi very well received.

Educational and Vocational Guidance (EVG) Counsellors from 13 Delhi government schools received an intensive training workshop on Career Guidance from 19th to 21st January at ICSSR in New Delhi. The counsellors were trained to conduct a 2-part workshop called Career Focus Finder to Class X students. JobCorp, an end-to-end employability solutions' company, delivered the 3-day workshop.

The workshop offered new perspectives for the counsellors in the area of Career Guidance. They were trained on conducting group exercises that are primarily activity-based and using effective communication strategies. The training provided them with new tools and a step-by-step methodology to work more effectively with their students. The competencies transferred during the workshop were tested through field visits to schools during the training. This allowed the counsellors to get hands-on experience on the methodologies involved and the challenges and advantages in using the resources with adolescents.

The counselors will deliver the material to their students from January-February 2011 and will receive monitoring and follow-up assistance as they implement the program. Based on the feedback received after the training, the counsellors are very enthused to carry on this program in their schools. The career glossary provided to the counsellors claimed much appreciation as it provided the students a place to find information about various careers in one place.

"Discussion on attending skills was really great and important" and "Influences on career development: I never took them into account while choice making!" are just some of the positive comments the counsellors provided.

SkY is working to build this momentum further by engaging the counsellors in regular knowledge sharing activities which include organising conclaves, distributing newsletters created by and for the counsellors and sharing case studies to peer counsellors through a common channel.



Successful completion of training for counselors for SCERT schools in Delhi in Jan 2011.

Keep up-to-date with the SkY Online Portal!

You can keep up on the SkY Program through the Skills for Youth Online portal. Here you can find weekly updates on the various pilot and advocacy activities as well as the reports and research from our stakeholder consultations to understand the skills deficit challenges facing youth in India.

The SkY portal provides access to all resources, tools and research reports relevant to the SkY program. The portal will soon have a dedicated space for communities whose lives are being touched through SkY, to share their experiences and voice their concerns to the larger audiences working on this issue of skills deficit. Many more dynamic features will be added over the coming weeks. We

encourage you to register yourself and your organization with the portal. This platform over time will evolve into a lively space for information and updates about SkY as well as a space for fruitful dialogue on related issues. You will play an important role in shaping that conversation.

Skills for Youth (SkY) Online portal has been hosted as part of the Livelihood Connect Portal which is an online community of diverse stakeholders in youth employability who seek to engage and share resources, research and knowledge on solutions that are working to address the employability challenge. Please visit <http://livelihoodconnect.net/sky> to sign up.

Future News

In the next issue of SKY News look forward to hearing about recent trainings of JSS centers on life skills.

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