

Study Visit India

General Information

Dates: 14 August – 4 September 2017

Participants:

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The study visit in India took place in Bhubaneswar the city and Bonai in the area of Sundergarh.

Field research

The team of 3 youth workers led by the Indian coordinator conducted 17 interviews in total, more specifically 7 with youth workers, 7 with policy makers and 3 with owners of small and medium size businesses. The field research attempted to get a perspective of the role and impact of youth work in all sectors - public, private and not profit.

The team had specific questionnaires to interact with each target group.

The Youth workers were asked about the definition of youth work, their perceptions about the role, tasks and skills of youth workers, the training process to become a youth worker, the ways they promote their work and the impact of youth work on the personal and professional development of youngsters in the region.

The Policy makers were asked about the national and regional strategies for youth, their level of involvement in decision making, the existing processes of consultation with youth and the required improvements of the policy making process.

Owners and directors of small and medium size enterprises were asked about the form of cooperation with young people, the skills youngsters acquire by working for them, the process of on-the-job training, the way they promote their work and the potential benefits from using youth work to connect youngsters' skills with market demands.

All interviews were taken in English. In the cases where translation was necessary, it was provided by the hosting organization.

Job Shadowing

According to the schedule of the Study Visit, the 1st week was devoted to the so called 'job shadowing'. It included an orientation for the participants from Greece and Togo and started



with a presentation of the hosting organisation Jivan Vikas and their working model. The participants interacted with members of Jivan Vikas in order to learn more about the activities and other running projects at the organisation.

Jivan Vikas has been working with the support of Actionaid India with **448 tribal families in 55 villages** under Lahunipada Block of Sundergarh District, Odisha. The Paudi Bhuyan of this area is one of the major sections of the Bhuyan tribe which has been identified as particularly vulnerable tribal group by the state. The Paudi Bhuyan villages are mostly located on the top and slopes of hills. The households in Paudi Bhuyan villages are thinly distributed with maximum of 25 to 30 families. Due to low density of population mobilizing resources for establishing institutions like Child Care Centre, and a School within the norm of the Government becomes even more challenging. Also due to the disadvantage of location and communication facilities the tribe members have poor access to schooling and health care services.

Jivan Vikas, traces its origin to coming together with local tribal youths imbued with the spirit of National Service Scheme (NSS) and rights based approach for development. These local tribal youth from Banei sub-division of Sundargarh district came together with the conviction to develop their own people. Jivan Vikas came into being in the year 2003 and has grown into a prominent organization for tribal people in the district. The belief that the tribes have low economic power because they have been denied their basic rights as citizens and that their development is possible only after their basic rights will be ensured has defined JV's engagement with the community.

Jivan Vikas has planned activities focusing on 6 strategic priorities: Strategic Priority-1: **People's control over resources like land, water, forest, commons and livelihoods.** Strategic Priority-2: **Radical democratization of the society, economy and polity at all levels.** Strategic Priority-3: **Assertion of women and girls' rights as human rights.** Strategic Priority-4: **Children are recognized as political and equal citizens.** Strategic Priority-5: **A Socially just, secular, violence free and peaceful society and state.** Strategic Priority 6: **Solidarity with struggles and progressive actions beyond local boundaries.**

On the following day, the team visited a local NGO called "Centre for Integrated Rural and Tribal Development" (CIRTD), Sundargarh. After an introduction meeting with the staff and the organisation's management, CIRTD's Secretary General Mr Nata Kishor Mishra presented their activities, methods of intervention and working methodologies.



CIRTD works with under-privileged and deprived people of the weaker sections of the Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe, Other Backward Caste and Minority Communities living in difficult interior areas of tribal belts. CIRTD has been concentrating in 65 villages in compact areas in 3 Blocks named Balisankara, Hemgir and Sadar in the Sundargarh District. In addition, they have reached out with people's programme in collaboration with Network partner organizations working in 5 other Blocks in 3 Districts named Sundargarh, Jharsuguda and Subarnapur.

Their major efforts include:

- # Ensuring land and forest rights to the tribal communities.
- # Mobilizing the tribal communities to assert for their rights (community and habitat) and control over forest resources and governance.
- # Mobilizing the community for revival and popularization of ecological farming (This includes revival of millets and indigenous paddy).
- # Mobilizing tribal groups to avail all entitlements of Government as fundamental rights
- # Mobilizing tribal communities for assertion of their cultural identity for life with dignity.

On the following day, the team visited a project village called **Gadapali** to follow and participate in some of the local activities of Jivan Vikas. The villagers organized a welcome meeting for the participants in traditional way. 80 villagers including community leaders, youth and youth volunteers participated in the meeting where they presented their activities implemented by



Jivan Vikas. The major focus of the discussion was about:

- # Youth volunteers' involvement to ensure quality education for tribal children such as non-formal education programmes. , where the education centres are settled up in each project villages. Volunteers work with the children four days per week.
- # Regular follow up on Integrated Child Development Programme in day care centres (run by the Government). All facilities are provided by the Government to children and lactating



mothers.

- # Organizing cultural events in each project village where main responsibilities has been undertaken by a youth volunteer. Discussing on the tribal culture and contribution of the tribal leaders led movement for justice and freedom. These events help the tribal people to increase their knowledge and dignity about their culture.
- # Organizing different campaigns like “Girls children education”, “child marriage”. The lack of livelihood, poverty and higher education are among the major contributing factors to child marriage.

The following visit was to Randa village where an anti-mining movement is led by youth. Randa is among the Project villages too. It is a beautiful village surrounded by forests and mountains. A stream called Kuradhi is flowing in the east of the village. The mountains surrounding it are rich of minerals like iron ore and manganese.



The mine was located near the village and due to blasting, the houses started cracking and the hit of splinters from the blast caused a numbers of deaths and injuries to the cattle. Gradually the mining caused decrease in fertility of the soil, water and created noise pollution, environmental degradation in the area and the livelihood from forest collections were affected strongly. Now there are 32 families from Paudi Bhuyan tribe that are living together. Village youth has taken the lead role to protect both their village and environment from the mining company. More than five hundred youth including social activists, social workers and youth workers have been involved providing solidarity support to lead the movement against the mining company.

Jivan Vikas interventions are providing support to youth and village leaders as follows:

- # Sensitization and Awareness generation among the people on the rights to forest land under Forest Right Act through organization of meetings at the Village level.
- # Making the voice of each and every man and woman heard. At least 10 Men and 10 Women from each village need to be trained on processes and procedures required for realization of rights over Land, Water and Forests.
- # Strengthening Panchayat (local council) level Organizations for people’s movement on rights and entitlements. Pressure building on the government through people’s organizations.
- # Encouraging people to join and strengthen the movement
- # Capacity building of the youth and community on government schemes and programmes.
- # Rapport building as well as pressure building on the government and its instrumentalities through rallies, demonstrations etc.

- # Information Education Communication (IEC) campaign for awareness generation and knowledge building among the community on government schemes and programmes.
- # Network building with like-minded organization for creation of critical mass for lobby and advocacy.

The team visited also the Kiri village, Sundargarh, a remote tribal village under the Jivan Vikas project. The village is surrounded by hills and forests and the Bardhi stream flows east of the village. The total of the families living in the village are 18, while the population there accounts for 98, out of who 51 are male, and 47 are female, apart from that 8 are adolescent girls and 7 are children between the age of 7 months to 3 years.



The families have been living on a hilltop in the forest for the last hundred years, being deprived of facilities as a road for communication and all kinds of Government support. Due to absence of all weather commuting facilities, many of the village people have lost their lives on the way while being taken to the hospital. The tribal people considered the village unsuitable and inauspicious after those deaths and the whole community decided to shift to the old place of their ancestors at Kansaldarha in the Derula reserve forest near the village Derula which seemed more suitable for habitation and for their traditional agrarian activities. After consulting the villagers of Derula, majority of whom belong to the same tribal group and after obtaining their consent, the members of the community living in Kiri village constructed 18 huts by cleaning the forest and moved to the new location in Oct-Nov 2011.



Things looked positive because the villagers of Kiri has become and lived as a part of the community living in the Derula village, while the situation suddenly changed when officers from the forest department arrived to enquire about the new habitation. The officials and workers at the forest department went to the spot with diesel and kerosene, threatened the community to vacate the place or face the consequence. On the particular day when the community members went into the forests out of fear, the forest department set the huts on fire disregarding the requests. In this inhuman act, the tribals lost most of their belongings including their clothes, ration Card, voter cards, rice etc. The tribals who shifted to the place for a better life lost everything and became homeless.

Villagers with the help of Jivan Vikas raised this inhuman act at block, district and state level. They state that the Government of Odisha and the district administration failed in implementing and executing protective Acts. So, the inhuman act of the forest department officials is an open violation of the rights of the tribal community. Jivan Vikas with the help of ActionAid successfully mobilised various state level advocacy groups and human rights commissions to exercise pressure on the district administration. Immediately the authorities provided them with plastic to stay in and food stuff as immediate relief and decided to settle them in the same place. Jivan Vikas has taken few concrete steps to bring the life of these tribals back to normal. In March 2012 they could build their houses again.

Villagers worked together to make their land cultivable and build a stone bonded check dam on the stream flowing near the village. As they have little income from agricultural activities, they demanded job under Government schemes. They were able to construct a wide road by mobilizing IRS 1 million from the Government. The village has been geared up now to undertake plantations and facilitate aided natural regeneration in the forest. There is a perennial stream flowing down from the forest on upper reaches on which a diversion weir has been planned and officially approved to be constructed. The diversion weir has the potential to irrigate more than 150 acres of land downstream.

Youth Work in India

The definition for youth in the state of Odisha where the Study Visit took place is separated in age groups.

- 1) The first sub-group 13-19 years comprises adolescents whose needs and concerns are different from those of the young in the other age-groups because of their critical transitions from childhood to early adulthood.
- 2) The second sub-group of 20-25 years includes youth who are in the process of completing their education or are outside of the education system and are engaged in unpaid and paid work within the household or in the work force.
- 3) The third sub-group of 26-35 years comprises young women and men most of whom are expected to have been fairly settled in their lives. The sub-group also includes those who have not found a clear direction and livelihood opportunities.

Policy makers

The vision at policy making level is for young people to be fully enabled, motivated, engaged and empowered to accomplish their full potential, have healthy lives, progress far in education, secure productive livelihood, participate in their communities, have a say in their future and contribute to the growth and development of the state.

The mission is to create an enabling environment that recognizes the diversity, multidimensional needs and aspirations of young people, and puts in place the processes,

modalities and structures to secure their fundamental rights, to unleash their potential to lead fulfilling lives and to become active partners in the progress of the state.

The objectives they want to develop are to mainstream youth development in designing appropriate government policies, programmes and interventions, while recognizing the special needs of the sub-groups. Creating systems and institutional mechanisms at the levels of government, civil society, corporate sector and development partners, to facilitate development and empowerment of youth. To establish and strengthen the capacity of key youth development institution and improve their integration and coordination for optimizing avenues for the youths. To ensure the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of adolescents in the family, school and community and nurture their talents in various spheres. Promoting a culture of active citizenship among the youth and help them become responsible adults who care for their families and society. Another important part is to give access to quality education, health care, employment opportunities and other entitlements. Enhancing the skills of the youth to equip them to meet the challenges of a rapid changing and globalizing India.

Youth workers

During the days of our field research, we had the chance to meet with many people working for youth and with youth. The questions we made were trying to understand the unique work and perspective of each person. The preview one was not always easy and that is why we tried to have deep conversations and listen to the youth workers that had so many things to express.

After analyzing the answers, we understood that the basic idea in India is that the youth are the future. Youth have an opportunity to be different and bring a change for their society and help not only themselves but the elder of the society as well. The most important is that everyone pointed out the need for youth to be protected, even when we talk for children or teenagers or adults. They need to be protected in the context of having enough tools to built a strong character and fight all difficulties that their parents could not.

Youth workers in India come from different backgrounds and work in different frames. We talked with people in the agriculture trying to give knowledge to youngsters. Sociologists taking case of the social development progress so the youth can understand their identity and the social problems around them. Youth activists shaping international youth committees so the local youth can open their horizons and create things outside of their comfort zone. An interesting point of view came from the social workers which mentioned more their responsibility in the progress of youth. It was clear that they are talking about understanding the youth, checking their mental status, their psychology and measuring their contribution to the society.

The characteristics that a youth worker needs so he works with youth are communication skills, knowledge of many topics, self confidence and leading skills and most importantly the

power to be a mentor. The knowledge of mobility programmers and government policies was another important factor as well as good education in order to demonstrate the capacity to change someone's life.

Not many youth workers act on international level and when this is the case it is happening only for a short period of time or for a specific project. This is mainly because the challenges that they have to face are local and they require the local mindset and cultural background to solve them.

Many youth workers are led and motivated by the responsibility they personally take and their commitment to a cause. Volunteerism is the main 'school' for the most of them. Being a volunteer is bringing them close to the problems and that is how they start their action and work with the youth. This is the way they choose to show to the youngsters as well.

Owners of Small and Medium Enterprises

This group hires young people due to their belief that having cultural interactions and working at the same time while youngsters are studying is important for them.

Local Event

At the end of the Study Visit a local event promoting the importance of youth work was organized in Bonai. The countries of the guests were presented briefly and energizers were used for good vibes. A local band performed traditional dances, while the Togolese guest also presented and taught youngsters African dances.

The event was visited by more than 100 young people, most of who students.

Local authorities visited the event too, while the local newspaper covered it.