

External Evaluation of ENABLE Project

February 2023

Improving the learning and enrichment of 200 disadvantaged Girl Children and enhancing the income of 15 Waste Picker Women



Implemented by Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC)



Supported by The Swedish Chamber of Commerce India (SCCI)

External Evaluation by

Kalamani Arumugam

+91-94408 00601/ 94907 45809

kalamani@apmas.org; kalamaniicco@gmail.com

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Evaluation, Scope and Methodology	5
2.1. Objective of the Evaluation	5
2.2. Scope of the Evaluation	6
2.3. Evaluation Methodology.....	6
2.4. Evaluation Schedule	6
3. Relevance	7
4. Effectiveness and Efficiency	9
5. Impact and Sustainability.....	14
6. Recommendations	16
7. Conclusion.....	17

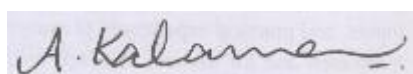
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As an external consultant, I felt extremely privileged to undertake the evaluation of DBRC's work on **"Improving the learning and enrichment of 200 disadvantaged girl children and enhancing the income of 15 Waste Picker women"**, in 15 slums of Guntur, Krishna (currently NTR), and West Godavari (currently Eluru) Districts. The evaluation was carried out through meetings held with the DBRC team, field visits made to the outdoor learning centres, meetings held with the waste picking women and their communities in an interactive and enabling manner.

At the outset, I would like to place my high appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the children and the women of the waste picking families who are battling to survive and lead a life amidst numerous constraints and challenges. I would also record my high regards and sincere thanks to the management team of DBRC for their valuable time and sharing their experience with a great amount of openness and enthusiasm. My special thanks are due to the project team of DBRC for their cooperation and support in carrying out the evaluation in a truly transparent and participatory manner.

I wish and hope that the outcome of this external evaluation would add value and strengthen the vision and mission of DBRC in creating a dignified life and livelihood for the waste picking families, especially for their children to access basic right to education and the women to attain socio-economic empowerment.

A. Kalamani



Hyderabad

16 February 2023

Disclaimer

*The report has been produced as part of an action financed by the **SCCI**. This report is an outcome of the external evaluation, which involved especially the children and women from the waste picking families, their communities and the team of DBRC. The observations, analysis, findings, and the recommendations are made in an objective manner with an aim to strengthen the efforts of DBRC in the slums where waste pickers are making their living and livelihood and dreaming for a better future for their children through access to education and strengthening the livelihoods of women. The factual errors and omissions if any may be treated as unintended.*

External Evaluation Report of ENABLE Project

Improving the learning and enrichment of 200 disadvantaged girl children and enhancing the income of 15 Waste Picker Women

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) was established in 1992 and has been working for the socio-economic and cultural transformation of the Dalit Bahujan communities especially women and children in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The main focus is on transforming the lives of these communities by providing information, knowledge, capacity building, and promotion of livelihood, dignity and self-respect among Dalits, Adivasis, Waste Pickers and informal workers.

Vision: Achieve social justice and social democracy to reclaim the human dignity of Dalit Bahujan communities.

Mission: Enabling Assertive Interventions of Dalit Bahujan Communities towards their Socio-Economic Empowerment.

1.2. Work with the Waste Pickers

Work with Waste Pickers: Towards achieving the vision and mission, DBRC has been implementing various projects especially with the Waste Pickers since 2016. At the outset, DBRC has studied the ground level situation and realized that the waste picking communities were in the most deplorable situation without having any access to basic entitlements and basic amenities such as safe drinking water, housing, sanitation, electricity, etc. DBRC then strategized its interventions and started working with the waste pickers in Guntur, Vijayawada, Eluru, Tenali and expanded its work to Visakhapatnam.

Waste pickers earn their living by collecting solid waste from dumpsites, bins and along roadsides, which is sold to recyclers through intermediaries. The waste comes from domestic, industrial and commercial sources. They are responsible for recycling almost 20% of the country's waste and play an important role in maintaining the health and hygiene of the local environment. Despite their economic and environmental contribution to cities, waste pickers are usually informal workers occupying the lowest rungs of urban society and struggling to lead healthy and productive lives. Their status in the Indian waste management system remains highly unrecognised. Given that waste picking is largely unrecognized by law, waste pickers lack social protection and suffer from various forms of social and economic exclusion. The waste picking is the only source of income and they live in utter poverty and at risk of starvation. Most of the indicators for home environment, nutritional status, health behaviour and socio-economic status showed that the waste pickers come from very poor families and background. Women and the children are the most vulnerable. They live in non-notified / unrecognised and overcrowded slums or fringes of peri urban, poorly ventilated huts made of tarpaulin sheets or hay and more likely to use open ground for defecation. They seldom have access to government schemes and services. The children are less likely to attend formal school and they also get engaged in waste picking along with the parents.

The following are the focus areas of DBRC's work with the waste pickers:

- Enabling waste pickers in accessing their basic rights and entitlements (schemes and services) through facilitating and following it up with the relevant authorities
- Supporting the Waste Pickers in generating income through strengthening their existing livelihoods and promoting alternative livelihoods
- Bringing behaviour change through sensitizing the waste pickers on health, hygiene, cleanliness and being assertive
- Sensitizing the waste pickers and their children on the impact of child labour and child marriage and saying 'NO' to Child Marriage and Child Labour
- Organising interface meetings between the government officials and the waste pickers to make the authorities understand the plight of waste pickers and their needs
- Engaging with the government to integrate the waste pickers into door-to-door garbage collection of the Municipalities and Corporations
- Supporting the children of the waste pickers in enrolling them into government schools, ensuring retention and providing life skills
- Capacity building of waste pickers on their rights and leading a life with dignity
- Working with women for their socio-economic empowerment through awareness, mobilising them into SHGs, developing leadership qualities, credit linkage etc

DBRC's work with waste-pickers started as a pilot project in Guntur and Vijayawada and subsequently expanded to Eluru, Tenali, Ongole, Darsi and Vishakapatnam. Currently DBRC is working with 2800 waste-picking families and the achievements so far are given below:

Basic Rights and Entitlements

- 1782 waste pickers got enrolled and received Aadhar cards with the support of the district administration
- 110 waste-picking & other Safai Karmachari families accessed TIDCO Housing in Vijayawada
- Enrolled 67 % of the children into government schools and ensured retention
- Reduced the incidence of child marriages and child labour among the waste picking communities
- Created access to health services resulting in increase of institutional deliveries

Livelihoods

- 1200 Waste Pickers received Occupational Identity Cards in Guntur, Vijayawada and Eluru
- Supported in the integration of 230 waste pickers in the door-to-door waste collection of the Guntur Municipal Corporation
- Provided 3 wheeler rickshaws to 121 waste pickers in Guntur, Vijayawada, Eluru and Tenali in strengthening their livelihoods
- Provided 4 wheeler push carts to take up alternative livelihoods (tea stall, tiffin stall, selling vegetables/ fruits/ flowers/dry fish/ steel & plastic items)

1.3. Study on Waste Pickers

DBRC has done a study in 2015-16 on the socio-economic status of the waste pickers. The findings related to the access to education for children and women's status were:

- Children go along with the parents to collect waste in the dump yard and roadside and exposed to hazardous environment
- Parents were not particular about their children's education due to high illiteracy.
- Children's education becomes least priority when the survival and next meal are uncertain
- Children do not go to school and even if they go to school, the attendance is irregular
- Very low attendance in the primary schools and the secondary /high schools are far away
- Children in the schools and anganwadi centres are subjected to stigma and exclusion due to their unhygienic look and behaviours
- Women waste pickers are subjected to drudgery and bear the burden of feeding families

DBRC felt a dire need for providing education to the children of waste pickers' and strengthening the livelihoods of women. Hence a project, '**Improving the learning and enrichment of 200 disadvantaged girl children and enhancing the income of 15 Waste Picker women**', (ENABLE Project) was conceptualized and implemented for six months with the grant of Rs.6,08,922 from **SCCI** and local contribution 25% of Rs. 2,02,973. The focus of the project was two-fold.

- ❖ **Outdoor Learning Centres** initiated to engage **200 girl children of 6 to 15 years**, in educational activities and eventually reinstate them in the mainstream education system from 15 slums of Guntur, Krishna, and West Godavari Districts.
- ❖ **Tricycles to 15 women** waste pickers in Guntur to strength their livelihoods

The Enable project was evaluated in February 2023 as per the donor agreement. The details of the evaluation, observations, key findings and the recommendations are presented below.

2. Evaluation, Scope and Methodology

2.1. Objective of the Evaluation

Swedish Chamber of Commerce India, New Delhi has supported the Enable Project for a period of six months from 15 June to 15 December 2022. The project outcomes were:

- Imbibing and enhanced reading habit
- Writing and communication skills
- Co-curricular activities (quiz, talent exhibitions, etc)
- Overall improvement in the academic performance of students
- Reduction in school drop-out rate
- Income enhancement of Waste Picker women by using Tricycles

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the project achieved its intended outcomes. It is also to document the learning which would be useful for DBRC to conceptualize and implement similar programs as well strengthen ongoing programs.

2.2. Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the work includes the following:

- Preparation of evaluation plan and signing of the contract
- Planning for the evaluation with the DBRC team
- Preparing tools for focus group discussions and interactions
- Review of documents and available data for making analysis
- Mapping the progress, behavioural changes happened, the learning, challenges etc.
- Preparation and submission of the draft report and the final report

2.3. Evaluation Methodology

The methodology was bounded by the objectives and the scope of the evaluation, and guided by the OECD-DAC “REEIS” (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) framework. The schedule for the evaluation was mutually discussed and agreed between the evaluator and DBRC. The evaluation was carried out through field visits, interactive meetings both in person and virtual with the children, women and the communities. The assessment tools were prepared for the discussions with the children, teacher, parents, women and the community leaders. Utmost care was taken to ensure everyone was sharing experience, concerns and suggestions without any inhibitions. The experience shared, observations made during interactions and field visits, and the data from the documents, monthly reports were considered as authentic for analysis and arriving at conclusions. Necessary caution was undertaken to interpret without any bias.

2.4. Evaluation Schedule

Date	Details of the Schedule	Location
30.01.2023	Review of project proposal and monthly reports	Hyderabad
31.01.2023	Discussion with the DBRC team	Vijayawada
01.02.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field visit to Three Outdoor Learning Centres• Interaction with the children and the teacher• Interaction with the parents & community leaders• Separate meeting with the women members• Interaction with the women received Tricycles (OLC at Yedlingainah Colony was not under SCCI support)	Guntur District 1. Ippatam Village, Vaddeswaram 2. Yedlingaiah Colony, Tenali 3. Kattevaram
02.02.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field visit to one Outdoor Learning Centre• Interaction with the children and the teacher• Interaction with the parents & community leaders• Separate meeting with the women members	NTR (Krishna) District 1. Keesara
03.02.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online visit to two Outdoor Learning Centres• Interaction with the children and the teacher• Interaction with the parents & community leaders• Separate meeting with the women members• Interaction with the women received Tricycles	Guntur district 1. Tadeipalli Elluru district (West Godavari District) 2. Eluru
05.02.2023	Report writing	Hyderabad
-15.02.2023	Submission of draft report & debriefing	Vijayawada
16.02.2023	Submission of final report	Hyderabad

3. Relevance

The waste pickers earn their livelihood by collecting, sorting, and trading the waste. Till now, India has managed to collect, segregate, and dispose of waste largely due to the efforts of waste pickers making them the backbone of the waste management. There are an estimated 1.5 to 4 million waste pickers in India. They live in extreme poverty and struggle every day to make their living. The children also go with the parents due to various reasons;

- To collect the waste to add income to the families
- Poverty pushes them to prioritise earning income for survival over children's education
- There is no one at home to take care of the young children
- Parents go early morning to collect waste, hence not able to send the children to school
- School environment is not so conducive and captivating for the children to be regular
- Parents being illiterate not able to understand the importance of children's education and lack of enabling learning environment at home and the place where they live
- Social stigma and exclusion force them away from the mainstream and the children forgo their basic right to education

In spite of constitutional rights and policies to ensure universalisation of education in India, the access to education as a basic right is still a distant dream to the majority of the poor, especially the children of the waste pickers. Why are children seen collecting scraps instead of going to school? Neither the laws nor the system is serious in ensuring free and compulsory education of good quality to the children of the waste pickers who are absent from the school-going population. Even if these children go to school, they drop out due to various reasons. The factors affecting children of the waste pickers are manifold and hence education needs to be much more than just a brick and mortar initiative for this community. Several civil society organisations have come forward to work for the rights of the waste pickers and their children with education. DBRC has been playing a very significant role in working for the basic rights of the waste pickers since 2016 in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It has simultaneously focused on providing access to quality education to the children. Keeping in view of the unique and multi-factors affecting these children from going to school, DBRC has conceptualised the '**Enable Project**' with two relevant ideas;

1. Set up '**Outdoor Learning Centre**' with the following purposes to;
 - Instil confidence, interest and determination among the parents and their children especially girls on the need of children's education
 - Provide a creative and joyful learning environment for education after school hours
 - Bring out talents in the children such as drawing, singing, dancing, cultural etc
 - Improve academic performance in the schools and thereby continuing their studies
 - Mainstream children into regular schools/hostels and ensure retention
 - Bring behavioural change resulting in adoption of hygiene practices in daily life
 - Make the children and the parents communicate without fear or any inhibition and realize the importance of leading a life with dignity without social stigma /exclusion
2. Provide **Tri-cycles** to the waste picking women with the following purposes to:
 - Ease the drudgery of walking 15 to 20 km in a day to collect and carry the waste bags on their back /shoulders /head for segregation and sale
 - Prevent women from facing issues such as dog barking/biting, people suspecting as thieves, sexual abuse and harassment etc

- Enable women to collect more waste materials and thus earn more income so that they can fulfil the daily needs of the families and the children
- Instil confidence by riding a tri-cycle and by earning more income

- ✚ Considering the context, the Enable Project conceptualized by DBRC is most relevant to respond to the most deserving educational needs of the children and the strategic gender needs of women of the waste picking community.
- ✚ The empowerment approach is adopted rather than welfare approach, which is relevant in enabling the community to speak for their basic rights /needs
- ✚ Strategies and interventions are relevant in providing continuum of services to the communities through other projects of DBRC (obtaining basic documents/ ID cards and availing government schemes / services, promotion of alternative livelihoods, mobilising women into SHGs, mainstreaming in the jobs with the Municipalities, collectivising them into a cooperative for procuring, segregation, recycling and availing remunerative price by avoiding middlemen/brokers etc)
- ✚ Relevance of the project is very high in the context of post covid since the children have forgotten whatever was learnt in the schools
- ✚ Project provided a platform for unheard voices of women and girls which paved a way in building social capital
- ✚ Project is very much in alignment of DBRC's vision, mission and values



4. Effectiveness and Efficiency

Realising the dire need to provide education to the children of the waste pickers, DBRC first started summer classes for the children wherein the children were encouraged to participate in various art, craft, outdoor games, music and dance which helped evoke liking for education. It also facilitated Aadhar cards and enrolled the children in schools. This intervention led to a mind-set shift in the closed group of 200 children of Waste Pickers out of which most of them were girls. Similarly, after recognising the pain and hurdles the waste picker women undergo due to carrying waste material in bags on their shoulders, DBRC provided Tri-cycles to few women to ease their drudgery. It was witnessed that the women were able to use it to their advantage – travel more, collect more waste and thus earn more income for the family besides reduction in drudgery. The covid and subsequent lock-downs worsened the situation for the waste picking communities. The children were completely out of the purview of the schools and the women were forced to bear the responsibility of feeding the families.

To address the situation, DBRC came up with the **Enable Project** with a twin approach; Outdoor Learning Centres for 200 girl children and Tricycles for 15 women from the slums of Guntur, Krishna and West Godavari districts. The tables and analysis below give the details of the activities undertaken and how effectively and efficiently implemented.

Table 1: Outdoor Learning Centres

#	District	Location	Since	Teacher Name	Teacher Qualification	Currently running/closed
1	NTR	Keesara	2 years	M.Sivakumari	Intermediate	Yes
2	Eluru	Eluru	2 years	B.Yamini	B.Tech	Yes
3	Guntur	Kattevaram	7 months	Akshaya	Degree	Yes
4	Guntur	Ippatam	2 years	B.Sowjanya	Degree	Yes
5	Guntur	Balajinagar	2 years	Saidabee	Intermediate	Yes
6	Guntur	Budampadu	7 months	Jyothi	Degree	Yes
7	NTR	Nainavaram	2 years	Vamsi	Polytechnic	Yes
8	NTR	Vambay Colony	7 months	P.Nagavalli	Degree	No
9	NTR	RR Pet 1	7 months	M.Bhanu	Degree	No
10	NTR	RR Pet 2	7 months	V.Anitha	Intermediate	No
11	Guntur	Venigalla	7 months	V.Jyothi	10 th	Yes
12	Guntur	Kolakaluru	7 months	S.Jyothi	Intermediate	No
13	Palnadu	Chenchu colony	1 year	K.Harshavarthan	Degree	No
14	Palnadu	Muppalla	1 year	K.Parvathi	Intermediate	No
15	Guntur	Tadepalli	7 months	R.Ramulamma	10 th	No

Out of 15 centres, 4 centres were visited in person and two virtually. It was found that out of six, one was functional till 15 December 2022 and closed due to non-availability of the teacher. DBRC has reopened the closed centres from 15 February 2023 onwards. The children come around 4 to 4.30 pm and remain in the OLCs until 6.30 to 7 pm depending upon the daylight available. The centres are running in the open place available in the slums itself to make it convenient for the children to come after school hours and the parents to witness how their children are learning at the centre.

DBRC was able to get nearly half of the teachers with good qualifications and remaining with intermediate/ tenth qualifications. However, all of them were trained by DBRC on teaching and learning methods to run the centres effectively. The teachers are found very friendly, creative and enduring. They used various methods to make the children learn with interest and joy – games, charts, activity work sheets, songs, dance, drawing, colours etc. The children get their homework also done with the help of the teachers. Apart from education, the children are also taught WASH practices, cleanliness, communication etc. Anyone can witness that there is a change in the behaviour of the children – they look clean, neat, active and communicate without any inhibition. They beam with joy and this atmosphere makes them go to school on a regular basis. The investment made to establish the centre is very minimal to procure certain basic items. The centres were managed efficiently with minimum investment and the






OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTRE
(A CENTRE FOR CHILDREN EMPOWERMENT) **DBRC**
Dhammapada Bhawan Resource Centre






Name : _____ Class : _____
Center : _____ Date : _____


COUNTING - 3

Count and write

 =  =

 =

 =

Draw the number of objects

5 |

10 ○


7 ☆


8 △


OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTRE
(A CENTRE FOR CHILDREN EMPOWERMENT) **DBRC**
Dhammapada Bhawan Resource Centre


Name : _____ Class : _____
Center : _____ Date : _____


Fill in the Blanks

___ ము 

 ___ పు

___ ల్లు 

 ___ గ

___ డత 

effectiveness was ensured due to the commitment and the passion exhibited by the teachers and relentless support extended by the DBRC team.

Table 2: Outdoor Learning Centres – Class wise Children

#	Location	Pre Sch		Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4		Class 5		Class 6		Class 7		Class 8		Class 9		Others		Total		Grand Total
		G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	
1	Keesara	2	1	3	2	5	2	0	0	6	2	1	2	1	0	2	0	3	1	3	0	0	0	26	10	36
2	Eluru	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	1	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	17	2	19
3	Kattevaram	1	0	3	2	4	3	6	1	0	1	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	19	9	28
4	Ippatam	3	1	2	1	0	0	4	0	0	3	5	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	9	28
5	Balajinagar	5	3	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	16	8	24
6	Budampadu	3	4	1	2	1	2	1	4	0	4	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	1	12	21	33
7	Nainavaram	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	5	1	2	2	5	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	20	8	28
8	Vambay Colony	0	0	4	2	3	2	2	2	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	14	10	24
9	RR Pet 1	1	2	5	1	0	2	4	2	8	2	1	1	6	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	29	13	42
10	RR Pet 2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	1	0	3	1	2	1	1	0	18	9	27
11	Venigalla	0	0	3	0	3	0	2	1	4	2	4	2	3	2	3	2	0	3	3	1	0	0	25	13	38
12	Kolakaluru	3	1	3	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	4	0	1	1	24	9	33
13	Chenchu colony	4	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	19	8	27
14	Muppalla	2	0	3	2	1	2	4	0	1	2	5	0	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	22	12	34
15	Tadepalli	3	2	5	1	3	1	2	1	4	1	0	0	3	2	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	22	12	34
	Total	30	17	38	18	30	19	31	15	31	20	37	14	37	13	20	11	22	15	22	7	4	4	302	153	455

Table 3: Outdoor Learning Centres – Children went to hostels

#	Location	Children came to OLCs			Children went to hostels			Children continuing or dropped out (reasons)
		Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	
1	Keesara	26	10	36	6	0	6	Continuing
2	Eluru	17	2	19	1	0	1	Continuing
3	Kattevaram	19	9	28	0	0	0	
4	Ippatam	19	9	28	0	0	0	
5	Balajinagar	16	8	24	0	0	0	
6	Budampadu	12	21	33	3	2	5	2 drop outs
7	Nainavaram	20	8	28	0	0	0	
8	Vambay Colony	14	10	24	0	0	0	
9	RR Pet 1	29	13	42	0	0	0	
10	RR Pet 2	18	9	27	0	0	0	
11	Venigalla	25	13	38	0	0	0	
12	Kolakaluru	24	9	33	3	1	4	Continuing
13	Chenchu colony	19	8	27	4	0	4	Continuing
14	Muppalla	22	12	34	2	2	4	1 drop out
15	Tadepalli	22	12	34	0	2	2	1 drop out
	Total	302	153	455	19	7	26	22 continuing & 4 drop outs

The data from the above tables above and the observations made during the field visits, the following can be interpreted:

- Overall 455 children benefited (girls 302 & boys 153) through 15 OLCs though it was envisaged to benefit only 200 girls
- About 47 are pre-school children (30 girls and 17 boys) going to Anganwadi centres and 8 are out of school (4 boys and 4 girls) who got attracted by the centre
- 26 children were admitted to hostels and 22 are continuing. Four got dropped out due to families migrated to other areas.
- Out of 455, 374 are (47 preschool, 8 out of school, 26 hostel & 374 regular school) regular to schools and performing well. The OLCs have contributed in retaining them in the schools and improving their academic performance and participation in extra-curricular activities.
- The children look very happy and the parents see OLC as gift sent by God to their children
- The teachers from the local area were appointed on a part time basis and paid honorarium of Rs,3000 per month. The teachers understood the difficult circumstances in which the children are living and the importance of education in shaping their lives. They also had a very cordial association with the community members, especially women. They were given training on the teaching methodologies and in handling the children in a sensitive manner.
- Out of 15 centres, 8 were initiated during covid period with the support of individuals. With the support of SCCI, these 8 centres were continued and 7 were newly initiated. Out of 15 centres, 8 are continuing even now (5 out of 8 initially started and 3 out 7 newly started). Individuals supported only for few months and there was no regular support before SCCI.
- DBRC facilitated Amma Vodi scheme (government deposits Rs.15000 per annum in the account of the mother if the child is sent to school) for 78 mothers and Pre-matric scholarship for 121 children (who engaged in unclean occupation – a scheme from the Central Government).

Table 5: Tri Cycles to Women Waste Pickers

#	District	Village/location	Woman received Tri cycle
1	Eluru (West Godavari)	YSR Colony	Nagamunthala Sarah
2			Katthi Durga
3			Andhe Ramulamma
4	NTR (Krishna)	RR Peta	Pedhala Durga
5	Guntur	Vaddeswaram	Buduru Chenchamma
6		Yanadi Colony	Buma Krishnaveni
7			Enuganti Nagalakshmi
8			Manikala Bodamma
9			Yakasiri Venkata Swami
10			Yatagiri Krishnaveni
11		Kolakaluru	Eaga Koteswaramma
12		Yadla Lingaiah Colony	Ponnuru Subbamma
13			Kathi Nagamma
14			Talapala thirapathamma
15			Potluri Venkateswaramma

Out of 15 beneficiaries, interactions were held with 8 women (three from Eluru (virtual), one from Vaddeswaram and four from Yadla Lingaiah Colony). All the eight women mentioned that their drudgery has come down and are able to collect more waste and earn additional income. They have also become members in the self-help groups (SHGs) and started saving. DBRC has good rapport with MEPMA (Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas) and the latter has complete trust on the work of DBRC. With the support of MEPMA, it has been easier for DBRC to bring the women into the SHG framework and now getting loans for strengthening women's livelihoods would also happen. In SHG meetings, DBRC is providing awareness to on behavioural and livelihood aspects, and women's rights. The women seem to be vocal now and some even spoke on the stage with confidence during celebration of various events in front of the government officials and political leaders. One of the women even choreographed a dance and the girls performed on the stage during Independence Day/Children's Day.

In the operational areas of the Enable project, most of the waste pickers, unlike many other Indian cities, belong to 'Schedule Tribe' category. They are mostly Yanadis, who were once upon a time forest-dwellers and were forced out of forest through push and pull factors. Generations ago, they were based in Nellore and Chittoor and now spread across the whole state. After leaving forest life, their major vocation became hunting snakes and rats in the farm land, thus helping the farmers save their crops.

In India, 49% waste pickers are women, but make 33% less money than men, according to a study by the Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group. There is an undeniable question of safety. Collecting and segregating waste is mostly done in isolated, open spaces. This increases the chances of sexual harassment and assault for women and children. Plus, the health risks from exposure to toxic elements. The solid waste management rules 2016 instructed State Municipalities to design policies for the inclusion of women and formation of SHGs. The implementation remains a challenge. However, DBRC was able to bring the women into the SHG framework. It has provided Tricycles to lessen the burden of waste carried by women who travel long distances, sometimes more than 20 km, to collect waste, bring it to a place to sort the scrap, and then take it to the scrap dealer's shop. The tricycle with

transportation cost Rs.19000 and the return on investment is not only in monetary terms but

also in the form of increased confidence and reduced work burden. Some of the families have fixed motors to increase the efficiency of the tricycles and are able to travel more and collect more waste. DBRC has also facilitated various entitlements for women and their family members such as ration cards, Aadhar cards, birth and caste certificates, schemes such as Amma Vodi, opening of bank accounts and thus made the entire effort very effective.

The budget has been very efficiently utilised for the following purposes.

#	Particulars	Amount Rs
1	White boards & Stands	37500
2	Tarpaulins for the Children to sit	19,500
3	Slate, Slate Pencils, Pencils, Eraser kit	18,950
4	Activity books, charts, drawing books, charts	60,290
5	Teachers payment	270,000
6	Training the Teachers (Venue Cost, Food, Travel)	15,760
7	Tricycles to Women Waste Pickers	2,85,000
8	Stationary (markers, duster, attendance, register)	7,500
9	Honorarium to the Project Coordinator	60,000
10	Admin Expenses (5%)	37,395
	Total Expenses	8,11,895

5. Impact and Sustainability

The impact of the project is visible. The children, women, men and the community leaders confirmed the following impacts created by the project.

Expected Outcomes	Achieved Outcomes
1. Imbibing and enhanced reading habit	1.1. Children are learning to read alphabets, lessons, tables etc with a lot of interest and enthusiasm. They read the lessons at OLC and the habit helped them in the schools
2. Writing and communication skills	2.1. Children forgot reading and writing during covid times and regained the same due to OLCs. 2.2. Children also get the homework done with the support of the teachers and in due course get their doubts also clarified 2.3. The children communicate with the teachers, community members and outsiders with a smile on their face and confidence. The fear and the shyness faded slowly.
3. Co-curricular activities (quiz, talent exhibitions, etc)	3.1. The day at OLC starts with games and the energy levels of the children are maintained throughout 3.2. Children learn and participate in singing songs, dancing, drawing and colouring, story and rhymes telling, sports, games, cultural etc 3.3. Parents joy knew no bounds when they see their children getting involved in various activities and their

	<p>talents. The desire to send the children to the school among the parents has been enhanced. They also oversee the functioning of the OLCs</p> <p>3.4. OLCs have prevented the child labour and provided enabling environment to the children for learning literacy, exhibiting their talents and behavioural change</p> <p>3.5. Children have learnt life skills with good behaviour, best habits and formal education</p>
4. Overall improvement in the academic performance of students	<p>4.1. Children are regular to the school</p> <p>4.2. Regular in doing their home works</p> <p>4.3. Go to school clean, neat and on time</p> <p>4.4. Able to answer the queries on the subjects asked by the teachers and scoring above average marks</p> <p>4.5. Participate in events and competitions in the schools</p> <p>4.6. No dropouts and no irregularity since the children have developed interest in studies</p>
5. Reduction in school drop-out rate	<p>5.1. Children are regular to the primary schools since they are located within the vicinity</p> <p>5.2. Some children give up schooling when secondary and high schools are located far away and due to lack of transport facilities. Parents find it risk to send their children go by walk due to bad roads and safety issues</p> <p>5.3. Parents drop their children in schools and pick up and ensure their regular schooling in spite of the distance</p> <p>5.4. Big children stopped going with their parents for waste picking</p>
6. Income enhancement of Waste Picker women by using Tricycle	<p>6.1. Reduced drudgery and women got relieved from carrying the waste on their shoulders</p> <p>6.2. Increased safety and self-confidence of women</p> <p>6.3. Able to travel long without getting tired, collect more quantities of waste and earn more income. Earlier income per day was Rs.200 - 250 per day; now it is Rs.300 - 400 and thus gender disparity is reduced</p> <p>6.4. Cycles are also used for alternate livelihoods purposes and transport materials needed for the household</p> <p>6.5. Children were able to sit in the cycle when women had to take them along with since no one was at home to take care</p> <p>6.6. Increase in additional income enabled them to meet their family needs and send their children to OLC and the schools</p>

DBRC has been working for the wellbeing and the rights of the Dalit Bahujan communities. It has a system of regular planning, reviewing and monitoring. The project progress and the budget utilisation are reviewed on a regular basis by the Program Manager, Urban Affairs. The project was supported by the field staff of DBRC in mobilising the communities, children,

identifying the location for OLCs with the support of the communities. Even though the Enable Project is a small project, it has created a larger and long lasting impact on the children and the women. Due to prime importance given to the project and dedicated services of the staff and the teachers made the project impactful and successful.

The underlying causes of discrimination meted out to the waste picking women, their children and families are deep-rooted in patriarchal / caste structures, norms and unwritten rules. Unless there is a structural and societal transformation, it is very challenging to ensure justice to the waste picking communities. In this backdrop, achieving sustainability in initiatives such as the Enable Project is a long way to go since it is not only a societal challenge but also an economic or environmental challenge. However, DBRC has focused on the following measures to ensure certain sustainability;

- Focusing on community engagement and ensuring their ownership through sensitization, meetings, exposure, trainings etc
- Sensitizing and policy engagement with the officials / departments towards the needs of the waste picking communities and for effective implementation of programs
- Facilitating basic entitlements and services from the government
- Mobilising local and CSR support for such initiatives – succeeded in mobilising the support from AID to continue the OLCs from 15 February 2023
- Collectivising the waste pickers with the focus on women into a Cooperative Society to take up segregation, recycling and selling by themselves without depending on the middlemen

6. Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations

- ❖ The Enable Project is highly relevant and essential and needs to be continued. More such centres are to be opened to do justice to the children of the waste pickers and for their education and better future.
- ❖ OLC needs to part of the all initiatives of DBRC, since it is very cost effective and brings interest among the children to study and excel in other extracurricular activities
- ❖ The children of waste pickers deserve basic facilities at the OLCs. Hence a room with basic amenities needs to be identified so that during rainy or windy days, the classes can continue without any disruption
- ❖ More of learning materials and play materials are to be made available for the children to make them creative and quick in learning
- ❖ The honorarium to teachers needs a revision to keep their motivation and dedication high all the time. Since the teachers are from poor families, they also need to earn their livelihood and it is a recognition for their hard work and dedication.
- ❖ Evidence based policy dialogue with the authorities shall be on a continuous basis so that the state come up with affirmative measures and action to ensure education to the children of waste pickers and for strengthening women's livelihoods
- ❖ A committee at the community level consisting of both women and men leaders could be constituted and one of their prime responsibilities could be ensuring education to the children of waste pickers

- ❖ All eligible women shall be brought into the SHG framework for their socio-economic empowerment
- ❖ Alternative livelihoods are to be promoted and women need to be capacitated to take up such options/opportunities. The existing livelihoods are also to be strengthened by providing awareness to women on their rights and upgrading their skills
- ❖ The initiative of Waste Pickers Cooperative needs to be further strengthened and replicated to ensure that they are not exploited by middlemen in getting fair price
- ❖ Identifying potential speakers among the children and women and providing them opportunities to voice their views during celebration of important events and while making representations to the government authorities
- ❖ Work with the school and hostel authorities to give special focus on the children when they join and ensure conducive environment for the children to learn
- ❖ Case studies on the academic performance of the children and the additional income earned by women are to be done from time to time and disseminated to wider audience

7. Conclusion

The project has faced certain constraints and challenges such as

- The OLCs are run in the open areas near their settlements. Whenever it rains, the OLCs are forced to remain closed during rainy days
- In the winter the sun sets early and hence continuing the study hours up to 6.30 pm becomes challenging
- It is a challenge at times to motivate the children to come to the outdoor learning centres on a regular basis.
- Mobilizing 25 % of the project money locally is a challenge. It is time consuming and one needs to put in a lot of effort in identifying the donors/supporters for setting up permanent shelters to ensure the centres are run during different seasons.
- It has become very hard to convince the wardens/principals while joining the children in hostels or even schools

In spite of the challenges and constraints, the OLCs functioned effectively and enabled the children in learning and exhibiting their talents and also building community sensitivity in supporting children's education.

The Enable Project recognizes that complex interrelated social challenges, such as those faced by waste pickers, cannot be addressed sustainably through siloed intervention approaches. For instance, an education intervention focused on girls in waste picker households – without simultaneously addressing social exclusion, poor water, sanitation and hygiene, and sexual abuse – may not yield the desired outcomes. A multi-pronged initiative can better address systemic exclusions and contribute to improving the access to education for children. To address gender disparity among waste pickers, the women need to be ably supported for their socio-economic empowerment by strengthening their existing livelihoods and promoting alternative livelihoods with skills up-gradation, capacity building and handholding support.

The positive small-scale efforts in different regional pockets by DBRC and various non-governmental organisations and individuals need to be up-scaled and replicated by the government. While there are several state and central government initiatives for educating children from marginalised communities, the children of waste pickers have completely fallen through the cracks of India's formal education system. They find no mention in policy documents or speeches. The waste picking women are also not included in most of the women empowerment policies and schemes. In the absence of a serious political will to implement the plentiful government policies against child labour and provide these children universal primary education, multi-pronged approach to empower waste picking women, organisations like DBRC and local community leaders, have been setting positive examples through their tremendous efforts to educate children in difficult circumstances and empowering women. *As the nation continues to talk about achieving sustainable development goals, there is an urgent need to shed light on the health, education and livelihoods of waste pickers, for whom economic growth and prosperity in India has bypassed.*