



Report on Needs Assessment for *Kilkari Home for Girls, Kashmere Gate, "Dil Se" Campaign, Aman Biradari*

*"Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account."*¹

The following report abides by the principles of the above extract and is a step towards realizing this right for children. This report is a review of the *Needs Assessment surveys* conducted by Music Basti in the Month of May 2010. The needs assessment surveys form a vital part of the annual evaluation cycle at Music Basti. In an effort to fulfill Music Basti's goal to promote the right to expression for children, needs assessment surveys are aimed at understanding the dilemmas confronting the children at Kilkari Home for girls, in this respect; how have their voices been suppressed? In what aspects of their lives do they exhibit inhibition? These are some of the questions the needs assessment is hoping to answer.

In this, the first round of phase one of the needs assessment, the survey was carried out in the form of an informal interactive discussion with a group of 17 girls. A list of questions pertaining to their lives at the Home and school were put forward for discussion as well as questions relating to an assessment of their interaction with Music Basti projects. Lastly, questions relating to their knowledge of current events were asked.

The members present at every needs assessment were part of the Music Basti Management Team i.e., Faith Gonsalves (Project Officer), Ushinor Majumdar (Program Head), Ishani Butalia (Volunteer Manager) and Sikandar M Kumar (Program Head). The assessment was carried out independent of the staff members at Kilkari Home. They were briefed about the nature of the workshop and given a summary at the end.

¹ See **Convention on the Rights of Children, article 12**, "*what rights?*", unicef.org



Summary of the sections of the Needs Assessment

School Life:² Most of the children (13) attend the bridge classes conducted at the Aman Biradari Home; the remainder (4) go to regular school. The majority in this group feels that the teachers showed no bias towards specific student. Eventually, a few children agreed that boys sometimes get preference. One girl pointed out that the children who tend to participate more get more attention, and two other girls affirmed this. The school that the four children attend has no extra-curricular activities.

All the children had been reprimanded verbally on making mistakes, both at school and in the home, but not arbitrarily. Fourteen girls said formal education is very important, and fifteen girls said the same for extracurricular/informal methods of education. Eventually seven children agreed amongst themselves that formal education is more important.

Home Life: The children said that they get about 3-4 hours of free time, and most agreed that this was enough time. One said that she would like more time to play, while another said she would like more time to study. The latter is attending the bridge course, at Kilkari Home for girls. The children were quite unanimous in their opinion that they preferred school to being at home; because of the fun they could have in recess. They also felt that at school they were able to focus more on studying, something they found lacking in their lives at home.

The children stated that they felt most comfortable approaching Mehnaz didi in a situation of emergency. In the event of a conflict, most said that they did not go to anyone, but approached Lilly (one of the older girls in the home) to resolve matters. They felt that their grievances were not always heard. Some children mentioned that sometimes they tend to go 'out of control' and start to hurt each other.

Community and awareness: The children do not watch the news at the Home but at their own homes, they do. The issues they were informed on were: inflation, Sania Mirza's wedding and the cricket IPL tournaments.

² All records of names, grades they are in at present, study and play times etc. can be found in the Needs Assessment Form (Phase 1) - Kashmere Gate.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (IDEA)

162, Ward No. 3 Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030

Phone: 9818453347/26181508 E-Mail: musicbasti@gmail.com



When asked about 'issues that troubled them most,' their responses were: students having to commit suicide due to exam pressure, heavy government taxation, opportunity (or the lack of) determined by the economic class of the individual, the fact that luxury goods were too expensive for many, police corruption, the situation leading to orphans and their treatment after and child beggars.

The one thing individual children in this group would like to change about the world is: the fact that private schools deny admission to some children, inflation, parents from forcing their children to beg and human trafficking. They would like to see more rehabilitative homes for street children and a more effective police protection in the city. They felt that the youth of India have an important role in popular politics.

Feedback for Music Basti

Most children were hesitant to answer the question, "Why does Music Basti come here?" The reason for this was not recorded. It is important that this reason be found out. The younger ones were able to answer however, stating that Music Basti came to the Home to teach them: the sargam, sur, songs, poems, names of instruments, scales, singing, [specific songs – kanha re, yuhi chala chal rahi, daulat, the mowgli song, chanda mama, ichak dana, yeh tara, lakho jatan].

The group felt that they could relate to the meanings of the songs that they had been taught. They were able to relate themes such as communal harmony, teamwork and right to live, to love and be loved. They would like Music Basti to teach them some fusion songs, popular songs, lok geet and Bhajjans. The majority would like to learn how to write their own songs and set it to music. A few however, were intimidated at the thought of writing songs as they felt it would be difficult. One of the girls had no desire to write songs.



Conclusion: General Recommendations and Follow-ups

The major thrust of the needs assessment abides by articles 12³ and 25⁴ of the *UN convention for the rights of children* and article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Freedom of expression)*⁵. The needs assessment conducted above, is itself a step closer to realizing these rights (especially the right to expression) for the children at Kilkari Home for girls. This last section of the report will re-voke the questions asked in the introduction and put forth some general follow ups for Music Basti to look into in its program development in the future.

- It seems the number of children who are exposed to formal education is lower in this group, although this might be an unfair judgment given that needs assessments are conducted with a select group of kids. However, since even the school going children are not given an opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities, Music Basti's role in this home seems far more urgent. A more rigorous outline must be made for this home and perhaps an effort to excite them more in learning extra-curricular arts through shows, external trips to plays and concerts etc. Music Basti's lesson plans should also take into account what they are learning at school as well as in the bridge courses to tackle the concepts with the children creatively. E.g. Songs can be made out of a poem from their poetry book.

³ See **Convention on the Rights of Children, article 12**. It states, "Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account," Ibid.

⁴ See **Convention on the Rights of Children, article 25**. It states, "Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full," Ibid.

⁵ See **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19**. It states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (IDEA)
162, Ward No. 3 Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030
Phone: 9818453347/26181508 E-Mail: musicbasti@gmail.com



- It seems quite unanimous from the needs assessment that the children find news boring. This can be tackled by drawing current issues closer with issues they feel strongly about such as government taxation. Perhaps song writing can be employed for this purpose.
- In the context of the specific curriculum for Music Basti, a few follow-ups need to be highlighted from this Home: The children want to learn both popular and traditional music like (lok geet and bhajjans). They would even like to learn a synthesis of these two in the form of fusion. Perhaps, a few songs of each kind can be incorporated in the lesson plans. Music Basti can contact some Indian classical singers and fusion bands like Mrigya, Indian Ocean and Swarathma (who have already performed for them) to perform for them in a special workshop.

Sikandar M Kumar

Program Team Head

Music Basti

Integrated Development Education Association (IDEA)