

Butterflies

An Initiative to Improve Lives of Street Children

June, 2007

Grassroots Intervention for Emancipation of Street Children

Recommendation: Donate

Rating: 19/25 (Good)

Revenue: Rs. 37,517,000
USD 921,000

Tax Exempt Status

India: 50% tax exemption under section 80G of Income Tax Act

Butterflies is a non-profit organization working for the emancipation of destitute children who live on the streets in precarious conditions. The organization is in contact with more than 1300 street children on a regular basis through its contact points spread across Delhi. What we like about the organisation is that it effectively works for providing education and life skills development of street children through a non-institutional approach.

“The main issue is both children and adolescents run away from home due to dysfunctional families and poverty and it is this very pauperization that makes children vulnerable to violation of their rights. Many of these children are not only exploited, they are often denied education, basic health care, adequate nutrition, leisure time and the safety and security of their families and communities. They live a life characterized by struggle for survival and are vulnerable to harassment, assault, abuse and exploitation. Their difficulties are further aggravated by negative attitude of general public towards them”

- **Holistic Approach for the Development of Street Children**

Butterflies focuses on protecting street children from abuse and exploitation through awareness generation and direct intervention. For development of life skills amongst such children, it provides alternate education facilities. To improve employability of street children, the organization conducts vocational training courses. Butterflies also provide shelter and medical aid to children in immediate need of help.

- **Alliance Building for Strengthening Initiatives in the Area of Child Rights**

Butterflies focuses on alliance building to facilitate collective work amongst grassroots NGOs on issues related to children. Some of the major initiatives taken by Butterflies in this direction are the establishment of National NGO Forum for Street and Working Children, Delhi Child Right's Club, National Child Journalist Forum (NCJF) and National Alliance of Grassroots NGOs (NAGN).

- **Focus on Indirect Interventions to Maximize Impact**

As part of its indirect intervention strategy for emancipation of street children, Butterflies relies on variety of tools, which include advocacy with the government, research and documentation of facts and issues related to children, alliance building with national and international development organizations, etc.

Major findings of the Study on Child Abuse – 2007, undertaken by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India

- *Two out of every three children in India are physically abused*
- *Out of those children physically abused in family situations, 88% are abused by parents*
- *65% of school going children face corporal punishment*
- *53% children have faced one or more forms of sexual abuse*
- *22% children face severe forms of sexual abuse and 51% other forms of sexual abuse*
- *Children on street, children at work and children in institutional care face the highest incidence of sexual assault*
- *50% abusers are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility*

Mission

The projects implemented by Butterflies are oriented towards empowering street children with knowledge and skills necessary to protect their rights and wellbeing. The organization also aims to provide such children necessary support and assistance for re-instatement in their families where possible and help them develop as respected and productive citizens.

The mission of Butterflies include lobbying to influence the Government policies which affect children and to ensure that child rights are an integral part of all government political agendas. The organization utilizes the provisions of Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a major tool for ensuring Government and public accountability to the well being of all vulnerable children.

Environment

With an estimated 12.6 million children engaged in hazardous occupations (2001 Census), India has the largest number of child laborers under the age of 14 in the world. Although poverty is often cited as the cause underlying child labor, other factors such as discrimination, social exclusion, as well as the lack of quality education or existing parents' attitudes and perceptions about child labor and the role and value of education also need to be considered.

In India, children's vulnerabilities and exposure to violations of their rights remain spread and multiple in nature. These violations are various, ranging from child labor, child trafficking, to commercial sexual exploitation and many other forms of violence and abuse.

Trafficking of children also continues to be a serious problem in India. The nature and scope of trafficking range from industrial and domestic labor, to forced early marriages and commercial sexual exploitation. Existing studies show that over 40 per cent of women sex workers enter into prostitution before the age of 18 years.

While systematic data and information on child protection issues are still not always available, evidence suggests that children in need of special protection belong to communities suffering disadvantage and social exclusion such as scheduled casts and tribes, and the poor. The lack of available services, as well as the gaps persisting in law enforcement and in rehabilitation schemes also constitute a major cause of concern.

Moreover, street children are subjected to physical abuse by police as governments treat them as a blight to be eradicated-rather than as children to be nurtured and protected. They are frequently detained arbitrarily by police simply because they are homeless, or criminally charged with vague offenses such as loitering, vagrancy, or petty theft.

Street children also make up a large proportion of the children who enter criminal justice systems and are committed finally to correctional institutions (prisons), often without due process. Few advocates speak up for these children, and few street children have family members or concerned individuals willing and able to intervene on their behalf.

About Butterflies

Rita Panicker, founded Butterflies in 1988 in Delhi as she felt the need to improve the inhuman conditions in which many street children were living in and around the capital city. The organization is a registered non-government organization, which imparts non-formal education and health care to street children and working children.

Butterflies also has a 24-hours free telephone help-line service known as Childline (1098), which offers online counseling to children for a variety of problems related to studies, relationships, sexual abuse etc.

In addition to this, if a child is in need of immediate help, then Butterflies offers medical and legal help. If a child is reported missing then his/her parents are contacted, otherwise the child is given shelter in the 'resilience centers' run by the organization.

The organization has 11 contact points in Delhi including railway stations, parks etc., where it conducts non-formal education classes including training in life skills, theatre, radio and print journalism as well as vocational training in carpentry, plumbing and electrical maintenance and repair.

Butterflies also conducts regular health care programs, which offer medical aid to street children as well as awareness generation pertaining to both curative and preventive measures. In addition, a mobile health unit with health team goes regularly to the contact points to provide health advice, treatment and admission to hospital when necessary.

Breakup of Revenue Sources 2005-06

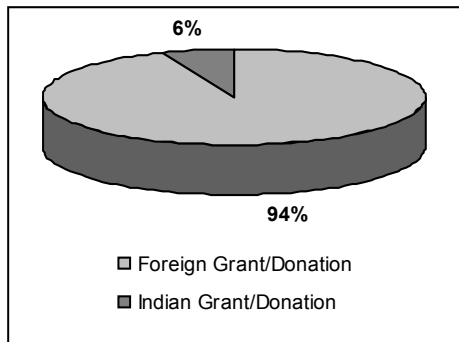


Figure 1

Business Model

Revenue of Butterflies almost wholly depends on grants and donations. Foreign contribution constitutes the most significant portion of the organization's revenue, as it accounted for 94% of the total income for the fiscal year 2005-06. Contribution from Indian sources accounted for the rest 6%.

	March 31, 2006	March 31, 2005	March 31, 2004
Revenue (Rs.)	37,517,000	21,147,000	10,923,000
Growth over previous year (%)	77.4	93.6	--

Table - 1 Revenue growth of Butterflies

Butterflies has partnership with various national and international organizations. These organizations sponsor specific programs undertaken by Butterflies. Misereor, Germany partly sponsors the educational and health projects of the organization. Railway Children, UK supports the Health on Wheels Project whereas Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), Netherlands supports the Resilience Center. Other major funding partners of Butterflies are Save the Children (UK), Center for Innovation in Voluntary Action (Comic Relief), The Atlantic Philanthropies, UK and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

Butterflies has achieved substantial revenue growth rate in the recent years (see table 1) as a result of fruitful partnerships with international grant making organizations. We believe that the growth in revenue will enable the organization to reach out to greater number of street children in Delhi and also help Butterflies to increase the scope and reach of its programs.

Structure

Butterflies is headquartered in Delhi where majority of its programs are concentrated. The organization also has operations in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, where it has intervened for providing relief to the tsunami affected children.

A seven member Governing Board oversees the overall functioning of Butterflies. The Governing Board also plays an important role in developing broad policy framework for the organization. The board meets at least once a year and the minutes are duly recorded.

The Founder Director, Ms. Rita Panicker is the executive head of the organization. The total staff strength of Butterflies in Delhi is about 85. Implementation of various programs is overseen by a core team of project coordinators. The core team includes coordinators from seven departments that include Street Project, Health Project, Technical Training, Resilience Center, Advocacy and Research Center, Alternate Media Center and Children Development Bank.

Our Rating

Butterflies has received an overall score of 19 out of 25 (see table 2) on account of its quality management, effective strategy and execution and transparency of operations.

The maximum possible score is 30 with an equal weight given to each of the six criteria; the maximum point that can be assigned to each criterion is five.

Butterflies has received a score of 19/25 on account of its quality management and effective strategy and execution. We can not rate the organization on the resource allocation criteria due to lack of adequate information

Criteria	Score
Disclosure	3
Clear Strategy	4
Execution of Strategy	4
Resource Allocation	NA*
Management Quality	4
Ethics	4
Total	26

Table - 2 Butterflies Rating (Scale of 1 to 5)

**See Resource Allocation under Operational Assessment*

Operational Assessment

Disclosure

We believe that Butterflies is a transparent organization, but there are some aspects of information disclosure policy that the organization has to improve upon. The income and expenditure statement of Butterflies does not segregate administrative expenses and program expenses. This makes it very difficult to determine what percentage of the revenue is actually being spent on the programs and what is being spent on the overheads.

Though the annual reports and audited financial statements are not available on its web site, the organization provides these documents on request.

Butterflies publishes quarterly newsletters, which provide information about the organization's activities undertaken during that specific period. The newsletters can be accessed on the organization's website.

Clear Strategy

Butterflies follows a non-institutional and participatory approach for its children focused interventions. Based on this approach, the organization has evolved a two-pronged strategy which includes:

- Field based interventions, and
- Indirect interventions including advocacy, research, training and alliance building with partners and stakeholders

The objective behind this strategy is to empower children with knowledge/skills necessary to protect their rights, provide them necessary support for re-instatement in their families wherever possible and help them develop as productive citizens.

Execution on Strategy

Implementation of Butterflies' strategy largely depends on its field based interventions, wherein the organization reaches out to the street children for providing its services. Major components of the field based interventions are explained in the following sections.

Night Shelter

The organization has established three night shelters for street children in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The night shelters are a response to the need of homeless street children, with provision of subsidized meals, toilet, hot bath and medical facilities. The shelters are also a place where other program activities take place such as alternate education, theatre and cultural activities.

Night Reach

Small teams of field coordinators reach out during nights to such vulnerable children who are otherwise unavailable during the day. The objective of these night outs is to identify problem areas and also to stop exploitation or abuse taking place against children.

Resilience Centre

Butterflies has established resilience centers that are short term transit homes for children needing immediate shelter, medical attention/care, legal help, counseling and rest for a period of time to recoup from illness. When the children recover, they are either sent back home if they have a family, or to children's institution for long term rehabilitation. Some of the children are even sent back to streets if they desire so.

Childline

Butterflies is a partner agency in the Childline initiative, which is sponsored by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Butterflies responds to emergency calls made by children seeking assistance for medical aid, shelter, repatriation, rescue, sponsorship, emotional guidance and support, etc.

Alternate Education and Vocational Training

Butterflies provides alternate education facilities to street children with the strategy to mainstream them to formal schooling or enroll them in the National

Night shelters run by butterflies provide safe refuge to around 250 children on an average every night

Butterflies provide alternate education facilities to the children with an aim to align them with the formal schooling system, once they reach a specific level of educational attainment

Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Health education is integrated into education curriculum, wherein children are oriented on issues related to personal hygiene, sanitation and health.

Flexibility is followed in timings (as per children's convenience) and venue (at street corners, in parks, bus stations, night shelters); thus enabling those children who are otherwise not regular to access a class whenever possible.

Opportunities for vocational education offered to the street and working children include:

- Desktop publishing and data entry
- Electrical repair and maintenance
- Six months training program in food production and catering

At present around 265 children are part of the alternate education out of which, 20 children have been admitted to formal schools.

The Children's Development Bank (CDB)

CDB is a unique concept developed by Butterflies in the sense that it is managed and run by children themselves and facilitated by adults. The bank encourages habit of saving among children by providing a safe place to hold their money. The bank also offers small loans to members who are saving regularly.

The primary objective of the CDB is to impart life skill education as it supports children to be responsible, inculcate the habit of prioritizing needs, to budget and save. CDB teaches children basic principle of banking and the volunteer managers are taught basics of accounting - that is how to keep a ledger, cash and pass books.

Resource Allocation

The organization has not provided us with the details of their resource allocation under various heads such as program expenditure, administrative costs, fund raising costs, etc. Therefore it is difficult for us to determine the fund utilization efficiency of Butterflies.

Quality of Management

Rita Panicker, Director of Butterflies, has significant experience in working for the development sector. She majored in social welfare administration from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Bombay.

Soon after her graduation, she worked in the field of community health for almost five years. Rita enrolled in the master's program in development studies at the Institute of Social Sciences in Den Haag, the Netherlands.

Upon her return to India, she worked as a faculty member at TISS, where her interest in street children grew. By the time she moved to Delhi in 1987, Rita had resolved to work with and for street children and formed Butterflies.

Butterflies can boast of having a competent and committed staff. Most of the staff members are well qualified and dedicated towards the cause they are working for.

Ethics

Butterflies is not associated with any political or religious group and believes in providing equal opportunity to underprivileged children without any discrimination on the basis of caste, race or religion. The underlying strength of the organization is a team of dedicated staff who firmly believe in the cause they are working for. For these reasons, we believe that the organization is oriented towards maintaining high ethical norms in its functioning.

Milestones

Following are the key milestones attained by the organization:

- *Children Development Bank*: The CDB project of Butterflies has gained immense popularity. Many national and international agencies have partnered with the organization to replicate the model of CDB. The CDB concept has now been established in South Asia, with 26 main branches and 46 sub branches operational in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In India, the project is operational in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Muzzaffarpur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Leh.
- *Accreditation with National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)*: NIOS is one of the initiatives of the Government of India to make primary, secondary and higher education available to those people who have missed out on formal schooling. Educational curriculum of Butterflies is accredited with NIOS up to the 8th standard. 97 children from 11 contact points enrolled in NIOS for the academic year of 2005-2006.
- *Childline*: Childline staff of Butterflies handled more than 3000 distress calls in the year 2005-06. Close to 50% of Childline intervention cases involved cases of lost children followed by rescue (20%) and shelter (16%).
- *Child Protection Program for Tsunami Relief*: Butterflies started the program in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in March 2005 to provide immediate relief to the children affected by tsunami. It established Children's Development Centers (CDC) in villages and intermediate shelters. The CDCs provide activity based learning facilities to children. Presently, Butterflies run 61 CDCs covering more than 6700 children.

Childline Intervention Cases 2005-06

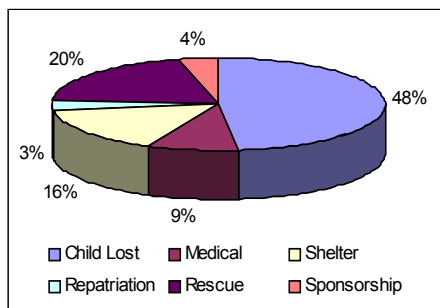


Figure 2

Table 3 Number of Children Attending Butterflies CDC

Island Name	No. of Children
South Andaman	1750
Port Blair	320
Car Nicobar	800
Little Andaman	1500
Nancowry Island	500
Great Nicobar	1900
Total	6770

Conclusion

Street and working children constitute one of the most disadvantaged sections of the urban population. These are children who have escaped hunger and violence at home to seek a better future in cities only to experience worse forms of violence and betrayal by adults in the cities.

Programs implemented by Butterflies are providing opportunities to these underprivileged children so that they can relive their lost childhood and realize their true potential. We believe that donating to the organization will help to address the critical needs of most marginalized section of our society – the street children.