

Visakhapatnam Adolescent Empowerment Programme

# PROMISING LEADS FOR GENERATION UNLIMITED STRATEGY



## Generation Unlimited strategy



The Generation Unlimited (Gen-U) strategy is a global multi-sector partnership initiative to ensure three basic needs for all young people in the age group of 10 to 24 years – education, training and employment opportunities – by 2030.

The Gen-U strategy is focused on creating global and in-country public-private partnerships to develop, support and strengthen investment opportunities, programmes and innovations focused on helping young people become productive in life. It calls on governments, businesses, foundations, academia, non-profits, communities and innovators to come forward and join hands in innovating and building solutions.

## Integrating Gen-U approaches into the Visakhapatnam Adolescent Empowerment Programme

One of the key strengths of the Visakhapatnam Adolescent Empowerment Programme (AEP) is to weave adolescent empowerment alongside linking education and employable skills services to the most vulnerable adolescents. In many cases, there will be greater focus on community awareness programmes to orient them on rights and legislations. Significant emphasis was also given in the AEP to design, negotiate and link the most important services, second chance education, and skills trainings to the most vulnerable adolescents. Thus, a combination of empowerment approaches along with linking them to a range of needed services resulted in vulnerable adolescents understanding their rights and negotiating with parents and the government on their needed services. This resulted in a significant decrease in child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

These holistic strategies developed for the Visakhapatnam AEP received an enthusiastic response from the Government of Andhra Pradesh. This was evident in the institutionalisation of many practices undertaken as part of the AEP, which was implemented in five Mandals of Andhra Pradesh.<sup>1</sup>

UNICEF, in close association with the District Adolescent Resource Centre (DARC) and its implementing partners for AEP<sup>2</sup> proposed several interventions as part of its new approach for adolescent empowerment. This included capacity building of the relevant stakeholders, leveraging district-level resources and ensuring active involvement of the relevant departments. Many of these are noticeable positive steps, which hold the promise of strengthening the Gen-U strategy. *Some salient approaches and experiences that can help in shaping the Gen-U strategy are elaborated in this brief.*



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<sup>1</sup>AEP was implemented for a three-year period from 2016 to 2019 in five Mandals of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh. These Mandals are S. Rayavaram (rural), Chodavaram (rural), Anandapuram (rural), Gajuwaka (urban) and Visakhapatnam City 1 (urban).

<sup>2</sup>Mandal-wise implementing partners: Gram Swarajya Samiti (S. Rayavaram), Srujana Welfare Association (Chodavaram), Vikasa (Anandapuram), ACCEPT (Gajuwaka), Mahila Action (Visakhapatnam City 1)

## Enhancing opportunities for education

The AEP focused on encouraging second chance education by continuously emphasising engagement with out-of-school and dropout adolescents and motivating them to re-join school. Several dropout children above 14 years of age were supported and initiated into mainstream education through open school facilities and second chance education. The programme provided initial financial support to dropout children towards admission and examination fees for Open Class 10 and Intermediate examinations. Access to scholarships, hostel facilities and social protection schemes was also facilitated for many children.

### Implications for community involvement in education

This experience augurs well for community involvement in education of children from economically weaker sections in society or from families who keep their children out of schools due to social norms. Village-level institutions such as Gram Panchayats, Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and Self-help



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Groups (SHGs), who are in close proximity with community members, can play an active role in changing mindsets and improving educational opportunities for children, who stay out of school for economic and social reasons.

## Educational opportunities enhanced as part of AEP

**608** adolescents enrolled in Open Class 10 organized by Andhra Pradesh Open School Education Society, Department of School Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh

**227** adolescents enrolled in Open Intermediate programme organized by Board of Intermediate Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh

**635** adolescents enrolled in Residential Schools

**302** adolescents admitted in Social Welfare Hostels for Backward Classes

**265** adolescents admitted in Social Welfare Hostels for Scheduled Castes

**145** adolescents admitted in Social Welfare Hostels for Scheduled Tribes

**7,122** adolescents linked to scholarships

**687** adolescents linked to social protection schemes





## Ensuring buy-in of AEP content at state and district levels

The training modules developed on career counselling, life skills, rights and empowerment issues, as part of AEP are relevant in the context of school education as well as programmes with an adolescent empowerment component. Through the AEP, these modules, content and tools were strategically shared with state departments of Women and Child Welfare and School Education, along with civil society organizations (CSOs). Active advocacy led to specific commitments by these departments.

### State and district-level commitments

- The School Education Department has agreed to integrate the modules in all government schools. The modules were appreciated in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
- The modules have been integrated in the Kishori Vikasam programme, being implemented by the Department of Women and Child Welfare in all 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh. UNICEF led the training of master trainers (MTs) (which included preparation of a kit for MTs). The district-level MTs in all districts are now using the programme content and training kit
- AEP has also developed a comprehensive proposal under the aegis of the Nirbhaya Innovation Fund for the Department of Women and Child Welfare. This proposal leaned on AEP experiences and advocated these approaches and



activities to the Department. Having approved the proposal, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has forwarded it to the Government of India

- Looking at the success of the AEP, the District Collector of Visakhapatnam has established a District Coordination Committee on adolescent skill training programmes. The Committee aims to create convergence among various departments along with public and private sector players to provide employable skill trainings for adolescents.



The School Education Department has integrated modules on adolescent empowerment and the teacher-led TALK module on life skills into the sex education programme in schools

With the Government of Andhra Pradesh launching the third phase of Kishori Vikasam, there is an opportunity to integrate elements of AEP into the latest phase of the programme

Establishment of the District Coordination Committee would be a strong starting point to integrate adolescent empowerment and skilling into the Gen-U approach as envisaged by UNICEF

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to allocate INR 10 crore for adolescent empowerment issues.



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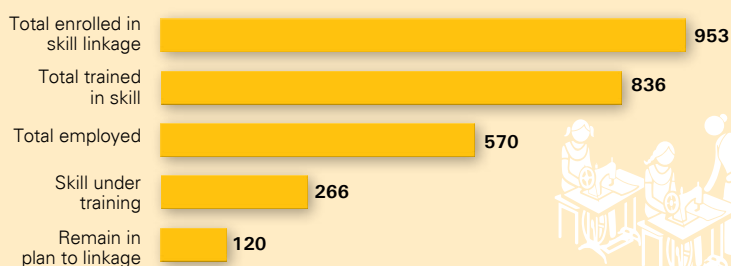
## Initiatives to strengthen skill development opportunities for adolescents

- A District Convergence Committee has been formed in Visakhapatnam for vocational and skill training of adolescents
- Discussions with the Andhra Pradesh Innovations Society and the Andhra Pradesh Skill Development Board – the key bodies that look into skills training for adolescents – have brought focus on gradually including formal sector skills training for adolescents through apprentice programmes such as the National Apprentice Promotion Scheme and Adolescent Labour Elimination Programme. The final destination, as envisaged in this roadmap, is to integrate skills training into the National Child Labour Project’s (NCLP) Societies. Negotiations have been undertaken with the Labour Department on integration of adolescent skills training as a key initiative of NCLP Societies
- Discussions have been undertaken with the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana chapters of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) and Social Impact Group (SIG) to take forward and integrate this approach of the AEP in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
- Adolescent skill training needs have been integrated into the Draft Youth Policy of Andhra Pradesh.

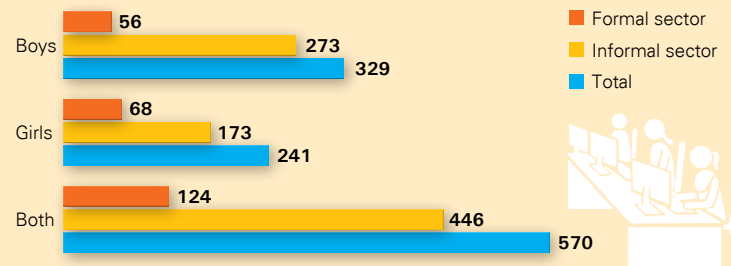
## Identification of skilling opportunities in the formal and informal sector

The AEP brought focus on skills training for adolescents and emphasis on making skill development and employment opportunities a pre-requisite for any adolescent empowerment programme. Due to the positive outcomes of the AEP, many steps are being taken to broaden the base of skilling opportunities for adolescents in the formal and informal sectors.

### Adolescents Linked to Skill Trainings (July 2019)



### Adolescents Employed after Skill Training





## Using technology for adolescent empowerment

The AEP introduced radio programmes on adolescent empowerment on public and private sector radio stations. Audio-video capsules were developed for children in schools as part of the programme. 250 episodes of the programme were converted into mobile-friendly content for extensive use with adolescent groups.

### Opportunities for use in Gen-U strategy

The Gen-U strategy can take forward such initiatives through the development of e-tools and e-platforms for adolescents and volunteers working with them. These tools can provide content on a range of issues such as adolescent rights, protection, employability, career choices etc. Career portals have recently been launched in Andhra Pradesh and such portals on employability, career counselling and skilling will be a part of Gen-U.

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## Enhancing volunteerism for adolescent empowerment

The experience of the AEP would help build the model as a promising approach for the Gen-U strategy. CSOs, non-CSO groups, corporates, and public and private sector entities provide a positive base to enhance volunteerism and link to the needs of adolescents related to education, skilling, protection and building access to government and social protection schemes. Building this network of partners and creating platforms will help create a strategic force to meet the needs and fulfil the aspirations of adolescents and youth in society.

### Partnering with National Service Scheme

The National Service Scheme (NSS) in Andhra Pradesh is implemented by Andhra University. Under the umbrella NSS Cell in the University, every college has an NSS unit with 100 volunteers and lecturers act as programme



NSS volunteer participation from **54** colleges

**30** peer leaders selected and trained each year

Each NSS unit has **one** adopted colony or village



officers. UNICEF partnered with NSS to capitalise on this existing resource pool of adolescent volunteers for the AEP. Through 3-day cascade training, the NSS volunteers were trained by programme officers who themselves had been trained by master trainers. The themes for their orientation included nutrition, girl child protection and child protection issues like sexual harassment, child abuse and drug addiction. Volunteers use theme-wise booklets, Meena Radio episodes on life skills in Telugu and interpersonal communication (IPC) videos as communication tools while interacting with adolescents and communities in slums and villages.

**People in my village used to think that educating girls upto Class 10 is enough. I insisted on joining college for my BA and then joined NSS. Through the NSS-UNICEF programme, we were trained on topics such as ending child marriage, adolescent nutrition and hygiene, life skills etc. My parents wanted to fix my marriage in my second year of college. Having gained confidence as an NSS volunteer, I firmly said no to marriage and told them about my right to continue with my education and pursue a career. I showed them my awards and participation certificate too. They were finally convinced and then encouraged me to pursue my studies. The programme activities have helped me develop my communication skills and overcome the fear of what others think.**

Madhuri, Student, St. Ann's Degree College, Visakhapatnam

## Potential for scaling up AEP in other states

An impact evaluation of the AEP has been undertaken. The findings of the impact evaluation would serve other states and countries as pointers while designing programmes related to adolescents.

The encouraging results of the AEP approaches have the potential to feed into adolescent programming with a focus on education, training and employment opportunities, which are the three pillars of the Gen-U strategy.





for every child

**UNICEF Office for Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana**

Plot No: 317/A, Road No.12

MLA Colony, Banjara Hills

Hyderabad - 500034, Andhra Pradesh, India

Tel: +91 040 23540712 / 0722 / 0744 / 0239

Fax: +91 040 23555-156

Email: [hyderabad@unicef.org](mailto:hyderabad@unicef.org)