

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE

Helping Young Girls Build their Aspirations

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas (KGBVs) are residential schools that enable access to quality education for girls belonging to marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Although KGBVs ensure a safe, secure and sheltered environment, most girls lack negotiation skills and the ability to make balanced life decisions, articulate and pursue their aspirations, and move ahead in life with confidence and self-assuredness.

Opportunities for Life (O4L) – piloted in Dungarpur district of Rajasthan from October 2018 to July 2019 – aimed to strengthen employability and self-empowerment skills among girls studying in classes 9–12 in five KGBV–IV hostels.



O4L was piloted by Sandhan (Society for Study of Education and Development), a non-government organisation, with technical and financial support from UNICEF and endorsement of the Government of Rajasthan's Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SmSA).

O4L KGBV hostels

Bankoda hostel | Peeth hostel | Manakpura hostel | Damri hostel | Genji hostel
Aspur block | Simalwara block | Sagwara block | Dovra block | Jhauhari block

Key objectives of O4L pilot intervention



Helping build self-empowerment and employability skills among young girls through development of:

- Communication
- Resilience and foresight
- Self awareness
- Problem solving and negotiation skills



Improving and strengthening their confidence and aspirations through role modelling



Enhancing their knowledge about entitlements, services, legal and protection rights

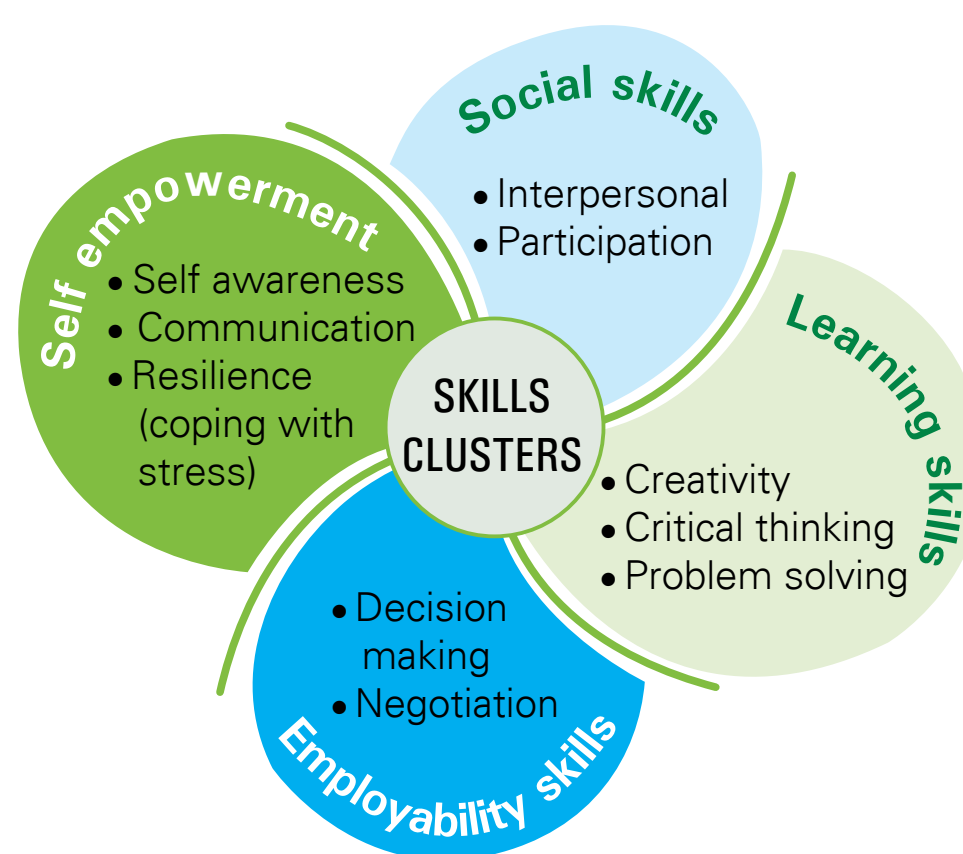


Expanding their understanding of rights and gender equity, and ways to address their violations



Building their exposure to employment/development opportunities and capabilities to choose employment options

A framework focusing on empowerment and employability



O4L's design leans on the Core Skills Framework, which is based on four pillars: **self-empowerment, employability, social skills and learning skills**. Of these four, O4L gave a thrust to self-empowerment and employability in the context of adolescent girls planning for their adult lives.

Experiential project interventions and methods

Project interventions were based on findings of a baseline assessment of the core skills of girls, conducted in October 2018.



Environment building – to ensure stakeholder buy-in and create a positive space for constructive conversations with girls

- SmSA officers were met with and informed about intervention
- Principals, teachers and wardens of schools where girls were studying were met with, informed and sensitised
- Group exercises such as singing, games and group work were undertaken in hostels to build communication and self-awareness



Interactive sessions on core skills – to develop a practical understanding of gender equity

- Select AdhaFULL* episodes were shown to the girls and group discussions conducted after each episode
- Reflection was done on the lives and experiences of girls, along with sharing and discussion around personal aspirations, gender norms, life skills and other relevant issues
- Interactive tools like role plays, charts, posters, drama and enactment of hypothetical situations were used



'Samvaad' (dialogue) sessions – to expand the horizon of career options for adolescent girls and strengthen understanding of their own rights and entitlements.

- Sessions were held with representatives of banks, police department, post offices, E-Mitras etc.
- The interactive career portal of the Government of Rajasthan was introduced by career counsellors
- Information dissemination and knowledge building was done on laws and rights related to children, adolescents and youth

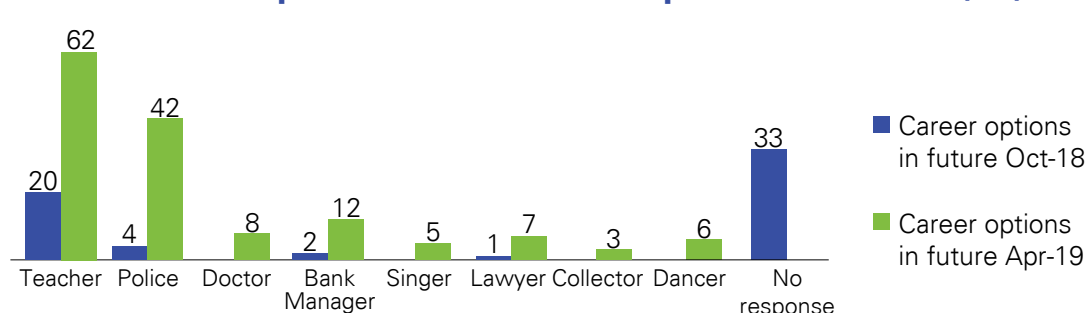


Life Labs – to simulate various services that can be accessed to help girls progress towards their dreams and aspirations in real life

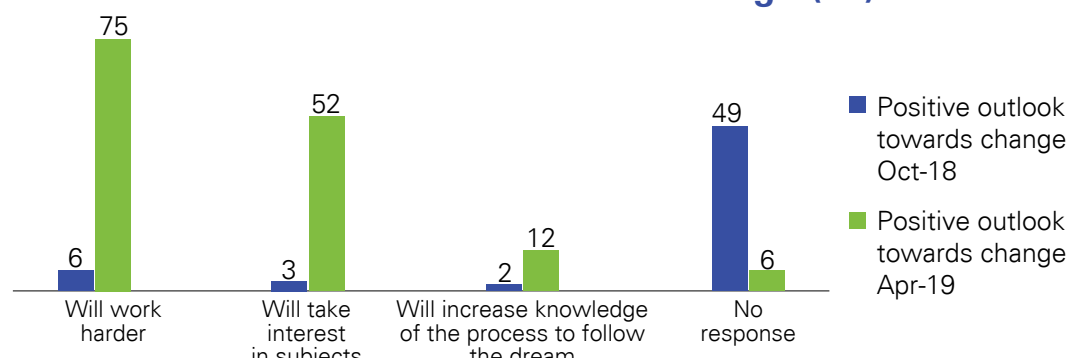
- Melas (fairs) were organised in hostels for girls to undergo a simulation and get a hands-on experience of real life situations
- Practice sessions were provided to fill up various forms such as cash deposit forms in the bank, applications for Aadhar card or domicile certificates etc. to avail services
- Stalls managed by peer leaders from schools
- Life Labs cemented the understanding of legal rights, entitlements and schemes among girls

*AdhaFULL is a 78-episode TV drama series that tackles many coming of age issues like higher education of girls, stereotyping of women and girls, gender-based violence and other such issues.

Increased aspirations for career options in future (%)



Positive outlook towards change (%)



Encouraging results and scale up of O4L

- O4L will be scaled up in select Aspirational Districts followed by a state-wise scale up
- A two-phase scale up is being envisaged for roll out in partnership with the Department of Education
- In Dungarpur district, the experience of O4L is being expanded to 21 more similar institutions including those run by the Tribal Area Development Department and the Social Justice and Empowerment Department
- Resource kit used for O4L available for the government to support integration and scale-up of the programme



Resource kit developed for O4L

- Calendar of activities
- Facilitator's guide
- Monitoring kit to record change
- Reference book for adolescent girls
- Kit for the Life Lab