

Lending a Hand Today and Creating Self-Reliance forever

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A review of the current status of the graduates of Lend-A-Hand India's¹ vocational training program, PLAN 100, shows that multi-skill practical training, combined with early mentoring, leads to economic self reliance for poor and marginalized rural youth. Read the findings and some case studies in the report that follows.

Introduction:

The success of its alumni is perhaps one of the best measures of the quality of an educational institution. It is also the outcome against which the sustainability of the institution's programs can be evaluated, especially if they are not-for-profit endeavors with low-income communities. That is why to measure both the *quality* and *sustainability* of the multi-skill vocational training program: Introduction to Basic Rural Technology (IBT)¹, Lend-a-Hand-India (LAHI) decided to conduct a survey of its graduates over the last seven years. We believe this survey is timely because LAHI has chosen IBT as a model that can be scaled up and geographically expanded to reach larger numbers of India's underprivileged youth. Through Project PLAN 100, LAHI will replicate the IBT program to impart occupational and life skills to 20,000 girls and boys from 100 high schools in rural India.

We realize that in order to ensure successful program expansion, it is very important to assess the current impact of IBT and identify challenges, if any, as well their solutions. Accordingly, on the following pages, we present a summary of our findings and an analysis of the issues the survey unearthed.

Background:

Lend-A-Hand India's mission is to make a difference in the lives of the poor through

¹ Lend-A-Hand India, a 501(C)(3) not-for-profit corporation based in New York and working for the cause of youth and education, supports the proven model of the training program, Introduction to basic rural technology (IBT), attached to high schools in rural India. Under its flagship Project "Plan 100," Lend-A-Hand India plans to start IBT centers in 100 high schools, which will equip 20,000 girls and boys in rural India with job and life skills by 2008.

self help. Our goal is to help the poor realize their full potential so they can meet their aspirations for a better life. Our approach is to first identify successful and sustainable models / programs of development created by non-profit organizations, and then to replicate and expand them by providing technical assistance, resources, and advocacy efforts. This approach is a well thought out response to India's population challenge and it recognizes the need to reach large numbers with workable solutions.

Lend-a-Hand India partners with carefully-selected grassroots non-profit organizations. One such partner with an excellent track record is Vigyan Ashram (VA) based in Pabal, Near Pune, India. VA has developed the Rural Development Education System which imparts multi-skill training to students through the Introduction to Basic Rural Technology (IBT) program. Approximately 800 rural youth have completed the full-time IBT program over the past 15 years. Many of the VA alums are employed in service and manufacturing sectors or have started their own enterprises in the vicinity of their rural communities. A small proportion pursued further studies.

The IBT program is based on the philosophy of 'learning by doing'. After years of experimentation it is clear that this is the best way to acquire and assimilate knowledge and skills. Practical, hands-on experience turns classroom learning into a resource for opening up new choices, developing livelihood opportunities, and attaining economic self reliance. Another characteristic of the IBT program is its multi-skill approach. Given the size of rural economies, a single skill does not generate

viable options for earning livelihoods. Therefore the IBT program trains students in a variety of skills such as construction, fabrication, solar and biogas technologies, poultry and goat farming, compost making, soil testing, water analysis, blood and urine testing, knitting, and food preservation.

LAHI believes that VA's program is now ready for replication and expansion. As its flagship initiative PLAN 100, LAHI will extend the program to 20,000 students from 100 high schools in rural India. As LAHI gets ready to launch Project PLAN 100, it wanted to systematically measure the impact of the IBT program. For that, LAHI must look beyond initial job placements and evaluate the long-term employment and income status of IBT graduates.

LAHI therefore commissioned a survey of 400 alumni of the IBT program with the help of a special team.

The objectives of this survey were to:

- Learn if the first job turns into a sustainable source of livelihood
- Analyze problems the aspiring entrepreneurs face in establishing themselves in their chosen vocations
- Understand what additional support we can provide.
- Develop an alumni database to make the survey annual exercise
- Establish an alumni network acting as support group for budding entrepreneurs.

Methodology:

A survey by mailing of a questionnaire to alumni who graduated over the previous seven years (1999 – 2005) was planned. 400 students had graduated with IBT diploma during this period. A special team was set up to conduct the survey. They designed a questionnaire in consultation with the current program director and the instructors.

The survey was conducted during April 2005 – March 2006. The specially designed

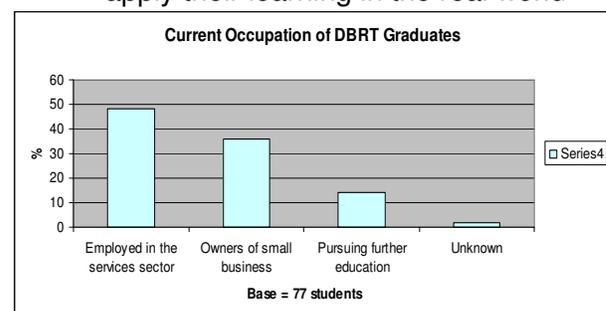
questionnaire was mailed to 400 past students whose data was available from VA's admission registers. A deadline was set in the cover letter for returning the questionnaire. As the adequate response was not forthcoming, the questionnaire mailing was followed by reminder and a phone call. Unfortunately, the attempt to obtain the data by this mail survey method did not yielded an adequate response.

In the second phase, therefore, the team prepared a plan to conduct face-to-face interviews with the graduates by visiting their locations. They visited graduates living in all the eight representative districts such as Amaravati, Yawatmal, Pune, Pen, Ratnagiri, Nagar, Dhule, and Thane. These in-person meetings proved to be very successful. The alums were very candid and shared a lot of insightful information. In all 77 alumni were interviewed.

Survey Highlights:

As shown below, of all IBT graduates

- 48 percent are employed in the services sector
- 36 percent are owners of small business
- 14 percent are pursuing further education
- A majority of students believe they benefited from the IBT training:
 - 71 percent directly attribute their current occupation to the IBT training
 - 16 percent say it helped develop their personality though did not provide employment
 - 13 percent say they were not able to apply their learning in the real world



Challenges to Overcome

The survey revealed the major reasons why some graduates of the IBT program failed to benefit from it:

- *Local economic conditions* could not support their enterprise
- *Lack of funds* prevented move to a nearby town or industrial area
- *Traditions such as early marriage* were additional constraints
- *Absence of mentoring and guidance* that would have helped to identify opportunities and provided encouragement

Qualitative impact

For some, the program's impact has been profound in other ways that are not necessarily quantifiable through any tangible measures.

For example, one student Raju adopted a 3-month-old baby girl in his village when her mother died. This act is remarkable because traditionally in many rural and poor communities a girl child is regarded as a financial liability and is often unwanted. But Raju, already a biological father of a daughter with his wife, was happy to bring home a second daughter. For him, the IBT education was an important lesson in life that taught him values.

Many girl graduates of the IBT program have overcome social obstacles and become financially independent. Sarika and Savita, for example, came to the IBT program from orphanages. Today, Sarika works in a nursing home. Savita is a staff member at the "Father Agnel Ashram" where she takes care of the children. On the side, she makes envelopes, greeting cards and decorative items that are sold to visitors in Maher – a non-profit organization for destitute women to which she had once belonged.

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Santosh Bhoje completed the IBT program and left for his village Jawhar located in tribal district of Thane. The local economy did not provide him the conditions to practice apprenticeship. When the surveyors visited Jawhar, they found him enrolled in a college and half-heartedly pursuing a liberal arts program with little employment potential. But as the VA was aware about Santosh's aptitude for workmanship, they decided to put him in touch with VA alum Deepak Shinde. Deepak runs a fabrication workshop near Pune, focusing mainly on agricultural equipment. Today, Santosh is one of the six employees of Deepak.

The case studies in the appendix 1 show how the combination of practical training and mentoring changed the lives of young people. Many say they would have worked as farm or unskilled labor had they not come across the IBT program.

Conclusion:

This survey set out to evaluate the impact of the IBT program. The findings were: just under half of the graduates are currently employed in the services sector, a little over a third own small businesses and the remaining few are pursuing higher studies.

A significant 71 percent attributes its current occupation directly to IBT training and 16 percent believes the training helped develop their personality.

This survey confirmed that the IBT program is successfully empowering India's rural youth in achieving sustainable livelihoods. But LAHI does not want to ignore the problems that surfaced. A gap that needs to be directly addressed is mentoring. In the absence of coaching and encouragement, it is very hard for beginners to take off. That is the reason why efforts are continuing to build upon the alumni database and turning it into a network that will support the early entrepreneurial and job seeking efforts of graduates. As IBT program scales up to cover 20,000 students

across 100 schools, LAHI is committed to compliment the IBT program with counseling and mentoring and facilitating the students' journey toward self reliance -- so that they can ultimately thrive independently.

High-performing IBT graduates are the chief inspiration behind LAHI's decision to scale up the IBT program.

Implications for LAHI:

Lend-a-Hand-India realizes that of all the challenges identified by this survey, the ones that can be directly addressed are the absence of networking, mentoring and coaching facilities.

There are many other structural issues that also need to be addressed. India has extensive governmental and non governmental poverty-reduction programs. But practitioners on the ground know only too well that not all efforts directly result in creation of sustainable livelihoods. For example, Sa-Dhan, the country's leading association of microfinance institutions, estimates that as of March 2007 the gross loan portfolio of its members was close to a billion U.S. dollars.² But the organization believes that in addition to increasing the number of service providers, improving the operational context for microfinance in India and developing minimum standards for performance are also extremely important.³

LAHI believes that government programs and the non-governmental organizations have a crucial role to play to ensure that resources provided to the rural poor are put to productive use. Entrepreneurs and job-seekers coming out of the IBT program can flourish if they get early support in improving their employment potential or increasing the sales or profits of their business.

² Sa-Dhan, The Association of Community Development Finance Institutions, *Quick Report 2007, A snapshot of Microfinance in India*

³ <http://www.sa-dhan.net/>

About "Lend-A-Hand India"

Lend-A-Hand India's mission is to make a difference in the lives of the poor through self-help.

By partnering with grass-roots non-profit organizations and community groups in India, we work to create better access to education, vocational training, career development, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Our goal is to help the poor realize their full potential to meet their aspirations for a better life.

These efforts serve young men and women by raising awareness of their environment, rights, and responsibilities, and empower them to seize opportunities beyond what is usually assumed to be out of reach.

Lend-A-Hand India's program approach is to help existing and new organizations replicate their proven program interventions and technologies. The goal is to motivate them to diversify and move beyond their existing program areas. This approach is a conscious choice in recognition of India's population challenge and the need to reach large numbers with workable solutions.

Lend-A-Hand India is a 501(C)(3) tax-exempt non-profit corporation with its head office in New York City and a branch office in Pune, India.

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To learn more about Lend-A-Hand India and its programs, please visit www.lend-a-hand-india.org or write to sunanda.mane@lend-a-hand-india.org

*Appendix 1: Case Studies:**Vjay Surum*

Vijay got trained in website development, and computer hardware and software at Pabal. Immediately after graduation, he worked as a computer instructor in the IBT program. He returned to his village Jawhar to start a computer training center. But he could not gather enough resources, either financial or manpower, for this venture. However, Vijay soon found a job in the government forest department as a computer operator. He is now happily married, earning an annual salary of around Rs 48,000 (\$1,200).

Dinesh Adwilkar

Dinesh was sponsored by a school in Dapoli for the IBT course in 1998. Upon graduation he taught as an IBT instructor. Teaching in the program helps students practice their skills and earn a stipend while planning the future. Dinesh's entrepreneurial streak was not hidden from anyone, but he was such a good instructor that the school was reluctant to let him go. After four years of teaching, Dinesh finally resigned from his position in the IBT program and started his own workshop. The savings he has accumulated from his teaching job as well as loans from relatives helped to finance this enterprise. He also started a small flour mill, and today employs 4 workers.

Kisan Pande

Kisan did very well in class 10th (Junior High) securing an above average score of 77 percent. However, his economic circumstances were such that he could not have financed himself through high school and college. Therefore, he enrolled in Vigyan Ashram. After completing the IBT program in 2005, he started conducting tuitions for other students in Chikhalgao and continued to contribute to his family's agricultural work. His tuitions were successful, and we encouraged him to use his earnings to complete his formal education. He is now in class 11th (High School).

Chandrakant

One graduate, Chandrakant wrote: "*I paid Rs.4000 (approx. \$ 100) in fees, but did not get Rs.1 in return.*" Chandrakant is from village Dudhani near Pen (Konkan), which is a tribal part of Raigad district. His parents, whose main occupation is 'agriculture' are always short of cash. Some volunteers from a non-profit organization, Jnana Parbodhini, supported his education in Vigyan Ashram. Chandrakant was asked to join one of the IBT projects as an instructor. But since he had not passed junior high, he found the prospect of teaching intimidating. He returned to his village where he works as farm labor. He does not have the resources to move to a nearby industrial area. In addition, he has new responsibilities because he is now married.

APPENDIX: Lend-A-Hand India : Survey of IBT Alumni

	Name	Benefited Y/N	How you got benefited?	Present Occupation	Annual income in (Rupees)	Future plans	comments by the interviewer
1	Hirasing R Baghel	Y	Electrical	Cable connection business		Expand existing business	
2	Sanjay Sonawane	Y		Electrical shop, farming	10,000.00	Project in farming	
3	Nagindas D. Devare	Y	Got job	Company Job	80,000.00	Business	
4	Mukund Pawar						
5	Namdeo Bhave	Y	Workshop, agri	Plumbing, borewell work	90,000.00	Expand existing business	
6	Subhash Misal	Y	Agri, nursery	Building material, construction, nursery	150,000.00	Expand existing business	
7	Shivaji Bhave		Got job				
8	Nandkumar S. Dagade		Got job	Company Job			
9	Arvind V. Gunaki	Y	Got Job	Company Job	26,400.00	Two wheeler workshop	
10	Vasudeo Gautre	Y	Experience, knowledge	Training center	24,000.00	Business	He run his own computer center for few years and then close down
11	Pratap Jamdar	Y	Getting electric job.	Electric contractor		I still don't have confidence	
12	Krishna kumar Admane	Y	*	Cooperative bank	65,000.00	Appearing for competitive	He wrote a half page about ashram
13	Chandrakant M. Shid	Y	Light fitting		20,000.00	Joined in a job	
14	Limbaji kashte	N	Due condition in my family.	Agriculture	5,000.00	I want to go back to school	
15	Navanath Shinde	Y	I can do any kind of work	Petrol pump repair	25,000.00	Develop agriculture	
16	Deepak Shinde	Y	Knowledge	Own workshop	48,000.00	Improve agriculture	
17	Kiran Motghare	Y	Got job	Supervisor	36,000.00		
18	Pramod Thorat	Y	Got job	Milton Plastic	40,000.00	Job as machine operator	
19	Ravindra Motkar	Y	Got vocational training	Agriculture	50,000.00		
20	Vishal Vasunde	Y	Got vocational training	Seasonable business		Goat/poultry	This students paid money to someone who was his acquaintance at the training center for getting a job. But was cheated.
21	Shanta Patil	N	N	Knitting		Not yet decided	No help from organisation, which sponsored her, she is orphan
22	Raju M. Chavan	Y	agriculture	Agriculture	18,000.00	Improve agriculture or business	
23	Sachin Karanje	Y	all learn is useful from morning to evening	Mess/hotel	45,000.00	Expand existing business	
24	Kailash Mandhare	Y	In my business	Dry cleaner	25,000.00	Expand existing business	
25	Sandeep Galande	Y	Got knowledge	Petrol pump repair	24,000.00	Start own garage	
26	Ganesh Shelke	Y	for dairy management	Dairy/agri	30,000.00	Increase dairy	
27	Bhaidas N. Thakare	N	teaching	Agriculture	-	Agriculture	
28	Chandralekha N. Thakare	N	N	Wages	2,000.00		
29	Vandana A. Thakare		N	Farming			
30	Vijay Surum	Y	learn computer and Computer hardware	Job in Forest Dept as computer technician	24,000.00	Animal husbandry	
31	Ashok Misal	Till date no	I got Practical experience used knowledge for rural school students.	Agri , education	17,700.00	Poultry	
32	Ramchandra Renuse	Y	started our own goat farming	Education	20,000.00	More knowledge in IT	
33	Umesh Londhe	Y		Comp. job	10,000.00	Continue with job	
34	Vishven soneji	Y	Increase in confidence. I can't express that much I learn	Agri, solar repair, workshop, education	*	To live life which is useful for villages. To work on renewable energy solution.	Vishven never went to school. His parents did not send him to school for ideological reason. Both are engineer settled in village and doing agriculture.
35	Gopal Ghedad	Till date no	No	Biogas technician in Pragati Pratishtahn	12,000.00	I am thinking	He mentioned he is not benefited. But when ask the work he is doing in Pragati Pratishtan like Kaju processing and biogas plant operator. He done it in ashram. But later he told, he was refering to education like school.
36	Kailash khedkar	Y	I am able to increase income in agriculture	Agriculture	7,000.00	To start dairy as side business	he also wrote a half page about the training center and his experiences. He developed his agriculture very well
37	Vasant Mahale	Y	Practical experience	Teacher	12,000.00	Animal husbandry	
38	Vasant Khurkute	Till date no	Not able to start business	Agri, education, instructor in night school	15,000.00	Goat farm and poultry	
39	Vittal Shid	Y	Got job	Workshop	31,200.00	Start a workshop	He send his one brother for for the same program. He is tribal and converted his temporary shelter into a permanent house in one year. His elder brother want to leave college and join IBT next year.
40	Somanath Jagdale	Y	Got interested in doing work	Working in workshop		Poultry	

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	Name	Benefited Y/N	How you got benefited?	Present Occupation	Annual income in (Rupees)	Future plans	comments by the interviewer
41	Manohar Thavil	Y	Increase interest in electric	IBT instructor	18,000.00	Business	
42	Avinash Gorade	Y	I learn welding	Own workshop		Same business	
43	Satish Changade	Y	learn skills	IBT instructor	18,000.00	Joined into a job	He is orphan in Killari earthquake. He stays with old parents of MR.Kadam of Nhavara school.
44	Vilas kasar	Y	Got job	Company Job	54,000.00	To start a workshop	He is from very poor family. His brothers are agriculture laborers. Nearest available phone is 5km away from his house in Yawatmal. He got a job near pune after IBT.
45	Anil Gade	Y	I got confidence	Job at Water resort	36,000.00		Anil is from poor family in Shirampur. He was working as a security guard. He read article about IBT program in news paper and contacted. He had only his last months salary to give as a fees (I.e Rs.1200).He reapid back the fees after completing the course. Now he is saving to purchase home for his parents.
46	Avadhut kulkarni	Y	agriculture	Spinning mill			
47	Baburao Thite	Y	I got information to start business	Construction and workshop	30,000.00	Improve existing business	
48	Sukhadev Gaikawad	Y	learn welding	Work in fabrication workshop	24,000.00	Start a business	
49	Amol Kasawa	Y	skill	Solar heating business	50,000.00	Improve existing business	
50	Vikram Khopade	Y	Animal husbandry	Animal Husbandry instructor	18,000.00	start goat/poultry	Vikram was a troubled child. His father expired long back. His mother does tailoring work. He was not interesting in anything. After joining the residential IBT progrom he found interest in animals. He does his work honestly and carefully. After completing the course, he was wanted his mother to help him to start poultry. It is beyond her capacity. When he approached the IBT training center, he was told to prove his ability by improving the goat farm and dairy at the center and generate profit. Vikram is working on the goat farm and also works as an animal husbandry instructor for the IBT program
51	Balu nana Sonawane	Y	I can do all kind of work.learn computer hardware	Job	40,000.00	Start business	
52	Rushikesh Joshi	Y	practical	Side business/college		Not yet decided	He works with his brother,who is electric contractor.Also do nursery at home.
53	Sushil More	Y					
54	Rushikesh pawar						
55	Suyog Waghmare						
56	Parshuram M. Jagdale	Y	Got job	Works as Computer Operator	48,000.00	Computer Hardware Engg.	
57	Ravindra B. Gaikwad	Y	Got job	company job	50,000.00	Poultry	
58	Sampat T. Yadav	Y	Got job	company job	43,200.00		
59	Laxman D. Yadav	Y	Got job	company job	43,200.00		
60	Hridas N. Yadav	Y	Got job	Fitter in workshop	48,000.00		
61	Pravin T. Phadatare	Y	Got job		48,000.00		
62	Somnath S. Gaikwad	Y	General knowledge, how to deal with people	Auto riksha, agriculture and land sale dealing	200,000.00		
63	Aanna B. Yadav	Y	I got job and also benefited in doing agriculture	company job	25,000.00	Use of new techniques on farm	
64	Sahebrav B. Memane	Y	Got job	company job	36,000.00	Doing a job and also works on the family farm	
65	Sampat T. Yadav	Y	Got job.one will never face problem after doing RT course	company job	40,000.00	Business	
66	Santosh H. Waghale	Y	I got Knowledge of various Technology. I got job in electrical dept	company job	50,000.00	Farming	
67	Ankush R. Waghale	Y	Got job	company job	24,000.00	Business	
68	Santosh R. Waghle	Y	Got a job in company, which makes poultry feed.	company job	36,000.00	Joined into a job	

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69	Shamrao M Waghle	Y	I got Knowledge of various Technology	company job	35,000.00		
70	Shairaj S. Shekh	Y	in day to day my life	Two & Four Wheeler Garage	48,000.00	Four wheeler garage	
71	Atul Shenmare	Y	Got job	Supervisor	48,000.00		
72	Mohan Admane	Y				Preparing for Police recruitment	
73	Prashant Rajeurkar	Y	Got job	Works at Koradi thermal station	48,000.00		
74	Avadhut Ghanawat	Y	for motor rewinding	Diesel engine and motor rewinding shop	48,000.00	Increase business	
75	Samadhan Mane	Y	Increased my ambition	Electrical,grocery shop			
76	Shailesh Gorad	Y	I become all rounder	Work in a company as computer operator	42,000.00	Do data entry job at home	
77	Pradeep Salave	Y	Electrical,diesel engine	Company job	42,000.00	Do my job well	