Piecing it all together
DRF Social Audit
The Social Audit process for 2007-08, held by DRF for the third time, has helped it look at all its activities in perspective.

Center Stage
Nearly 1000 aspirants have been trained so far by MSDF LABS in Delhi, in association with Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

Case Studies Competition
The Annual Case Studies Competition – 2008 is underway, celebrating the success stories of LABS alumni from across India.

Post-Placement Surveys
In this quarter, DRF carried out post-placement surveys of LABS alumni who had passed out recently from Kerala, Pune, AP and Delhi.

LABS News
Tidings from various LABS centers across India, covering parents’ meets, valedictory functions, partners’ visits, center launches, etc.

Alumni Website Launched
A special website has been launched for the benefit of LABS alumni, providing several useful services on topics of their interest.

Alumni Meets in AP
The quarter witnessed a slew of alumni meets in AP, which helped them share valuable information on job opportunities and higher education.

Course Corner
A profile of the popular IT-Enabled Services course taught under the LABS program, which has generated thousands of livelihoods.

Employerspeak
A chat with a senior HR executive of Eureka Forbes, which has emerged as one of the largest employers of LABS alumni across India.

Meet our Facilitators
Profiles of some of our facilitators, who have joined DRF from diverse backgrounds, but with a common cause in their hearts.

SCOPE Initiatives
YUVA : Youth Learning Centers and Transit Education Centers have been reaching out to thousands of out-of-school children.

Pudami Neighborhood Schools
DRF’s Pudami English Primaries and Neighborhood Schools are making quality education accessible to children from all walks of life.

We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sake and for our own.

- Cesar Chavez (American activist and labour organizer, 1927-1983)
The panel comprised Mr John Pearce (Social Audit Network, UK), Dr Amita Joseph (Business and Community Foundation), Mr Raju Subramanyam (Senior Director - Sustainability and Safety, Health and Environment, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories), Dr Vasanth Kumar (Regional Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Osmania University) and Mr GV Krishnagopal (Director - Strategic Development, Access Livelihoods Consulting).

The Social Audit process, being held by DRF for the third time, helped the Foundation report accurately and transparently on all its activities and achievements during the year under review.

**Stakeholders’ Views**

**Aspirants**
- The duration of the course could be increased to six months.
- New courses need to be introduced as per market demand.
- Bus pass facilities should be provided to the aspirants for attending the course.
- More LABS centers should be set up, to enhance the program’s reach.

**Aspirants’ Parents**
- The course duration could be increased as per the domain’s requirements.
- Employment opportunities should preferably be provided to girls in local areas only.

**Aspirants’ Neighbours**
- In rural areas in particular, disadvantaged youth are not well aware of the LABS program.
- DRF should take steps to increase its visibility, so as to benefit more rural youth.

**Aspirants’ Employers**
- The aspirants’ English-speaking skills need to be strengthened further.
- There is a need for strengthening the aspirants’ technical skills as well, especially in domains like Multi-Skilled Technician, Automobile Mechanism, etc.

**LABS Staff**
- DRF should keep pace with the fast-changing development scenario, and constantly explore new livelihood models and methods to extend its reach.
- LABS should network more closely with its aspirants’ employers at the district level, and invite them frequently to the training centers to see the quality of the program for themselves. This will further enhance the aspirants’ placement prospects.

**Managing Trustee**
- The successful execution of a LABS course in just three months vindicates DRF’s belief in the capacity of youth to build on their inherent strengths.
- The LABS model has shown itself to be easily replicable, and should be taken up by others to reach out to more disadvantaged youth.
In early 2008, DRF launched a LABS project in the National Capital Region of Delhi, in association with Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. The project seeks to provide sustainable livelihoods to 6000 youth from slum pockets that are being relocated to resettlement areas on the city’s outskirts.

After carrying out livelihood mapping in consultation with government bodies, industries, community representatives and opinion leaders, MSDF LABS centers are currently in operation at Jahangirpuri, Kalyanpuri, Narela, Sawda Ghewra, Okhla, Sangam Vihar, Uttam Nagar, Noida, Holambi Kalan and Tilak Vihar.

To address the challenges of mobilization and enrollment of aspirants, DRF has forged community partnerships with NGOs like Aman Biradari, Aroh Foundation, Niskam Trust and Child Survival of India.

Nearly 1000 aspirants have been trained from these centers so far, in Automobile Mechanism, Hospitality and Customer Relations & Sales. Organizations that have employed the aspirants include Spencer’s, Shopper’s Stop, Café Coffee Day, KFC, Pizza Hut, Hindustan Coca Cola, Sbarro, Papa John’s and Team Lease.

It is proposed to scale up the LABS partnership between DRF and MSDF across the country soon.

20-year-old Razia belongs to an impoverished family from Okhla (Delhi). She lost her father in her childhood, and has since been brought up by her mother, who earns meagre wages working as a maidservant in several houses. Razia continued to study through all her tribulations and, with her mother’s encouragement, cleared her Class XII exam with good marks.

While looking about for a decent job to contribute to the family’s income, Razia came to know of MSDF LABS and took up a course in Customer Relations & Sales. She did very well in it, and got a job in Coca Cola Company with a handsome starting salary. She says “LABS has brought prosperity and happiness into my family, and I am indeed very happy that I am able to do something for my mother, who has sacrificed so much for me.”
The Annual Case Studies Competition is back!

Case studies of LABS alumni exemplify the spirit of human triumph, perseverance, courage, and determination in the face of adversity. These success stories are put together by the LABS project staff from various centers across India. It’s time to celebrate them through the Annual Case Studies Competition – 2008. The response to the call has been overwhelming, and we have already received over 900 entries so far. The results of the competition will be out by January 2009.

LABS centers may continue sending their entries for 2009. The following points (of which the first six are mandatory) are to be furnished in each case study:
- Aspirant’s name; age; sex; workplace photograph; address with contact number; physical disability if any; reason for discontinuing education; LABS course joined; occupation before joining LABS: reason for joining LABS; opinion about LABS training; suggestions, if any; family details; breadwinners / dependants in the family; major crisis (financial / death / serious illness) in the family; current employment; future aspirations / educational plans; role model(s), if any; message for fellow aspirants.

Awards have been instituted for the following categories:
- Best Case study (five would be selected)
- Best creativity (for skill in expressing the case study)
- Quality of details furnished (as per requirements specified in the preceding paragraph)
- Best photograph of the aspirant (preferably at the workplace)
- Best message from the employer
- Best message from the aspirant

There will also be prizes for the following:
- The team that sends the first case study
- Maximum entries from a centre
- Maximum entries from a state (the award will go to the State Coordinator)
- Maximum entries from a project (the award will go to the Project Coordinator)

The entries may be emailed to drfcasestudies@gmail.com, or by post to the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) department at the DRF Head Office (6-3-655/12, Somajiguda, Hyderabad – 500082).

Snapshots of Success

DRF has brought out ‘Snapshots of Success’, a compendium of case studies of over 70 LABS alumni drawn from various projects and domains across the country. It also features stories of some alumni who, with the help of their LABS training, have set up their own collective enterprises.
Post-Placement Surveys

DRF carries out regular post-placement surveys (PPS) of LABS alumni to check out how they are faring after they have completed their vocational training courses. The surveys, which include interviews with the alumni’s employers, seek to determine how successful they have been in sustaining their jobs, progressing further in their careers, pursuing higher education, etc. The PPS also helps in identifying avenues for enhancing future training inputs for fresh LABS aspirants.

In the last quarter, PPS exercises were held in respect of alumni who had passed out recently from our LABS centers in Kerala, Pune, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi. The alumni were from diverse domains, such as Customer Relations & Sales, Multi-Skilled Technician, Automobile Mechanism, Hospitality and IT-Enabled Services.

Alumni’s Observations

A good number of the alumni had received quick promotions from their entry-level positions. Many of those interviewed said the LABS training had significantly boosted their confidence levels, dispelled their inner fears and improved their communication skills. The technical skills they had learnt in the course, coupled with industry exposure, had equipped them to discharge their workplace responsibilities effectively, and their life skills training had enabled them to set clear goals for themselves.

To maximize their potential, many alumni are pursuing higher studies (through distance learning) while at work. Many of them said they were contributing to their family income, and also putting aside some savings for their long-term aspirations. They also showed a keen interest in joining alumni forums and staying connected with ongoing LABS centers, so as to be able to help their juniors in finding good placement opportunities.

Some alumni felt that the duration of the course could be extended to four months, so as to ensure a thorough assimilation of the training inputs by the aspirants. They also felt that they could be trained a little more in Communicative English.

Employers’ Observations

Most of the employers interviewed had a good opinion of the LABS alumni working with them. They observed that the alumni were generally vibrant and positive in their approach to the job, and showed good potential for being entrusted with greater responsibilities. They said the most striking feature about the alumni was their confidence and commitment, which greatly eased the process of giving them organization-specific induction training.

Some employers however, observed that the alumni’s Communicative English needed reinforcement, especially in the Hospitality sector. Many employers in the ITES sector also felt that the LABS alumni should acquire greater speed in typing.

Several employers preferred to have their employees coming from within a 20-km radius, as that would help keep the attrition rate down. A few employers were extremely impressed with the LABS training methodology, and expressed their willingness to contribute to it in the form of taking guest lectures.
LABS News...

IKP LABS, Pebbair

On November 5, the IKP LABS center at Pebbair (Mahabubnagar District, AP) was inaugurated by Mr G Chinna Reddy (Minister for Rural Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh).

Other dignitaries present on the occasion included Mr Ravindra Babu (Project Director, DRDA), Ms Jyothi (President, Mandala Maha Samakhya, Pebbair Mandal) and Mr. Sudhakar (Area Project Manager, Mahabubnagar District).

On December 1, the facilitators and aspirants of the IKP LABS center at Pebbair (Mahabubnagar, AP) took part in a rally to mark World AIDS Day.

On December 2, they took part in a ‘Santhi’ (peace) rally to express their sympathy for the victims of the terrorist attacks that had rocked Mumbai in November.

IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS, Anantapur

November 1 was a memorable day for the aspirants who passed out of IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS center at Anantapur (AP). They received their Course Completion certificates from Mr JC Diwakar Reddy (Minister for Panchayati Raj, Government of AP), in the presence of other dignitaries such as Mr T Ananthavenkata Rami Reddy (Member of Parliament), Mr Sailaja Nath (Member of Legislative Assembly), Mr Chiranjeevulu, IAS (Collector, Anantapur District), Ms T Kavitha (Chairman, Zilla Parishad), Mr R Parasuram (Mayor), Mr Nagabushanam (Municipal Commissioner) and Mr Krishna Murthy (PD, MEPMA).

IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS, Kukatpally

On August 13, the IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS center at Kukatpally (Hyderabad) was visited by a team comprising Mr HS Anand, IAS (Principal Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Govt. of India), Ms Pushpa Subramanyam, IAS (Secretary, MA & UD, Govt. of AP), Mr Sunil Sharma, IAS (Director & Commissioner - Municipal Administration, Govt. of AP), Mr Jagadeeshwar, IAS (Mission Director, MEPMA, Govt.of AP), Mr PK Jha, IAS (Addl. Secretary - MA & UD, Govt. of AP), Dr N Satyanarayana (Addl. Director, MEPMA), Ms Shivaparvathi (Addl. Commissioner - UCD, GHMC), Mr Harikrishna (Jt. Addl. Commissioner – UCD, GHMC), Mr Srinivas Goud (Dy Municipal Commissioner, Kukatpally) and Mr Prabhakar (Town Project Officer, Kukatpally). The visitors interacted with the facilitators and aspirants on various elements in the LABS program.

On December 8, the second batch of the center was inaugurated by Mr Srinivas Goud (Dy Municipal Commissioner, Kukatpally), Mr Prabhakar (Town Project Officer, Kukatpally) and other government officials. Course Completion certificates were also given away on the occasion to aspirants of the first batch, who were trained in Business Process Outsourcing, IT-Enabled Services, White Goods Services, Hospitality and Customer Relations & Sales.
IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS, Kurnool

On October 30, at a valedictory function, 207 aspirants who passed out from IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS center at Kurnool had the privilege of receiving their Course Completion certificates from the Chief Guest, Mr C Ambaiah (Project Director, MEPMA, Kurnool). Looking on were their proud parents, who were specially invited for the event.

Impressed with the quality of the LABS program, Mr Ambaiah assured DRF of unstinted MEPMA support in scaling up the LABS program. Mr Anil Kumar (District Employment Officer) also spoke on the occasion, and outlined various government schemes available for enhancing urban livelihoods. Taking the podium, several alumni recounted how LABS had given them a new lease of life and enabled them to access opportunities that would otherwise have been denied them.

IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS, Proddutur

On December 13, the IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS center at Proddutur (Kadapa District, AP) was visited by Mr V Mukthiyar (Municipal Chairman), Mr PVVS Murthy (Municipal Commissioner) and other ward councilors. They interacted with the facilitators and aspirants and commended the LABS program for contributing to the economic betterment of the region by generating employment avenues for underprivileged youth.

SGSY-NABARD LABS

On November 24, an HR team from of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) conducted a campus interview of the aspirants in Rae Bareli. 19 of them were selected to undergo a one-month training program organized by Career Launcher Academy at Lucknow. The aspirants will receive a stipend of Rs 2000 pm during the training period, after which they will be absorbed into HUL at a starting salary of Rs 4500 pm.

In a recent development, Barbeque Nation (a unit of Sayaji Hotels Limited) has recruited 35 aspirants of SGSY-NABARD LABS for its various outlets across the country. The aspirants are presently undergoing induction training at Indore. Barbeque Nation is a pioneer in promoting ‘do it yourself’ cuisine in India.

CII-Yi LABS, Pune

On December 1 (World HIV / AIDS Day), the aspirants of the CII-Yi LABS center at Pune presented interesting skits that highlighted various aspects of HIV and AIDS.

A guest lecture by Ms Meghana Marathe (Social Initiative Wing of Forbes Marshall) was also organized on the occasion.

Samriddhi Program

AP ranks highest in the incidence of HIV / AIDS in India. Reproductive Tract Infection among young girls in the state is also high, mainly due to lack of healthcare awareness. To understand the information needs on reproductive and sexual health issues among LABS aspirants, an expert team from Youthreach (a Delhi-based NGO) conducted a study on November 6 and 7 at two IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS centers in the state.

Based on the inputs of the study, ‘Project Samriddhi’ will design a special curriculum for LABS aspirants. Training aids will be used to overcome the hesitation that trainers sometimes feel while discussing topics considered taboo by society. LABS facilitators will be trained to deliver these modules.
Grameen LABS, Bilaspur
On October 4, a meeting titled ‘Manthan II’ was held at the Bilaspur Grameen LABS center. Over 30 facilitators from across Himachal Pradesh attended the meeting, where they shared best practices on issues like livelihood mapping, mobilization, better facilitation techniques, ways to minimize aspirants’ dropouts from jobs, partner management, capacity building for facilitators, reporting mechanisms, documentation / record keeping, a ‘facilitator’s pledge’, etc.

Grameen LABS, Dehradun
On November 15, Automobile Mechanism aspirants at the Grameen LABS center at Dehradun (Uttaranchal) were given a presentation on ‘Honda Activa’ by Mr Praveen Gulati (Service Manager, Essell Motors). The aspirants obtained a clear idea of the job profiles of ‘workshop technician’, ‘service advisor’ and ‘operator’. After interacting with the aspirants, Mr Gulati observed, “The all-round training that these aspirants receive at LABS makes them truly job-ready in many ways. Their commitment to the job is also very commendable.”

Grameen LABS, Durg
The second batch of Grameen LABS was commenced at the Durg center (Madhya Pradesh) on September 29. The 175 aspirants enrolled in the batch are undergoing training in IT-Enabled Services, Hospitality, Customer Relations & Sales, Bedside Patient Assistance and Automobile Mechanism.

Grameen LABS, Ernakulam
On December 22, under a ‘Corporate Interaction Program’, faculty from the DC School of Management and Technology (Wagamon, Kerala) were invited to speak to the aspirants of the Grameen LABS center at Ernakulam (Kerala) on issues such as industry expectations, teamwork, motivation and leadership / interpersonal skills.

Grameen LABS, Shimla
On October 22, Course Completion certificates were distributed to two batches of Grameen LABS aspirants. Invitees at the function included Dr SriKant Baldi, IAS (Secretary - Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India), Mr Taushi Sandop (Project Officer, Shimla District), Dr Anand (Asst Director - District Rural Development Agency), Mr AS Saluja (Ex-Chairman, Chambers of Commerce) and representatives from the media. The visitors interacted with the aspirants and facilitators and expressed their appreciation of the program quality.
The LABS Alumni Service Cell (ASC) nurtures lifelong relationships among LABS alumni. A website titled www.labsalumni.org has been launched to serve as an e-platform for LABS alumni. Offering programs of relevance and service to the alumni, the website reinforces LABS’ endeavour to provide young adults from economically weak backgrounds with greater opportunities to assimilate into the competitive job market.

The website runs ‘Continuing Education Programs’ (CEPs) through sharing of information on both soft skills and technical skills. It also gives the alumni a chance to give something back to their alma mater by sharing their ideas and experiences with facilitators and aspirants in current LABS centers.

Another important feature in the website is a useful module on migration of alumni in search of employment. Getting a good job in India’s rapidly changing economic profile entails a certain amount of relocation, which brings with it a new series of challenges, especially for those who are required to shift away from their rural moorings to an urban atmosphere.

Through the website, the alumni can contribute to the LABS program by offering their assistance in mobilization, arranging guest lectures / industry visits, and sourcing job opportunities for their fellow-alumni.
In November-December, Alumni Meets were organized at Anantapur, Bobbili, Guntur, Hyderabad, Kadapa, Kakinada, Karimnagar, Kurnool, Prakasam, Rajahmundry, Ramagundam, Sircilla and Visakhapatnam. Over 600 alumni attended the Meets (including one at Kurnool for differently-abled alumni), which helped them share information about themselves and their jobs, and also suggest how the LABS curriculum could be strengthened further to make it more compatible with industry expectations. Several alumni created email IDs for themselves, which has helped DRF in updating its alumni database.

The alumni appreciated the recent launch of www.labsalumni.org, a dedicated website for them, and assured the LABS program of their assistance in mobilization, arranging guest lectures / industry visits, sourcing job opportunities for their fellow-alumni, etc. At Hyderabad, a lecture on ‘Quality at the Workplace’ was organized as part of the ‘Continuing Education Program’ (CEP). At Anantapur, three alumni located better placements at the Meet, which prompted the participants to suggest that such Meets could serve as useful job platforms as well. At Guntur, the participants felt that there could be an exclusive ASC helpline number for Guntur.

At Kadapa, Kurnool, Ramagundam and Visakhapatnam, the alumni formed SHGs / alumni clubs to avail themselves of various micro-enterprise benefits offered by the government. The Karimnagar Meet was also attended by a few alumni’s parents who expressed their delight at the transformation brought about by LABS in their children. At Kakinada, the alumni began to form support groups to address issues like accommodation near the workplace, employer harassment, remuneration, etc. At Rajamundry, there was some information sharing on distant education programs and better job opportunities.
LABS Centers in India

**Himachal Pradesh**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Bilaspur, Kangra, Solan, Shimla, Una.

**Punjab**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Amritsar, Muktsar, Nabha (Patiala), Sanaur (Patiala), Tarn Taran.

**Haryana**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Ambala, Jhajjar, Panchkula, Yamuna Nagar.

**Delhi**
MSDF LABS (With Michael & Susan Dell Foundation)
Holambti Kalan, Jahangirpuri, Kalyanpuri, Najafgarh, Narela, Noida, Okhla, Sangam Vihar, Tilak Vihar, Uttam Nagar.

**Uttarakhand**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Chamoli, Dehradun, Haridwar, Pauri.

**Uttar Pradesh**
NABARD LABS (with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development)
Amethi, Kadipur, Lalganj, Lambhua, Maharajganj, Musafirkhana, Salon.

**Gujarat**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat, Vadodara.

**Dadra and Nagar Haveli**
Grameen LABS (With Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Khanwel, Silvasa.

**Maharashtra**
PCC LABS (with Pune Corporate Consortium)
Pune.
CH-YI LABS (with Confederation of Indian Industry-Young Indian)
Mumbai.
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Latur, Sholapur, Thane, Wardha.

**Goa**
Grameen LABS (With Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Canacona (South Goa), Sanquelim (North Goa).

**Karnataka**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Bidar, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur.
Accenture LABS (with Accenture)
Bengaluru.

**Kerala**
Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)
Alapuzha, Ernakulam, Kannur, Malappuram, Thiruvananthapuram.
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**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Chirang, Nagaon.

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**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Shillong (East Khasi Hills), Nongstoin (West Garo Hills), Tura (West Khasi Hills).

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**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Bagnan, Barasat (24 Parganas North), Bashirhat (24 Parganas North), Bilkuli, Kalikapur (24 Parganas South), Sankrail (Howrah).

**SHG LABS (with Government of West Bengal)**

Uttar Dinajpur.

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**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Dindori, Gwalior, Indore, Mandla, Morena.

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**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Bilaspur, Dhamtari, Durg, Korba.

18

**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Berhampur, Cuttack, Khurda, Puri.

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**IKP LABS (with EGMM, Government of Andhra Pradesh)**


**IKP Urban (UPADHI) LABS (with MEPMA, Government of Andhra Pradesh)**


**GVMC LABS (with Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation)**

Arilova, Santhinagar.

**Grameen LABS (with Union Ministry of Rural Development)**

Bodhan, Jangaon, Kazipet, Nellore, Parigi, Sattenapalli, Siddipet, Yemmiganur.

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**Corporation LABS (with Corporation of Chennai)**

Chennai (at Mint, Triplicane).

**Firstsource LABS (With Firstsource Solutions)**

Chennai.

**Accenture LABS (With Accenture)**

Chennai.
IT-Enabled Services (ITES) is one of the most popular domains taught in the LABS program. The technical inputs in the course are demand-driven, and prepared in consultation with industry experts and professionals. The training includes practical sessions, on-the-job training, assignments, guest lectures, etc.

Topics covered in the ITES course include:
- Computer fundamentals (input / output / storage devices, CPU)
- System / application software
- Basics of programming languages (machine / assembly level, procedure-oriented
- Overview of Operating Systems
- Desktop icons (My Computer, My Documents, My Network Places, Recycle Bin, Internet Explorer, etc)
- Files, folders and directories (creation, renaming / deletion, moving, copying, etc)
- MS Windows (multi-tasking, radio buttons, check boxes, accessories, saving a file in different paths)
- MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, FrontPage, Publisher)
- Desk Top Publishing (PageMaker, PhotoShop, mixing images, drawing tools, ImageReady and animations)
- Networking (LAN, MAN, WAN)
- Browsing the Internet (search engines)
- Internet chatting (with webcam and headphone)
- Adding / removing programs
- Anti-virus software
- Printing and scanning
- Data compression and transfer

Technical skills developed by the aspirants on course completion include:
- Basic computer operations and troubleshooting
- Office automation jobs such as preparing letters / documents, mail-merge, etc.
- Making presentations
- Designing pamphlets, business / invitation cards and books for printing
- Editing photographs; converting black-and-white images into color
- Maintaining accounts; debit and credit operations
- Creating and using a template
- Preparing a database
- Making calculations on a worksheet
- Basics of animation; creating backgrounds

Entry-level opportunities for the aspirants include scanning / printing operator, computer operator, cashier, data entry operator, DTP operator, etc.

B Rajkumar hails from Rajagollapally village (Karimnagar district, Andhra Pradesh). His parents divorced in his childhood and he was brought up by his mother. He says, “My mother was traumatized when my father married a second time, and was determined that I should do well in life. With her meagre earnings she managed to give me a decent education. But poverty forced me to discontinue my graduation and look for a job. I came to know of Grameen LABS through a DRDA official, enrolled in the program, and underwent training in ITES. The training taught me many things and greatly boosted my confidence. I got a placement as a computer billing operator in Big Bazaar, Hyderabad, with a starting salary of Rs 4000 pm, plus PF, ESI and other benefits. I am really happy that my mother’s dream has finally been fulfilled. I shall continue to work hard to rise higher in my career. God puts us through several testing situations in life. It is our duty to fight and overcome them. It is important to be positive and take every challenge as a blessing.”
**Eureka Forbes** was the first company to introduce domestic water purifiers (‘Aquaguard’) and vacuum cleaners in India in the 1980s. To popularize these previously unknown products, Eureka Forbes pioneered the concept of ‘direct selling’ in the country. It is now the largest direct-selling company in Asia, with a 5000-strong sales force that touches 1.25 million Indian homes, and adding another 1500 customers daily.

Eureka Forbes has been recruiting LABS alumni for over four years now, from across the country. We spoke to Mr BV Krishna Mohan (Area Head – HR, Eureka Forbes) and sought his views on LABS alumni who have been employed by his organization.

**Q: How long has your association with LABS been?**
A: My association with LABS goes back three years. I am quite impressed by these motivated youngsters brought out by the LABS program. Despite coming from modest backgrounds, they show a high degree of competence at the workplace.

**Q: How do you find LABS’ skill-based training program?**
A: The training significantly raises the aspirants’ employability potential by honing their skills. That makes it much easier for us employers. We mostly recruit aspirants from the ‘Customer Relations & Sales’ domain, as their job here involves marketing, direct selling and product demonstration. We put them through a 21-day orientation program – in which they learn about our work culture and concept marketing techniques – before sending them to the market.

**Q: In what aspects do you think LABS aspirants require additional skills?**
A: Their communication skills need to be improved, as there is a burgeoning demand for people in the industry and career prospects are extremely rewarding. The training program should include modules on direct marketing, door-to-door selling and tactful demonstration of product features, which will enable the LABS aspirants to flourish in this sector.

**Q: Would you like to contribute anything to the LABS program?**
A: Yes, apart from recruiting LABS aspirants, we have been visiting various LABS centers and delivering motivational programs. We would like to be more involved with LABS in this way.

**Q: What about the attrition rate of the LABS aspirants?**
A: Attrition is a universal phenomenon. We do have cases of LABS aspirants who couldn’t cope with our work culture and dropped out. We urge our employees to be mentally strong, and stay focused and disciplined if they aspire to go higher in life.

**LABS Alumni at Eureka Forbes**

“Although I passed out of the ITES domain at LABS, I have opted for a job at Eureka Forbes. It is because the life skills and communication skills taught at LABS have shaped me into an all-rounder.”

- Eshwar

“Earlier, I was not used to things like punctuality and time management. But LABS helped me understand their importance. After inculcating them, my routine is much more organized now.”

- Rajesh Chouhan

“I have learnt to take challenges head-on and not view them as problems. The LABS training helped me overcome my limitations, and I am now looking forward to a great sales career.”

- Gangamma
Domain Conferences

On September 16-23 and November 14-21, Domain Conferences were held in Customer Relations & Sales, Automobile Mechanism, Hospitality, Business Process Outsourcing and Micro-Irrigation. Experienced facilitators from the respective domains attended the Conferences.

Industry experts invited to the Conferences included:

- **Customer Relations & Sales**: Mr Tushar Kant Ojha (More), Mr R Hari Krishnakanth (More), Mr BV Chalapati (Reliance Retail) and Mr U Avadhani (Eureka Forbes)
- **Automobile Mechanism**: Mr S Devender (Panchasheel Motors) and Mr Sudhakar (Tata Motors)
- **Hospitality**: Mr Joydeep Mazumdar (Hotel Green Park), Mr Amareesh Misra (Novotel Hotel) and Mr Justus Allan Satya (Novotel Hotel)
- **Business Process Outsourcing**: Mr Amit Kumar (Deloitte) and Mr M Hussain (Deloitte)
- **Micro-Irrigation**: Mr Surya Srinivas (Jain Irrigation Systems) and Mr Prabhakar (Jain Irrigation Systems)

Key Outcomes of the Domain Conferences

- LABS curriculum was redesigned in accordance with emerging industry needs, with emphasis on practical training.
- Equipment required for the aspirants’ practical training was reinforced.
- Facilitators’ handbooks were enhanced with case studies, role plays, examples and presentations.
- Audio and video inputs were added for easier comprehension of actual workplace settings.
- Several handouts were developed for the aspirants’ post-course retention.
- Assessment tools were made more comprehensive and interesting.

At the conclusion of these Conferences, Domain Experts (from amongst the facilitators who had attended the Conferences) were identified and taken into the Learning and Development department to help monitor the quality and relevance of the domain curriculum, as well as the training methodology.

The Industry Angle

“The Customer Relations & Sales curriculum packs a lot of useful knowledge in three months.”

- BV Chalapati (Reliance Retail)

“Practical aspects are given a good deal of emphasis in the Automobile Mechanism course.”

- S Devender (Panchasheel Motors)

“LABS aspirants trained in Hospitality come with a high degree of work readiness.”

- Joydeep Mazumdar (Hotel Green Park)

“It is amazing that school dropouts are trained so well to succeed in the BPO sector.”

- Amit Kumar (Deloitte)

“The all-round training that these aspirants receive at LABS is really impressive.”

- Surya Srinivas (Jain Irrigation Systems)
‘Train the Trainer’ Programs

...in Communicative English

In October, November and December, five ‘Train the Trainer’ programs were held at Hyderabad for 122 Communicative English facilitators across the country. The programs were facilitated by Dr T Samson (English Language Consultant, English and Foreign Languages University). Volunteers from Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and Deloitte – Mr Aditya Sharma, Ms Lakshmi Krishnan, Ms Neha Bhasin, Mr Ladde Santosh, Mr Nishan Singh, Ms Makhija Vartika and Ms Bist Vasudha – lent their voices to the audio portions of the revised Communicative English curriculum.

...in Micro-Irrigation

On December 10 and 11, a ‘Train the Trainer’ program was held at Hyderabad for nearly 30 Micro-Irrigation facilitators drawn from all over India. Addressing the participants, Prof Syed Ahmed Hussain (Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University) spoke on a wide range of topics such as irrigation methods, advantages of micro-irrigation, water conservation, efficient utilization of water resources, tools / implements used in micro-irrigation, etc. Valuable inputs were also given by industry experts in curriculum delivery and teaching methodology.

...in Customer Relations & Sales

In the recently held Domain Conference on CRS, the curriculum and facilitator’s handbook had been redesigned in consultation with industry experts. To orient the CRS facilitators on the new curriculum and handbook, a ‘Train the Trainer’ program was held on December 22 and 23, at Hyderabad for 30 CRS facilitators drawn from all over AP. Mr Prathap Rao and Mr Prakash Rao from Eagle’s Eye Consultants were invited to present an overview of the industry to the participants, and address them on basic generic skills required for an aspirant to obtain entry-level positions. The participants found the program useful in getting a practical update on new developments in the sector.

...and in Telecom Sales

On December 8 and 9, Mr Pallab Mitra (Sr Manager – Ops L&D, Tata Teleservices) facilitated a special training program under a new ‘Asha LABS’ project, which is being launched shortly at Hyderabad and Indore. Beginning with an overview of the telecom industry in India, Mr Mitra profiled the business activities of Tata Teleservices and covered topics such as Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) technology, various business models (post-paid / pre-paid / branded retail), associated business units and selling skills specific to the telecom sector.

Induction Training Programs

Four Induction Training Programs were held at Hyderabad during the quarter October-December, for 125 new facilitators drawn from various LABS projects across the country. Each batch was put through an eight-day induction program that included an overview of DRF and the LABS model of generating sustainable livelihoods.

The inductees visited nearby LABS centers, interacted with the facilitators / center coordinators / aspirants, and went through the various documents and training exhibits on display. They also visited the Head Office, met with functionaries in various departments, and obtained a fair understanding of organizational culture, policies and quality parameters to be ensured at the LABS centers.

The last Induction Training batch of the quarter was put through a nine-day program to orient the facilitators to the curriculum, facilitator’s handbook, teaching-learning methodologies / tools and assessments specific to their domains. This procedure will be adopted for all Induction Training programs in future.
### District Coordinators’ Training Program

From October 13 to 16, a Training Program was held at Hyderabad for District Coordinators (DCs) of Andhra Pradesh, to build their capacities in:

- Communication (within the organization and with partners and employers of LABS alumni)
- Leadership (negotiation skills, conflict resolution, interaction with partners, trust-building in a team, etc)
- Meetings (drawing up the agenda, organizing a meeting, documentation and reporting).

Mr Anant Wadkar from Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories gave a presentation on ‘negotiation skills’. The DCs also discussed various initiatives to increase community coordination and alumni networking (through alumni meets and the newly created alumni website, [www.labsalumni.org](http://www.labsalumni.org)).

### Center Coordinators’ Training Program

A Training Program was held at Hyderabad from November 13 to 15 for Center Coordinators from various LABS projects in AP, to improve their functional and behavioral competencies.

The Program included sessions on center management documentation and reporting, B2Y networking, Alumni Service Cell, HR, IT, quality and batch reviews. Ms Prachi Dube from Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories facilitated a session on team building, conflict resolution and delegation.

### New Curriculum Development

#### Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI)

In India’s fast developing economy, BFSI is becoming increasingly popular in the services sector, throwing up exciting new job prospects for professionally trained personnel. The curriculum designed by DRF takes into account the various skills required in marketing financial services, as well as good product knowledge.

#### Telecom Sales

Telecom sales is another major constituent of the country’s rapidly expanding services sector, making quick inroads into deep rural areas as well. To cater to the need for a large trained workforce in this sector DRF has, in association with Tata Teleservices and other telecom companies, developed a special ‘telecom sales’ curriculum to be introduced in its LABS program for disadvantaged youth.

#### Retail

In consultation with Zebra Cross (a retail training firm) and Shoppers’ Stop, curriculum in a new domain ‘Retail’ has also been developed. Salient elements in the curriculum include aspects specific to organized retailing, which is rapidly expanding into rural India. This would open a wide array of job opportunities for rural youth.
Meet our Facilitators

**Jennifer**, the Center Coordinator of the Firstsource LABS center at Chennai, is a BA in English Literature. Prior to joining LABS as a Communicative English facilitator in 2006, she took tuitions at home for school children.

Jennifer says, “I was delighted when I got a chance to serve in DRF, as teaching is my passion. And I was doubly thrilled when I learnt that at LABS one is not just a teacher, but a ‘facilitator’ who takes responsibility for generating livelihoods for disadvantaged youth. The life skills component of the LABS course inspires the aspirants to boldly take on every challenge. When my old aspirants tell me how well they are doing in their lives, I thank God for enabling me to work for the less privileged.”

**Vijender Singh Morea** hails from Indore. He is now the Centre Coordinator of the Grameen LABS center at Dindori, which is a backward tribal district of Madhya Pradesh. Prior to joining LABS as a facilitator in the Hospitality domain, Vijender worked for two years in Kingfisher Airlines as a Guest Relations Executive at Delhi.

Vijender has trained two batches so far, and helped place nearly all of his aspirants in good entry-level positions in the Hospitality sector. Ever ready to help everyone with his vast experience in the Hospitality sector, Vijender says, “I get immense satisfaction from finding good livelihoods for my aspirants. It is indeed very heartening to see them happy at their workplaces.”

**C Raghavender Rao** brings with him a great deal of experience to DRF LABS. He has worked in Standard Chartered Bank, and been adjudged the ‘Best Executive’ for the South region. A multi-faceted personality, Raghavender is an MBA and M.Sc. (Geology), and holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism as well!

Having trained over 150 aspirants from four batches in Customer Relations & Sales, Raghavender is presently the Center Coordinator of the IKP-Urban (UPADHI) LABS center at Nacharam (Hyderabad). He loves sharing his workplace experiences with his aspirants and says the combination of life skills, soft skills and technical skills taught in the LABS problem is a perfect recipe for success.
SCAPE Initiatives

**YUVA: Youth Learning Centers**

DRF strives to wean working adolescents away from exploitative work, help them continue their education, and empower them to gain secure employment. The Yuva Centers are community-based adolescent youth learning centers established in various urban slums in Hyderabad to help bring long dropouts and working children back into the mainstream education system. The Centers offer academic, counseling and job-related training programs for youth (13-18 years) who have been forced to drop out of school. Girls with little or no formal education, in particular, are encouraged to join these Centers.

The Centers prepare the students for the Class X Board exam, so that they can obtain formal academic certification. They also provide career counseling and job-related training in fields such as Early Childhood Care and Education, Mechanical and Electrical Technology and basic computer skills. DRF currently serves over 500 students at five Yuva Centres across Hyderabad. It also runs a Residential Yuva Center for girl students, which is funded by the National Child Labour Project under Rajiv Udyogasri. Five more Centers are to be set up soon, to cover another 500 students.

**Education for Children of Migrant Workers**

The construction industry is a key employer for many of India's many internal migrants, who are forced to work long hours in return for very low wages. As they often change construction sites, their children miss out on formal schooling and are left on-site to fend for themselves. Older girls are often forced to drop out of school to baby-sit their infant siblings. It is also not unusual to find these children engaged in casual labor. In early 2008, with support from Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, American India Foundation and other government and private sector partners, DRF launched an education program for these marginalized children:

**Transit Education Centers**

These are temporary schools housed on construction sites, where migrant laborers live and work. Currently, they provide over 4000 children (aged 6-14) with a bridge course curriculum in Math, Environmental Science, English, Telugu and Hindi. DRF operates 100 centers in seven mandals of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

**Residential Bridge Courses (RBCs)**

These are designed to regularize schooling for migrant children, to facilitate their transition into the formal education system. DRF operates six RBCs in Hyderabad covering over 600 children, working closely with their parents.

On December 16, a function titled ‘Jungle Day’ was celebrated at a school for construction workers’ children set up at Kukatpally (Hyderabad) by Indu Group, a corporate partner of DRF.

Indu Group is a leader in providing quality education to children of workers at its construction sites. The celebrations included many fun events in music, dance, arts and crafts, all based on a ‘jungle’ theme.
To make good English-medium education accessible to urban children from lower income groups, DRF has set up 29 Pudami English Primaries in Hyderabad and RR Districts. Located in close proximity to where the children live, these schools involve the neighborhood community and parents in mobilizing the children. The teachers are also mostly drawn from the neighborhood, so that there is a greater sense of participation in the school’s functioning. The Primaries are assisted by the ERC in curriculum design, academic monitoring mechanisms and preparation of training material for the teachers, in accordance with the National Curricular Framework. These Primaries – imparting basic training in English, Mathematics and Environmental Science – act as feeder institutions for Pudami Neighborhood Schools.

The typical school in India has several shortcomings – admission tests / parents’ interviews that don’t necessarily reward true quality, parents’ social / financial background influencing their children’s eligibility for admission, obsession with academic tests, rote learning, heavy assignments / homework that rob the children of their creativity, crowded classrooms, grossly inadequate teaching aids, etc.

The Pudami Neighbourhood Schools approach children’s education very differently. Our ‘admission test’ does not admit or reject a student. Rather, it is a tool that helps us figure out teaching strategies specific to each child, in consultation with the parents. Every child, however difficult, is taught with concern and brought around finally. There is no beating or harsh words. The teachers meet every day and exchange ideas on what more can be done for their children. Absenteeism is not a problem, as the children really love coming to school. They share the teacher’s responsibility in maintaining classroom discipline. Parents are free to walk into the Principal's office anytime and discuss their children’s progress. Our school has excellent classrooms, labs and toilets.

The way we teach Math is different from conventional methods, and very effective too. It isn’t limited to just recognizing, writing and spelling a number. Basic arithmetic skills like counting, addition and subtraction are taught through activities. Place values (units, tens, etc) are taught using matchstick bundles. Many children have difficulty in addition, like adding 4 to 53; they wonder whether ‘4’ should be added in the place value of ‘5’ or ‘3’. But with our ‘matchstick bundles’ method, they perceive ‘5’ as five bundles and ‘3’ as three sticks; so they know ‘4’ (represented by four sticks) has to be clubbed with ‘3’. Similarly, for explaining division we make use of seeds in an interesting and learner-centric manner. I have given these examples to explain how basic Math concepts are concretized in the children’s minds with the help of simple objects and activities. Emphasis is laid on making them visualize the mathematical process while solving a problem. This method helps them understand even abstract concepts at a higher level.

- P Prabhakar Rao
Principal
Pudami Neighborhood School, Kondapur

Pudami, the School with a Difference

Children's Day Celebrations

On November 14, Children's Day was celebrated at the Pudami schools and Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya with gaiety and enthusiasm. The schools sported a festive look, with the children turned out in colorful dresses. There were plenty of songs, dances and other fun events.
DRF in the News
It has been over 12 years since Dr. Reddy’s Foundation began its trailblazing journey in trying to make a difference to the lives of the underprivileged. Much has been achieved by the Foundation in this time, through a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning. Sighting possibilities beyond the horizon, we have been driving change and pioneering new initiatives, both in livelihoods and education.

Through our flagship Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS) program, we are reaching out to youth constrained by poverty, inadequate skills, irregular employment, and absence of opportunities for training and development. In partnership with both the government and private sectors, we have generated over 170,000 sustainable livelihoods so far across the country, and have even helped implement the LABS idea in Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The assistance provided by LABS to individual aspirants has led to larger benefits to their respective communities, such as reduced indebtedness, increased local area spend, improved education levels and reduced gender inequality.

The LABS model has catalyzed citizen-community-corporate partnerships towards creation of replicable livelihood models. We are grateful to the government for generously supporting us in implementing LABS as an important ingredient of their poverty alleviation programs. It is also very encouraging to see other socially inclined private sector organizations partnering with us to take the idea forward with their own genius. To realize our vision in full measure, we need to reach into the thousands of villages that dot India's landscape. Setting up sustainable rural micro-enterprises is the next big priority for us. We have just launched a few pilots, and look forward to scaling them up for wider applicability soon.

The same inclusive philosophy drives DRF's educational interventions as well. We fight child labor and strive to provide quality education to children who are deprived of it. Using schools as community learning resource centers, we implement innovative strategies in association with the mainstream education system. Our Education Resource Center conducts schooling-related research, builds capacities and shares best practices. Our Yuva Youth Learning Centers provide an integrated learning process for adolescent school dropouts. In partnership with construction companies – and with the support of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and AIF – we have set up Transit Schools to provide regular education to children of migrant construction workers.

DRF also runs 29 Pudami English Primaries in areas with large populations of urban poor, to provide children from all walks of life with access to good English-medium education. Our four Pudami Neighborhood Schools strive to bring quality education to all children in their vicinity. The Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya has a current strength of over 1500 students from KG to Class X, and the Kallam Anji Reddy Vocational Junior College offers government-recognized, Intermediate-level vocational courses. Altius is a skill advancement school that provides graduates with suitable employability skills.

While we can justifiably take satisfaction at having been able to change tens of thousands of lives for the better, we also need to place on ourselves a mandate to reach ever larger sections of those who need a helping hand. Let us remain focused on this big picture in the coming year.

My best wishes to everyone for a happy and fulfilling 2009.

Anuradha Prasad
“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language,
And next year’s words await another voice,
And to make an end is to make a beginning.”

- TS Eliot