

Collaborative Creativity:
Using Music and Drama to Encourage Creativity and Unity

Music and Creative Learning Project

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Paste Manav Sadhna, Indicorps and Ahimsa logos here

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Title: Collaborative Creativity: Experiments on Using Music and Drama as Tools to Encourage Creativity and Unity in a group of Muslim and Hindu Teenagers in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to document and analyze activities done to encourage creativity and collaboration of creative ideas in All-in-One, a musical/drama group of fourteen Muslim and Hindu teenagers. The objective of the group is to have the children themselves create a performance that is their own vision of unity. This sort of creative project thus includes not only individual creativity, but also the conglomeration of all of the children's ideas in the group. Selected activities where the entire group worked on creating music, drama, or stories are fully documented and placed in an appendix at the end of this paper. The activities were selected to show the range of effectiveness of collaborative creativity from the activities. Observations made for each activity are documented. Trends gathered about the group from analyzing these activities and general observations of the class are used to evaluate what barriers existed within the group in terms of creative cooperation. Possible hindrances to creativity are discussed, and ways to mitigate their effects are explored. Suggestions for building better creative collaborations in a group of teens from different backgrounds are also presented. In a group setting, the comfort of the participants with each other as well as the space allowed for private creativity are the most important aspects of ensuring successful creative collaborations. Elongated time spent with the group, as well as thought out lesson plans will also help cooperative creative efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Experiments on Creativity

Creativity, whether in America or in India, is often neglected as an important developmental aspect in the lives of children. Creative growth in an individual encourages open-mindedness, introspection, and resourcefulness. Creative growth in a group setting fosters cooperation, collaboration, and compromise. All of which are important skills that will be useful throughout life.

Many children in India do not have the opportunity to be pushed to think creatively. Emphasized aspects of the Indian educational system, such as rote memorization and fact finding,² have resulted in many children ignoring the creative side of themselves, or not developing creativity through exploring the alternative possibilities. Creativity, as any other muscle in the brain, needs to be exercised in order to grow stronger. Many children have not even been able to recognize creativity within themselves, let alone allowed themselves to explore it. Researchers within India have recognized the need to focus on creativity more within the Indian Educational system.

Studies have shown that exposure of children to music and the performing arts helps to increase their comfort with creating and their capacity to create³. In addition, there are various other benefits to music education. The hours spent working on music instills a sense of discipline and mastery over one's mind and hands to create the desired sounds. The days working with other children develops a sense of humility, and respect for peers who develop into fellow musicians. The months of preparation for a performance builds patience in learning from mistakes, and persistence in pursuing perfection. A sense of pride in their achievements with support their self esteem, hopes will be nurtured, dreams will grow.

Within the context of a community or group of individuals working together, throughout every minute of the experience of working toward music, something even greater is being built. A sense of interdependence and trust between the children is built. Their joint collaboration results in creative expression of musical and social harmony. As a result, the creation of music itself demonstrates the creation of the foundation of a stronger community, a community where people live and work together despite their differences and find a common voice. Thus, having children learn how to work together to create and perform music not only empowers these children to have faith in themselves, but also to have faith in the strength and power of a community. It encourages them to see how communities can build upon one another and strengthen one another to create a community works well together, listens to each other and creates harmony.

This need for building a stronger community is particularly important in Ahmedabad, where the gap between religious facets have become even larger over recent years. The violence of riots, whether politically sparked or not, has resulted in a reaffirmation in the minds of many Ahmedabad citizens that Hindus and Muslims working together may cause more trouble than the process is worth⁴. A unique quality of the performing arts is that the voices heard and characters seen are not linked to their own personal history. One cannot easily tell who is Hindu, or who is

² Indian education and creativity [see Indicorps article]

³ Sherma, RW (1971) Creativity and the Condition of Knowing Music. *Music Educators National Conference*. pp 19-22.

⁴ Kamdar, M. (2002) The Struggle for India's Soul. *World Policy Journal*.109(3) pp

Muslim when they hear a chorus of voices or see performers on stage. In addition, performing arts have the capacity to convey messages to an audience in an entertaining way. Thus by gathering a diverse audience, and sending a clear message, the performing arts can be utilized to send a message to the audience that will result in building a stronger community.

Music and the performing arts can thus be used as both a medium to build creativity and to build stronger communities. As a result of the need to reintroduce children to their own creativity, as well as build stronger communities, the focus of my Indicorps Fellowship this year has been to bring out creativity in children through the medium of music and the performing arts. Dovetailing these two strengths of music has resulted in All-in-One, a group of young Ahmedabad teenagers who have created their own musical drama to perform throughout India.

In the context of these children, I define creativity as any particular way that these children have found to express themselves in a way that is more than just copying what they already know and are comfortable. The following examples, I do not consider an expression of creativity: singing a Bollywood song in their play, replicating the sounds of a market place, or restating a story that they have heard in school while changing the names of the characters. However, I do consider these following examples as expressions of creativity: changing the lyrics and/or tune of a Bollywood song to express something new, adding the voice of a shakwalla that sings a song middle of the market place, or using a story that they know in school as the base for a new story with a different ending or moral.

Creativity in an individual is necessary in order for creative collaborations to occur. Since this project aims to build a composition of all of the children's creative ideas, the group's 'creativity' was dependent upon all of the children suggesting new ideas and further working together upon selected ideas, and combining them to create a conglomerate story. Even though some individuals may be very creative in private, emphasis in this project was placed on bringing that creativity out in the open and sharing it with other children. Therefore, when considering creative "growth" what is considered is not just the personal and private thoughts, but also the leap to share that with the rest of the group and offer their own creativity to spark new ideas in others. Therefore, group activities have the potential to develop creativity in individuals as well as help children to work together to compromise and compile creativity together. Collaborative creative activities thus give children a chance to explore their own creativity and others together, learning how to cooperate, and share themselves and their ideas with their peers and the world.

Objectives of the Project

The initial goal of the project was to use music as a tool to bring creativity out of individual children. However, since I was placed in Ahmedabad, and was aware of the definite separation of Hindus and Muslim areas, with the exception of a few counties, I thought that the project could not only use music as a tool to build creativity, but also bring children together who normally would not have been able to interact. One of the easiest ways to encourage creativity is by exposing ourselves to things that are "different" than us. Exposing ourselves to people who are from different classes, religions, genders and cultures opens up our minds to possibilities that were previously not known to us. This exposure also poses the possibility of realizing that people or places that we thought were different may be more similar than we expected. Thus the idea developed into bringing children of Hindu and Muslim together to create music. In order to give them a goal and purpose to work toward, and a focused medium for their creativity, I and

my partner NGO, Manav Sadhna, had decided that their creativity should be presented in the form of a musical or play. In order to encourage the children's own creativity and integration, the musical would be created by the children themselves. All of the ideas, lines, and songs would be products of the children. From the fact that a group of children would be working together, came the idea of learning how to best work together to form a collectively creative piece. Thus by working together, the children would become the living message of communal harmony that they were themselves working to develop in artistic form. Since the collaborative creative ideas and messages of the children would be expressed in a performance, their ideas would be shared with and experienced by the larger audience of Ahmedabad.

There are many objectives to this project. The final end product is to have Hindu and Muslim children create a performance that they can perform throughout Ahmedabad in order to show their collaboration in the theme of "All-in-One". The objectives that need to be achieved before this goal can be attained, are 1) the children becoming friends 2) the children growing creatively to individually think about their message 3) the children growing creatively to think about the way that they will present this message, 4) the children working together to create a performance that is a collaboration of their ideas 5) the children practicing and working hard towards perfecting their performance 6) the children performing and impacting the audience.

Studies on creativity have shown that children are more likely to be creative when there is a concrete goal that will result from their efforts⁵. In order to help the children to have a focus for their creativity, the children were given the opportunity to sculpt their own musical drama that reflects their experiences of living in Ahmedabad. They were told that their musical would be performed in different parts of Ahmedabad, and perhaps outside of Gujarat. After many brainstorming sessions, activities and discussions, the children decided that the focus of their performance would be unity of all people in India. They subsequently named themselves "All-in-One," or "Unekta ma Ekta." which translates into "Diversity in Unity."

Objectives of this Paper

As an amateur working with music and the performing in teaching/facilitator format I have little experience of encouraging children to think creatively. However, I believe that there is a growing need to understand the processes and procedures that are more effective in bringing out creativity in a collaborative format within children in India. It is valuable to document the descriptions of activities that I have worked on with these children, and observations of the effects of the activities on the children.

The following paper aims to document and analyze a select group of the children's experiments with creativity under the subsets of music, story creation, and drama. I will also focus my observations of various factors that may have affected that children comfort on experimenting with creativity. In the context of the activities and observed interactions of children in All-in-One, I will additionally explore possible barriers and non-obstacles to their creative development. Since the objective of working with these children is more than encouraging their creativity, I will also note my observations for the other goals of the project. Confidence in ones self and the group, building interpersonal skills and improving cooperation between children are all integral to creating together. Thus these aspects will also be analyzed to determine whether the overall experience of All-in-One has been effective in developing the

⁵ Balkin, A (1985) The Creative Music Classroom: laboratory for creativity in life. *Music Educators Journal* pp19-22.

children's creative collaboration.

METHODS

Music and Creativity Idea Development

As an Indicorps Fellow, I was placed in Ahmedabad, Gujarat to volunteer with the NGO Manav Sadhna [Service to Mankind.] Manav Sadhna works mainly with impoverished children from the Ramapir No Tekre, the largest slum in Ahmedabad, to improve their lives through value-based education. Manav Sadhna runs a number of programs that aim to improve education and livelihoods of children. Since its inception, Manav Sadhna has promoted communal harmony and encouraged peace by working with communities from all castes and creeds. One particular project, EKTA, focused on the idea of building communities and cultural exchange through sharing the messages of Gandhi and D. Martin Luther King Jr. In 2000, Brad Baldwin, a film director, combined efforts with world renowned dancer-activist Maalika Sarabhai, director of Darpana Academy and Manav Sadhna to create a dance drama performance. The performance aimed to spread the similar messages of Dr. Martin Luther King and Gandhi, and demonstrate how these messages of the past are still relevant today. The performance traveled throughout America, and be performed in various schools and places of worship to spread their similar messages. Fourteen children who lived in the Tekre were selected to participate in EKTA. As a part of this project, the children were given professional dance and drama classes at Darpana Academy, and took part in a variety of creative developmental classes run by EKTA's directors. The drama was completed its three month tour in the Spring of 2002. Ever since this project's completion, Manav Sadhna has been interested in preparing a similar troupe of children to perform a play about Unity in Ahmedabad. The initial idea was to have the children perform a pre-planned play about a historical story of Hindu and Muslim unity in Ahmedabad.

As an Indicorps fellow, my project initially was to help strengthen the Music Program at Manav Sadhna. The music program at Manav Sadhna is supported by Project Ahimsa, an NGO based in San Francisco that promotes music education, and financial support to victims of violence⁶. A year ago, Project Ahimsa had donated instruments, and provided the salary for tabla and Hindustani vocal teachers at Manav Sadhna. After coming to Manav Sadhna and working for a few months on the Ahimsa Music Program understood the future vision of a Unity Performance from Manav Sadhna, conversations were initiated with both groups concerning the possibility of using music to build connectivity and creativity with children of different religious backgrounds.

The idea for the All-in-One project became strengthened after visiting two other projects with the similar goals of spreading a message to an audience about a socially relevant issue. Dr. Maalika Sarabhai, shortly after completing EKTA, created a play in reaction to the communal riots that struck Ahmedabad in 2002. The project was called HUM [Hindus United with Muslims] also meaning 'Us' in Hindi. It was a street play was performed by Darpana students. It aimed to educate Ahmedabad school children about political causes behind the riots. This play was thus meant to dispel the accusation that the riots were one particular religions fault or malicious intent. Instead, the play explained, the riots were a political gimmick of the government. An exhibition about the interdependency of Hindus and Muslims traveled with the

⁶ Sukadia, R. (2004) Beats that Heal Streets: The story of a Music Education Foundation. *The Subcontinental*. pp75-82.

performers and was set up to be further viewed by the audience after the performance. The other project that was helpful to learn from was the Samvedan Cultural program. Hiren Gandhi, director of Darshan, an NGO that promotes political and social awareness, also supervises this program. The Samvedan Cultural Program consists of a select group of six young adults, three Muslim and three Dalit Hindus, that perform prewritten street plays about relevant social issues, such as domestic abuse, sanitation, government corruption, and communal harmony. These young adults are being trained in the technique of "Theatre of the Oppressed," a form of theatre that is based on Paulo Frieres book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." After every Samvedan program, the audience is engaged by the actors in dialogue about the issues that they have seen.. The drama aims to involve the audience to become "spect-actors" who by questioning the play, consequently question themselves and their opinions on the issue.

My personal experience as a music student at the Juilliard School in New York City, has also helped me to understand the power of music as a means to build cultural connectivity. From the age of thirteen to sixteen, I was selected to participate in the Music Advancement Program (MAP) at the Juilliard School. The purpose of MAP was to develop young classical musicians who were of backgrounds that were currently not represented in Western classical music. These ethnic backgrounds included African Americans, Latinos and South Asians. The program was an extensive musical and academic experience that was run every Saturday. Classes taken by students accepted into the program included Western Classical Music History, world music, ear training, composition, improvisation, ensemble, orchestra, and personal instruction. Although the main purpose of the program was to develop classical musicians of diverse backgrounds, cooperation, and cultural understanding was also fostered through orchestra and ensemble classes. Everyone in the program experienced how different musical instruments, and similarly different cultures and religions, could come together and create a symphony of musical and communal harmony. It was this experience that helped me to understand that unity does not need to be the primary goal of a project in order to be achieved. It also taught me that children working together on an enjoyable goal, such as making music or a play, results in the development of confidence, cooperation and creativity.

Each of these three experiences, strengthened the ideas behind the importance of working towards All-in-One. HUM helped to demonstrate the need and effectiveness of using drama and exhibitions as to send effective messages. HUM also demonstrated that schools are a strong medium in which to perform since the children are receptive to the entertainment of drama and music, as well as open to learning. Samvedan Cultural Program demonstrated that the play would be more powerful for both the children and audience if the group consisted of Hindu and Muslim children. It also helped us learn about the power of street plays and the strength of music as a tool to spread messages. The MAP program helped me to place myself in the position of the children, and think about what it feels like to be a child in which substantial investment was placed in to build musical capacity and creativity. I learned a variety of activities and insights into working with children on diversity issues as a result of this experience that helped me to critically think about the performance art as a tool to build confidence, creativity and connectivity.

Choosing the Children

In order to work with both a Hindu and Muslim community of children, Manav Sadhna, based near Vadaj in Ahmedabad Gujarat, paired with F.D. Juhapura, an Urdu school, to bring

eight impoverished Hindu children together with eight well-to-do Muslim children. Since the children were from different areas of Ahmedabad, and from different socioeconomic classes and religions, this combination of children would not only help these children to grow creatively individually and together, but also to challenge their initial thoughts about what it means to be different.

Since I had spent the first few months at Manav Sadhna developing the music program, I had a general idea of children that I thought would be good candidates for the project. All of the males participating from Manav Sadhna were selected by personal recommendations from other workers at Manav Sadhna, their musical abilities, and their personal characteristics of commitment and excellent interpersonal skills. The girls were selected via a musical audition and interview. The female candidates were all from Vinay Mandhir, an all girls school that is sponsored by the Harijan Sevak Sangh and Manav Sadhna.

The Muslim children were more difficult to find. I was first interested in working with an NGO and their children. However, there were very few strongly established NGOs that worked predominantly with Muslim children. After the Tsunami in December 2004, Manav Sadhna and the FD Urdu schools, a district of seventy two schools that serves the Urdu-speaking Muslim population of Gujarat, worked together in an effort to collect funds to help South Indian victims. During this effort, I visited the majority of these schools, met with their principals and asked about their willingness to participate in the All-in-One. As a result of its reputation for educational excellence, and its enthusiasm to the idea of the project, and the upper middle class background of their students, F.D. Juhapura was selected to participate. All of the children from F.D. Juhapura were selected based on an audition and interview, similar to the Vinay Mandhir students.

The parents of each child from both Manav Sadhna and F.D. Juhapura were also involved in the process. After the children were selected for the project, a meeting was held with all of the parents and children, where they were encouraged to ask questions, made aware of the schedule, and were invited to sit into practice sessions. Each of the children and parents have signed a permission slip, stating that they are aware of the time commitment that they have made to the project.

Background of the Children

The sixteen children initially selected range in age from 14 to 18. The children are from the F.D. Municipal school in Juhapura and from Manav Sadhna in Ahmedabad. The Muslim children participating in this project are Ayesha (16), Shaheen (16), Karishma (16), Huma (16), Zeeba (15), Farheem (16), Anas (15) and Irfan (15). All of these children are students enrolled in the F.D. Juhapura Municipal school. All of them have participated in drama and musical performances at in their school. Some are currently taking dance and Hindustani classical voice lessons as extracurricular activities. The Hindu children participating in this project are Rakesh (15), Mehul (16), Rakesh (18), Bharat (19), Kiran (18), Chaitali (15), Sonal (14), Madhuri (14). These children are from a variety of backgrounds, and have been involved in various projects of Manav Sadhna (MS), including the Non-Formal school⁷, Vinay Mandhir⁸ and EKTA⁹. Initially

⁷ The Non-Formal School of Manav Sadhna is in the Ramapir No Tekro, the largest slum in Ahmedabad. The school is run by young men who live in the Tekre and are trained as teachers. The purpose of the school is to encourage children to learn basic reading and math skills. Rakesh and Mehul are current teachers and former students of the Non Formal School.

there were eight girls and eight boys, eight FD children and eight Manav Sadhna children. Two of the children from Juhapura withdrew from the program. One young man lost interest in the project. Another young woman was in a serious scooter accident during the year. Her mother decided to pull her out of the project for health reasons. All of these children were selected through personal recommendation, or an audition based on their confidence, ability to sing, and interest in communal harmony.

All-in-One Project

In order to ensure that both FD Juhapura and Manav Sadhna was involved in the process of All-in-One's development, facilitators were chose from both organizations. There were three main facilitators initially involved in All-in-One. Niyaz Sheik, a Hindu teacher at FD Juhapura and graduate of drama school, Jignesh Parmar, a college graduate, drama student, and former child of Manav Sadhna, and I, an Indicorps Fellow placed at Manav Sadhna with a background in music all worked together as the predominant facilitators in developing All-in-One. Additional volunteers from America and India, such as Ishrat Kundwala a teacher of adult literacy in Texas, and Anand Sirwani a student of Darpana Academy also helped. Meetings with children, the creation of activities, and collaborative developments of the children were nurtured by a conglomerate efforts from these facilitators. Jayesh Patel, Anar Patel, and Viren Joshi, co-founders of Manav Sadhna, Mr. Gena principal of FD Juhapura school and Roopal Shah, co-founder of Indicorps all provided guidance, support and suggestions for the further development of All-in-One.

The facilitators decided that meetings would be held first with the FD and MS children as two separate groups. This would allow the facilitators to know more about the children in smaller groups on an individual level as well as help them gain a better understanding of the children's creative capacity. In addition, this time separated would help the children to become comfortable with the idea of creating and working together, instill them with skills that would be valuable once the entire group of children met, as well as provide testing of the effectiveness of activities planned for when the entire group would work together. After this time period, FD and MS children would meet regularly to work together, and do activities that would not only build their creativity and cooperation, but also collaborations that could be used for their actual production. After the production script was finalized practice would begin with the children to prepare them for performances. Regular weekly meetings were also held for the facilitators to re-evaluate our progress and plan for the upcoming week.

Meetings in the separate communities occurred twice weekly for 3 hour periods during the months of December 2004, January 2005 and February 2005. Meetings with all of the children together were be held every Saturday and Sunday in the month of March 2005. Throughout March, the children participated in dramatic and musical activities that built their creative and collaborative skills. All of these children also participated in brainstorming activities which formed the founding storyline and structure of their performance. Throughout the month of March it was determined by the facilitators that a retreat was necessary for

⁸ Vinay Mandhir is an all girls-high school created by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. All girls who attend this high school belong to the untouchable caste. Chaitali, Madhuri and Sonal are all students at Vinay Mandhir.

⁹ EKTA was a dance-drama created by Brad Baldwin, Maalika Sarabhai, director of Darpana Academy, and Manav Sadhna. These children, in addition to being professionally trained in dance and drama, were encouraged to grow and think creatively. Bharat and Kiran, current participants in All-in-One, were also participants in EKTA.

furthering the children's rapport and collaborative ability. Therefore the children spent 2 days together in the Environmental Sanitation Institute in Sugad, Gujarat in the beginning of April. During this retreat they participated in teambuilding activities, drama and confidence building activities, and created more through collaborations for their performance.

As mentioned previously, one of the main objectives of the project is to have the children create their own storyline and music for the performance. In this way, this project encompasses their creative growth on both the individual and group level. Throughout meetings with the children together, common themes, stories and ideas were gathered. A select group of six children worked with the facilitators to compile all of these ideas into one storyline. After the storyline was finalized, Bhargav ____ was asked to help further the dramatic development of the children. Bhargav bhai and the facilitators worked together to have the children go through the scenes of the storyline and inject their own dialogues. These dialogues formed the base of a script that was compiled by Niyaz bhai and Jignesh. The script is now completed and being practiced by the children for performances. The performances should begin in July. One of the children in All-in-One, Bharat Vagela, who is dedicated to the idea of All-in-One, creatively gifted, and capable of leading the group, has also been selected to serve as a student-facilitator, to help organize and guide the group, as also provide a constant representation of children's ideas during facilitator meetings.

As a result of the background of the children in All-in-One, I thought that they should not only include working towards ideas for the play, but also engage the children in thinking about their religious and national identity, and the gravity of them cooperating to create a message that the rest of Ahmedabad could receive. Therefore, initially it was important to have a space where the children were only with peers of their own religion. The reasoning for this was that if there was a space where everyone around them was of the 'same' identity it would permit more honest dialogues concerning sensitive issues. It would also provide time for the children to think critically about their identity and share in a space where they were less likely to be judged. The idea of providing a safe space for the children to think about these issues was also a factor in meeting with the Hindu and Muslim children separately for a month before the two groups met.

However, as meetings with the children continued in their separate groups, I realized that both the group and myself were not equipped to discuss these issues openly.

As I worked with the children separately, I noted that there was lack of confidence and shyness in many members of the group. I also noticed that members in the groups clung to their own friend and were not comfortable with other members in the group.

Thus while the children were working in their separate groups, the facilitators chose to focus on activities that would enhance their performance and creative capacities. The focus on creative building activities instead of diversity dialogues, resulted in increased their interactions and friendship between the children within the respective groups.

Thus, during the time when the children worked in their separate FD and MS groups, there were no pre-planned conversations or dialogues about identity and religion.

Once the children were brought together, I thought that it would be a good time to introduce dialogues on diversity. However, when they were brought together, the same issues of clinging to pre determined friendships and lack of confidence arose, since the children were now in a different group that included children with whom they were not yet comfortable. Thus the more important focus was again to bring out their confidence and creativity and build trust in one another. In addition, my inadequate language skills, Western trained facilitation style, and lack of internal cultural understanding of Hindu-Muslim tension made me feel unequipped to engage

the children in a discussion about the children's own ideas of identity. Some of the other facilitators also felt that by bringing up a discussion about identity and religious affiliation may reinforce the idea that the children were different than one another. It was reasoned that if we conduct dialogues to help them see their differences, that they would shift their focus away from seeing the beauty of their similarities. Thus as a group of facilitators we determined that discussions about identity would be held off until the group had reached a level of friendship, and recognition of similarities that dialogues about their differences would not challenge their ideas about each other, but rather challenge their own individual perception of each other. Discussions about identity, nationality and religion will occur in conjunction with practices and before the children's first complete performance. This will allow children to be prepared for audience questions and ensure that the conversations will take place while the children are all actively working together for the same goal and secure in their friendships.

Choosing a Name: Collaboration on Identity

The children were given the assignment to choose a name for themselves. The project was referred up until this point as the Harmony Project, since the word harmony suggested a melodious symphony of both music and people. Understanding this exercise gives insight into the nature of the group's dynamic, vision of itself and its contribution as a performance piece. None of the facilitators voted or gave suggestions, to ensure that only the children collaborated in efforts to forge its identity.

The only facilitator input was the decision to use a chalkboard, the procedure of voting, and the initiation of brainstorming. The word "HUM" ['US' in Hindi] was written in the center of a chalkboard. The children were then encouraged to individually go up to the board and write words that came to their mind when they saw the word "HUM" and any other subsequent words that were newly written on the board. The children were then split into groups of four and asked to pick two names for themselves from the list of words that they saw on the board. Since there were 4 groups, and each chose 2, there were 8 items in the set of names that they created. A few weeks later, after the children had spent more time with one another, the eight previously chosen names were written on the board and the children had to choose one that they liked the best. The two names with the greatest majority of votes were kept on the board. The two names that remained on the board were "All-in-One" and "Bandan" [Tied together.] An interesting discussion ensued afterwards when the children then had the opportunity to talk about which one they should choose. They were then asked to talk about why they liked both names. Many children liked the idea of being tied together. They argued that everyone in the group was tied together. Someone brought up the point of being tied together was not always a positive thing. Many children also liked the idea of India being a place where diversity existed together. Only in India, where languages, and religions could be so different and people still feel tied to one country, could All-in-One occur. The children were asked to close their eyes and vote on the name. The name that resulted from this process was "All-in-One" or "Unekta ma Ekta" in Gujarati.

The children's choice of "All-in-One"¹⁰, suggests that these children are looking beyond

¹⁰ *In every exercise that dealt with religion, the children would try to incorporate their vision of 'all' religions. However, whenever they mentioned a diversity of religions, they would only include Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. This failure to mention various other religions may be the result of the fact that the group only consists of Hindu and Muslim children. Perhaps they consider Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism close to Hinduism and Christianity is very distinctively different and thus more worthy of being mentioned. Perhaps it also suggests that Christianity has a particularly strong presence, and that Jainism,*

themselves when they think about participating in this project. Although the group only consists of Hindu and Muslim children, they chose a name to which anyone can relate. They thus chose a name that suggests that everyone is related to one another, and that their message is focused on the connection of all individuals to one other, that extends beyond the message of Hindu and Muslim children working together.

“Unekta ma Ekta” translates into Diversity in Unity. The distinction between Diversity in Unity, and the more common English phrase “Unity in Diversity” is significant. The former is like a clear, transparent ball that is filled with multicolored beads. The latter is a necklace of the multicolored beads strung together with string. The focus is thus diversity, or the emphasis that there are differences that make up a holistic world. The name that the children chose for themselves, supported by their actions and storylines created, demonstrate that the children believe that different people can and do exist together as one collective whole.

Paper Procedure

As previously stated, the objectives of this paper is to document the effectiveness of the created activities and interactions of All-in-One to result in a creative collaboration. Although the project is still ongoing, this paper will focus on the time period of the creative process and collaborations of the children. Thus observations of the activities and process of getting to the point of making the storyline will be the focus of this paper. It is in the process of making the storyline and working on music, and preparing for dramas that has allowed the children the greatest opportunity to explore their creativity.

The activities that are documented in this paper are only a select few that were a part of the children’s growth process. These activities are divided and discussed along the topics of music, story creation and drama. They were selected to demonstrate a range of effective creative and collaborative exercises. The activities were created by the facilitators. The activities were created actively to instill children with particular skills and opportunities to creatively work together, or reactively to previous activities that were performed and were not as successful in their attempts. The activities were mainly a composition of previous drama and music exercises that were previously familiar with the facilitators themselves, either from previous experiences or books read. Activities that were reactive resulted from analyzing why a previous activity did not go well and adjusting the activity so that it could be more effective.

This paper will thus provide analysis of selected activities and their effectiveness. Appendices are provided with further details and references of activities. The paper will then analyze various trends that were observed through these activities and the progression of the project as means to better understand how creative collaborations can be encouraged. Finally difficulties experienced within the project will be shared along with best practices of the experiences gained and suggestions for the future.

DATA AND OBSERVATIONS OF ACTIVITIES

Below are detailed observations of children’s process of thought and reaction to selected creativity building activities. The data does not include all of the activities run, but rather a selection with different results regarding creative output from the children. The majority of these activities were done in the process leading up to the joint creation of the storyline. These

Buddhism and Sikhism somehow are not as prevalent in their children’s minds.

activities were run by facilitators between the months of February through June 2005. All 'All-in-One' children from both Manav Sadhna and F.D. Juhapura participated in these activities. All of the referred activities are detailed in the Appendix attached to the end of this paper. Please refer back to the Appendices for further information on these activities.

Jamming Together: Children's Experiments with Music

M1, *Thu Thu Thanna* (See Appendix 1) was the children's first attempts at changing and creating melody. All children, during their separate FD and MS meetings, had previously learned various methods for changing the melody. This background was helpful in this exercise which proved to be an effective for creating new music. Of the two groups, one focused more on alternating the rhythm and syncopation within the melody, whereas the other group created more variations on the actual melody. There was a tendency for the groups to alter the original melody to sound like tunes that they were familiar with in Bollywood. This further suggests the strength of these children's love and comfort with Bollywood music, and how easy it is for them to slip into re-singing a Bollywood song. The variation of this activity with words was also well done by the children. Some of them had a natural understanding of lyrics and the ways that words with similar sounds are more pleasing to the ear, and how words that are placed to a tune need to be balanced rhythmically. Others just wrote words that sounded as though the character, a beggar, would sing it. In all, the children were very creative with their words.

It was more difficult for the children to extend this melody and prepare a complete song using the melody as a starting point. This may have been difficult for the children because they knew the melody in the context of a particular activity that seemed as though there was no need for a song. This may have also been difficult for the children because we did not previously discuss or work in the separate FD and MS groups on understanding the parts of a song, i.e. chorus, stanza, verse, pick up etc.

In each of the groups there were a few individuals who were more confident with their musical creative abilities. This resulted in predominantly their ideas being selected by the group. Levels of comfort, more so than lack of creative ideas, needed to be raised in order to have the ideas of all children to be balanced.

M2 *Jam on Toast* (See Appendix 1) was an exercise that all of the children thoroughly enjoyed. This exercise was done for two different purposes. When this exercise was done so that the children recreated the sound of a set place, such as a busy street, the exercise was very successful. Children listened carefully to each other, and tried to create all of the sounds that were characteristic of the market place. Although this version of the activity may not seem to bring out as much musical creativity because the children are all recreating sounds that are known to them, the way that they recreate the known sound is very creative. In addition, the idea of them choosing and finding sounds that are common place and considering them now as musically significant to repeat, is also creative. It is a creative thought for them to hear music in conventional places.

This activity was much less successful during variation F (See Appendix 1) when the children were asked to make their own music as opposed to recreating a song or sounds with which they are already familiar. During their attempts to make their own music, most of the children used physical sounds of clapping hands, and stomping feet vs. making vocal sounds. However, what was most frustrating was that children did not listen to one another while making music. Unlike the previous version where they could immediately listen to their peers voice and

recognize the sound that he was making, in version F they had to listen to another's sound and find their own distinctive sound that fit well into the beat¹¹ and music of the other members in the group. What resulted from this version of the activity were a lot of in sync rhythms, but very little vocal music and no harmony. The music that they created together was not cohesive or harmonious.

The difference between the outcomes of these two variations is the result of the different needs and goals that the two versions fulfilled. Need to listen for different things, and in the set place version of the activity, there was a definite alternative to known sounds that you could make to fill the space. In the latter, the child needed to be more creative and think of alternate ways in which to create sound if she already heard her sound being made by someone else in the group. Thus the second version was much more difficult because it pushed the children to be more creative in a less comfortable fashion.

M3, *Esa Desh hai Mera [This Country of Mine]* (See Appendix 1) allowed children to work with a song that they all enjoyed, and encouraged them to change the lyrics of the song. All of the children worked individually to create their own lyrics and then pooled their lyrics together to create their entirely new stanzas. Since the children were comfortable with the tune, as well as had previous experience with changing lyrics, this activity was successful in creating a new song that will be used in the performance. There were children who were more creative with the use of words, however all of them contributed to the creation of the song since they each had thought of their own ideas previously and thus had something to share with one another.

The facilitators had asked all of the children to create a song about their county and anything else that they thought made their country special. The children chose to write a song that spoke about the religious diversity and landscape beauty of India. The children were also able to recognize places where the song needed to be improved, such as non rhyming words, or words with too little or too many syllables, which made it difficult to for the song to be sung. The song was both created and edited by the children themselves, suggesting that they were not only creative but also conscious of their creation, and open to criticism concerning their work.

Tell Me a Story! : Children's Experiments with Creating Stories

S1, *What's the Story? Workshop on Theme* (See Appendix 2) was the least effective in bringing about creativity and cooperation amongst the children. This may have been the result of a variety of factors. The children were recently introduced to one another at this point. Thus not only was the idea of story creation relatively new, but the children were also new to each other. This exercise was meant to be a test, to determine the base level of creativity and cooperation that existed in the group. The children were placed in pre designed groups to encourage mingling between Manav Sadhna and F.D Juhapura children. However, there seemed to be tension in individuals since they were placed into groups in which they were less familiar. In addition, the children were abstractly given the task to create a story. The themes of location, time and character were too broad for them make personal story. Also the children were not given individual time to think about their own ideas. This may have resulted in some children being intimidated by some of the other children who had expressed their ideas more quickly or with more confidence, and prevented some children from contributing their own ideas. Consequently, in only one group did the children work together to create a story. In the other two groups, children did not try to create a story, nor did they try to cooperate with their peers.

¹¹ This beat was repetitive and constant and formed the rhythm to which the music was set.

What resulted from this exercise was an understanding that children need to have something more concrete to think about in order to be creative. They need some sort of structure or set of guidelines within which to work, or a catalyst for thought. This exercise may have been more effective if the themes of location, time and character were given Ahmedabad, 2000, and a little girl respectively as the themes of their stories. This exercise also suggested that the children had a difficult time imagining what a performance about unity should embody. The theme of Unity itself is an abstract thought. As a result, this activity suggested that facilitators needed to do more work helping children think about what they wanted an audience in Ahmedabad to see, and uncovering what ideas they already had about unity.

S2, *What's the Story?-Workshop with Photo* (See Appendix 2) resulted in the most creative stories and cooperation among the children. I think that this exercise was the most successful for a variety of reasons. Every individual was given time to think and write down the creative stories that are inspired within them. Since each child had the time to think individually, they were each able to go into the group of children with their own concrete ideas of what the picture inspired in them. Not all of the children created their own stories inspired by the pictures. Some children simply described what was in the picture. Other children had written complete stories that involved characters and situations that were inspired by the picture. Even though some children were not as creative as others, they all had something concrete to share with each other during their interactive session.

The exercise was initially to pick one of the stories created, each of the individual groups asked to present a dramatic collaboration of their stories instead of choosing only one. The children decided that it would be better for them to combine stories and thus take the best ideas from each story so that all ideas would be represented.

This decision demonstrated that each of the groups worked well together well, interacted positively, and were learning how to cooperate to create a solid story. Children also took the exercise more seriously because their collaboration would result in a dramatic performance that other children would watch. In addition, this activity took place after the F.D. and M.S. children had interacted more with one other, so their individual levels of comfort with each other had increased significantly.

S3, *Around the Campfire: Storytelling in a Circle* (See Appendix 2) resulted in the purest forms of creativity, where each child's subsequent creative addition was dependent upon the creativity of the previous children. Facilitators gave children a starting point, and the suggestion to think about the themes of unity that were discussed as a group. Many of the stories created were disjointed. It demonstrated how there are a variety of lines along which a story can be developed, and that it is hard to integrate the different lines. Variations on S3, where children were prompted by facilitator questions produced the more cohesive stories. This was the result of everyone being asked detail oriented questions about the story and everyone hearing the answers. Everyone, through listening to the answers of others, could have also thought individually about how to take the story forward. This also permitted them practice of the flow of the exercise and the nature of speaking immediately after someone adjacent to you speaks.

Although the S4, *What's Your Story? Creating the Storyline of All-in-One* (See Appendix 2) activity was given to the children as an individual exercise, the results from this exercise were used to collectively form the storyline of the children. Sixteen stories were the result of this activity. Many of the stories had common themes and ideas. There were six variations of the classic Romeo-Juliet story between Hindu and Muslim teens. There were also 4 stories that took place in villages. This may be the result of romanticized and remote life in the

village where small disturbances can have major impact on tightly knit community members. Some stories were short moral based fables, that were not at all tied to religion, but instead suggested the strength of people working together and the power of the future. An interesting common theme was the powerful love of parents. Three stories contained incidents where a Hindu family adopted a Muslim child, or vice versa, and loved that child as if it were their own. Many stories included powerful dialogue after the end of a tragic scene, that mentioned the importance of seeing past religion. This usually consisted of a young person speaking out to an elder group or crowd of people.

There were two themes however that all stories contained. The first common theme was the strength of friendship. In every story, whether a love story or not, the key to people understanding and valuing one another's culture was the result of unconditional friendship. Every story was based around the idea of natural peace and an external cause of disturbance that resulted in either a permanent destruction of order, or somehow returned back to peaceful existence. Whether it was a village, or a family, or a neighborhood, in the beginning every member in every story was happy and at peace with one another. In every story, either a corrupt friend, evil group of people, natural disaster or even politician came and either a) themselves disrupted the peace or b) convinced other people who were once peaceful to also help him disrupt the balance. After this corruption a chaotic state occurred, with a violent riot or argument that resulted in people losing lives, homes or love. This chaotic state was always followed by the people in the once peaceful state losing faith in the fact that peace is possible. The endings either remained in this state, or returned back to a peaceful state. The idea that time heals wounds naturally did not occur in any of the stories.

Every story where the chaotic state returned back to a peaceful state only returned that way when the members of the community took an active role in recognizing and removing the source of the evil corruption¹².

This exercise was very effective in better understanding the themes and ideas in the mind of the children. Since they were given the individual time to write, they each were able to express themselves and their ideas in whatever way that they wanted. The facilitators through reading their stories were able to determine the common themes previously discussed and identify children who were comfortable expressing themselves through writing. All activities that occurred after this one where children dealt with the theme of creativity and unity resulted in expressions that seemed clearer in thought and purpose. This exercise again demonstrated the power of spending personal creative development time, whether through writing or drawing. This personal time was invaluable for both the project and the children. Since the children wrote for over forty minutes, some created very complicated and well thought out storylines, while others created multiple ideas and characters. This time and the documentation of their creativity was helpful in the forming the storyline for All-in-One.

Music and Madness: Children's Experiments with Drama, Music and Action

All activities that included the dramatic interpretation of music were enjoyable by the children. Again there were a few who were more forthright with their ideas, but in these activities every child had ideas that they were willing to share.

D/M1 Market Place Music and Madness (See Appendix 3) was the first activity done

¹² It is from these common themes, of natural states and eternal disturbances, of the strength of a community taking action, and the power of friendship, that the base of the play "Unekta ma Ekta" was formed.

with the children that included music and creative acting. In the instructions, the children were left with the open ended situation and the two groups were asked to give the story an ending. Upon these instructions all of the children looked confused. They worked in their respective groups for ten minutes. When the time came to perform their 'creation' neither of the groups created an ending but rather acted out the story up until where they were assigned to create a new ending. Both groups had the given the beggar a line to speak, and thus ended the play. Thus to further push the children to think of an ending, one of the facilitators gave an example of how he would end the play. His ending included the initiation of a riot, and violence towards the beggar from an unidentified crowd. He finished his suggestion by saying that this was only a suggestion, but that the children could choose to end their play in anyway they desired¹³. After the facilitators suggestion, both of the groups created different endings. However, both groups included violence in their ending. In one group, the crowd of people who asked the beggar to what religion he belonged, violently accosted the beggar and left him imploring God as to why people would hurt him, and why people cared so much about religious differences when they caused so much violence and division. In the other ending, the beggar was approached by a crowd that asked him his religion. The crowd was getting ready to attack him, when a Christian man came up to the crowd and convinced the crowd to leave. The Christian man then spoke to the beggar and asked him to come with him to a church to hide from another crowd. The beggar refused to leave his spot on the ground. Next a Hindu, and then later a Muslim man came to ask the beggar to come with them to hide from the crowd. In both cases, the beggar refused. Finally the initial crowd came to attack the beggar and left him brutally hurt. The beggar once again implored God, and asks him why God did not give him the sense to go with one of the religions, so that he would not be harmed.

Although new storylines and enactments were created facilitator's suggestions, both of the new dramas were heavily influenced by the facilitators ideas. Both of the stories also had similar endings, with different ways of reaching the same point. It should also be noted that this activity was done with the intention of seeing how the children would deal with the question of religious identity, and whether the children would in some way desire to engage others in the play or themselves in dialogue about the importance of religious categorizations. Neither of these conversations resulted from this activity. However, it is interesting to note that the unmarked beggar, in both cases still implored God, but was just ignorant of what category he held.

The idea behind D/M2 *The Fat Lady Sings* (See Appendix 3) was similar to D/M1 with the exception that the story was not at all related to religion, but rather incidents that everyone experiences in everyday life. This activity was also an experiment with group dynamic. There was concern that the quieter children may be overpowered by the voices of more confident children who had had previous experience with drama and performance. Thus in the three groups designed for this activity, the quietest/shyest, most vocal/confident, and mediating/compromising children were placed in the same group. During this activity each were asked to not only create their own ending to the situation, but also act the situation out with the inclusion of song. This activity was greatly enjoyed by the kids and brought out a lot of unexpected creativity within them¹⁴. Since all of children were asked to brainstorm together, the

¹³ The facilitators' suggestion had a tremendous impact on all future dramatic exercises. See Facilitator's Influence in Analysis section for details.

¹⁴ Lots of negativity. Every idea that was brainstormed by the children as possible outcomes of a fat woman getting onto a bus played on the negative stereotypes that children had of fat people. Either the bus broke down, or the

individual groups had a pool of ideas to draw from and spark new thoughts on possible endings. In addition, since groups were divided along similar lines of comfort, the two groups that included the confident and mediating children were the very creative with their expressions. The most confident group sang a song on the bus, with a co-ed group of friends singing to one another. The Fat lady simply intervened in their singing conversation, saying that girls and boys should not be so open with each other in public spaces. The group of friends playfully told her to mind her own business. In the mediating group, the children all sat on the bus in one seat. The Fat lady came by and sat next to them. The lady had a number of bags with her and asked them each to hold the huge bags on their lap. They had a whispered conversation of singing to each other about how annoying it was to have her come onto their seat. However, they were polite and did not tell her to move. The shyest group did not have everyone participate in the acting. Many of the children were simply passengers on the bus that did not have any speaking roles. However, two of the children in this group sang songs. The bus driver and the fat lady passenger. They also incorporated various other sounds, like the think of the bus and the sitting of someone on a seat. This activity thus demonstrated that separating children into groups where they are on similar 'levels' does not always mean that the children will be more comfortable creating.

D/M3 *Bharata Humko [Our India]* (See Appendix 3) helped the children to think about expressing a song with which they were familiar, but had not created. Within this activity they were simply asked to express in a way that would represent the song. The two groups expressed the song in very similar manners. They each first created circles of gracefully swaying people around a unmoving person who represented of 'Mother India.' For the next segment of the song all of the participants in a circle moved gracefully into a different positions, and swayed in different fashions while each 'Mother India' continued to remain stagnant. It surprised me that both groups acted out the song in similar structures, especially because the facilitators had not previously worked with the children to choreograph songs. Since both groups practiced in the same space, the similarity between the interpretations may have resulted from watching the other group. In addition, the lyrics of the song itself consisted mostly of words that described love for the country. Perhaps the exposure to other dances or interpretations of patriotic music affected their similar interpretations.

D/M4 *Voh Ekta Hai [That is Ekta]* (See Appendix 3) was one of the final dramatic/musical activities in which the children participated. They were given the least amount of structure in this activity, however, they were the most creative in this activity. They were simply asked as an entire group to create a few songs that would be used within the play. By this point, the script had been relatively completed, and all of the children had spent a significant amount of time thinking about the idea of All-in-One. Thus, unlike the previous activities given to the children where they needed to have concrete instructions in order to result on coherent products, the children were able to create the solid based of 4 songs from this activity, that they could use in their play. There was very little facilitator input in this activity, and the children were not only able to create the lyrics but also the tune to the song that they were singing. It was a very successful activity, mainly because the children had spent a significant time thinking

woman fell, or people laughed at her. Many of the stories made in the future always contained a lot of violence. Follow up activities were done afterward to have the children think about positive things that could happen if a Fat lady got onto a bus. i.e. perhaps she sang a beautiful song, perhaps she gave sweets to everyone on the bus, perhaps she was a mother. This was important in helping create a healthy balance about the possibilities of positive thinking in creative.

about these ideas, and that their comfort and friendship with one another was very strong. As a result, they were all able to creatively collaborate to form multiple songs that will be used in the performance.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONS

Conscious Collaborative Creativity

Throughout the period that the children were developing storylines for their performance, as well as participating in the previously discussed activities, the facilitators noticed that not all children were actively participating or creating. The children also ranged in their active involvement in the creative process. The objective of All-in-One's performance was to give children a chance to think creatively and collectively. Collective brainstorming, decision making, compromising and execution of chosen ideas are highly affected by group dynamic. Looking back at the effectiveness of the previous creative activities, as well as observations of the children's participation in class and interaction with one another, the following factors have affected the collaboration of All-in-One: gender and age, comfort level and group dynamic, facilitator influence, religion and socioeconomic status. Each factor will be evaluated with references back to particular activities as well as explanations of relevant occurrences in class and background of the children. This information will help better explain how these factors affected the group's creativity. Suggestions of how to minimize the effect of these factors will also be explored.

Finally an explanation of the differences between working with individual creativity versus collaborative creativity will be explored. The best practices from the observations over the past ten months, analysis of the observations as well as the suggestions for better ways of helping creative collaborations to occur between groups of different people will also be presented.

Age and Gender

The age range of children within All-in-One, from fourteen to nineteen, was fairly large. The five year difference between these two ages demonstrates that the teenagers involved in All-in-One were at very different developmental stages. Their differences in ages suggest that they also have a wide range of life experiences, that all effect their outlook on life, unity and affinity to be creative. Their ages also affected their external responsibilities. For example, the older males were very conscious of their commitments to their jobs and responsibilities to generate revenue for their families while younger males were much more playful, constantly spoke about cricket and less serious about discipline outside of school. Over all the elder children were more creative and willing to work together with others. However, there were also a few younger children who were incredibly cooperative and creative as well. In all, I think that age factored in the least to the individual child's ability to be creative.

There are an even amount of girls and boys participating in this project. The eldest children participating in All-in-One were boys, and the youngest were girls. In India, boys tend to be far more confident and outspoken. Arguably this could symbolize that the males in the group would be more likely to be creative than the females. On the whole this was not true. The FD girls are incredibly creative, more so than many of the boys. Their ages

are generally sixteen. They were also very involved with challenging others ideas, making suggestions and expressing their opinions. The girls from MS were the shyest children in the performance. They were also the youngest. From the variety of activities that was done with all children, two of the three girls were the quietest and least creative of the group. This may be the result of their young age or socioeconomic background. However, since these girls had only attended all girl schools for their entire lives, it is likely that the reason why they were so shy was that they were in a co-ed setting for the first time outside of their family. One of the MS girls, on the other hand, was one of the most creative and confident. She had been previously involved with drama before and had significant family support in this project. The elder MS boys were the most confident and creative of the group. These were boys who had been a part of EKTA, and heavily involved with drama and dance at Manav Sadhna. Activities run by Manav Sadhna naturally builds confidence and creativity. The younger MS boys were much shyer and less creative. They were the poorest children in the group. Thus, the result of their socioeconomic status and lack of exposure may be why they were not as creative as the other boys. The FD boys were not as confident as the elder MS boys, but healthily contributed to the group in terms of their suggestions. They often had the most innovative ideas because they spent a lot of time listening and observing before they spoke. There were definite snide comments from both sides about gendered activities. For example, during a drama activity where the children were required to play with a ball, one of the girls repeatedly dropped the ball. One of the boys commented to her that she could not catch the ball because of her gender. A facilitator, upon hearing that comment, immediately stepped in and told the boy that his comment was untrue and unfounded. I think that the quick action of this facilitator mitigated the number of future incidents like this one from occurring. Surprisingly, the boys and girls never grouped together to only support their own gender or friends opinions. The level of maturity within all of the kids resulted in them each listening to and weighing opinions in their mind regardless of gender age or even previous friendships.

I think that gender initially played a large role in the children's ability to express their creative ideas. Even now, many of the children will automatically defer to the eldest MS boy, Bharat, for guidance and advice. I think Bharat emerging as a natural leader is more the result of his experience in EKTA, maturity and commitment to ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, rather than the fact that he is a male. In the context of All-in-One, individual personality regardless of gender played a greater role in ones ability to share with or be heard by the group, rather than gender or age.

For future suggestions, I would remind facilitators to be very careful about their own gender biases, and to give respect and attention to children of all ages and both genders. I would suggest that facilitators are vigilant about reminding children about their equal capacity to create and grow. Initial gendered stereotypes amongst the children will also diminish as they become closer friends and colleagues.

Comfort Level and Group Dynamic

The comfort of individuals with one another in a group setting also leads to an increase of confidence, personal expression, and thus the possibility of creativity. Initially, as discussed previously, the Manav Sadhna and F.D. Juhapura children had met separately for a period of two months. In addition to meeting with the children for the possibility of dealing with identity issues in a comfortable space, there was also a need to have the children within these groups

grow together. As discussed in the background, although all of the Hindu children worked in some capacity with Manav Sadhna, there was very little interaction between the kids. Although the Muslim children all attended F.D. school, they were in different grades, and classes did not intermingle very much. Thus there was a need for them to become comfortable together within their separate groups before joining each other. The longer that the children spent in their separate groups, the closer and more comfortable they grew with one another. It was particularly interesting to watch the children from Manav Sadhna which included both the shyest and most outspoken individuals. The shy children were very intimidated by the outspoken individuals. As they spent more time working together, the shy children became much more comfortable speaking up for themselves. This did not necessarily mean that they became more creative, but that they became more comfortable with each other.

Each of the children had bonded in their separate organizational groups before they met one another in the context of a complete All-in-One. As a result, it took a few meetings, as well as a sleep over to open the entire group up to being as comfortable as they could with one another. Over time, the shy children definitely became more comfortable sharing their ideas with one another. It was anticipated that as comfort increased, so would confidence and thus creativity. However, this was not the case with every child. After becoming more comfortable with the group and their role in their group, shy children seemed more at ease talking to others and trying out the ideas of others. However, in two cases the increased comfort did not encourage creativity in the shy children, but did encourage their participation and group morale. This indirectly affected the ability of the more creative children to be more confident in the group, test out new ideas and thus create more quickly.

In order to increase comfort levels within the group, multiple games where all of the children learned to enjoy one another's company was invaluable. Games that cause increased intermingling of the group, to build their comfort with those whom they are not used to is also helpful. The retreat at Sugad was the most significant event that increased the groups strength and comfort with one another. By spending a prolonged amount of time with one another, as well as sharing the same space and common activities, such as eating and taking showers, closely bonded the children together. I would strongly recommend that any future endeavor to bring people with different backgrounds together should include a retreat or camp where everyone is required to share the same space for as long as practical.

Facilitator Influence

The relationship between facilitator and her participants in this project was more similar to that of a teacher and her students. As a result, All-in-One constantly looked to the facilitators for answers rather than for suggestions. The D/M 1 (See Appendix 3) activity demonstrates the power of the facilitators suggestions. The suggestions that were given to help catalyze creativity in this exercise was for the most part incorporated and used by the children instead of sparking another creative thought. In general, throughout the project, if a facilitator made any suggestion, with lyrics or movements or possible developments of stories, these suggestions were almost always included. These observations demonstrate that facilitators, without meaning to, heavily influence, and may even direct the thoughts of the children.

This preference of the children to use the facilitators suggestions may have occurred for a few reasons. It is easier to perform a given action, than to think up of an action on your own. Thus the children were inclined to take the teachers suggestion so that they did not have to be

creative and think of their own ideas. This made finishing their task much faster, than if they needed to think of their own ideas. This tendency was counterproductive and conflicted with the purpose of the entire project, which is to encourage creativity and collaboration of those ideas among the children.

The dichotomy of a teacher-student relationship is that the teacher always has knowledge to impart upon the student. Thus the teacher implicitly has more experience to draw from and would thus do a 'better' job than a student who is still learning. In addition, guidance is also an important aspect of teaching. Students look to teachers to help them find the answers, which may not be that far off from where the teacher is guiding the students. This may be another reason why the children may have preferred using facilitator's suggestions. They may have just assumed that the facilitator's way is the best way, and thought that they would not be able to come up with a better solution. In addition children may also want to please the facilitator by using her suggestions. Although it was emphasized that the children's ideas were of utmost importance, and that the play would be built upon their ideas, perhaps the children were still caught in a sense of making the teacher happy, and thus choosing to always opt towards her opinions and suggestions.

Consequently, facilitators' suggestions may have hindered the children's creativity. Since the children were so eager to use the facilitators' suggestions, they often they did not try to think of their own ideas, even when further prompted. As a facilitator, it is necessary to provide adequate guidance to help the creative process. It was difficult to balance putting forth a suggestion, while knowing that it may be taken and used by the children in its entirety. Suggestions may instead implant themselves into the children's mind. Therefore it could be very easy for the facilitators to place their own ideas into the minds of the children.

A few suggestions had a long term effect on the group. After D/M1, every other new storyline creation by the children included a riot, or violence. It cannot be determined whether or not the children would have included the idea of violence in their stories before hand. It is possible that violence would still be involved in their interpretations since the news and recent history of Ahmedabad include riots. However, it is likely that the presence of it in the first few activities set a precedence for what was appreciated or thought up of by the teacher. How did the children

Since nurturing the children's creativity is the focus of this project, it was a struggle to determine how much to guide the children. The incorporation of facilitator's ideas into the children's ideas occurred so often that we could not be certain whether the ideas expressed by the children were their own, or a regurgitation of things facilitators had said or that the children thought we wanted them to say. We also noticed an interesting trend of children to create things that were tragically dramatic, negative or violent. During the brainstorming activity of D/M2 (See Appendix 3), the children only created negative things that could happen to the Fat Lady, such as her falling off of the bus, pushing people off of a seat, or the bus breaking down because of her weight. Even within the S4 (See Appendix 2), where children were writing their own individual stories that they thought would be good for the performance, all of the stories included violence or a heated disagreement. Many of the stories did not end happily. If there was a disturbance that ended in chaos, a resolution was rarely formed without someone being hurt, lonely or harmed. The facilitators were concerned that perhaps the way that they designed activities, or went about talking about the project set up in the minds of the children that negativity was a necessary part of the play. After evaluating our activities, we determined that verbally we did use a lot of examples of riots as showing a time when things would become

dramatic and naturally result in something more peaceful. I had caught myself a few times, using negative or dark examples. There was an exercise not described in the appendix, where one child went outside of the room and knocked on a closed door. The manner with which he knocked on the door suggested a story, suggested something about the person behind the door and their mission to get into the room. When explaining this example, someone loudly banged on the door. I suggested that perhaps someone was coming with important news, warning that there was a riot or disturbance and that we needed to leave the house immediately. It is very possible that the children were prompted to think along the lines of riots, violence and urgency as a result of my suggestion.

The actual collaboration of the children's ideas was done by the facilitators and a select group of six children. The facilitators and their mentors, which consisted of professional producers and leaders of the F.D. school, gave shape and structure to the children's various ideas. In this format the facilitators gave additional suggestions to help the children's ideas come across. Thus the exact example of the children may have not been used, but the idea behind it may have been used to better create the story. The six children, were not always able to see where their ideas were represented, and thus became upset that their ideas were not incorporated into the play. Facilitators took special care to help the children see where their ideas were incorporated and whether or not their original ideas had changed significantly while they were being used in the storyline. However, this concern in these children's mind raised my own awareness as to whether the storyline was truly being created by the children or by the facilitators, and how to make the children feel that they were more a part of the process of creating the final storyline.

In order to help prevent swaying the children's opinions when giving advice and suggestions, I would urge facilitators to use examples that are balanced. Use the example both negative and positive, violent and non violent ideas to prevent the children from thinking that you think a certain way. Once the children are aware that you have a certain tendency, it will affect the children and their ideas. Also keep the children, if only a small group, as involved as possible. If possible, give these children more responsibility, so that the children are in the position of creative control.

Religion

Facilitator influence played a large role in whether the idea of religion posed difficulties to the children's creative learning. The facilitators had designed the project so that it would bring two distinct groups together, and help them to create something together. This precondition, coupled with the fact that the MS children and FD children met separately for the first month, may have suggested the idea of difference to initially arise in their mind. Friendships were formed within the separate religious groups because they were meeting together in the beginning. These initial strong intra religious friendships were expanded after both groups met and spend a large amount of time together. In addition, the historical context of Hindus and Muslims in India, and political accusations of involvement with spurring communal riots in Ahmedabad, may have made the idea of a performance that consisted of a group of both Hindu and Muslim children automatically take on a certain expectation of the need to show Unity. Thus by merely having a group consisting of Hindu and Muslim children, even if the children are asked to perform a play about anything, there is a natural push to perform something on the theme of unity. As a result even in the beginning there were imaginary goal posts placed that

where children may have thought they needed to reach.

This tendency was recognized by the facilitators. However, it was not perceived by them as a hindrance to creativity until activities began with the children to think about what they wanted to perform. When the children were asked “What do you want the play to be about?” Quite often the children would just say “Hindu-Muslim Unity.” However, brainstorming how to show that unity was very challenging for them, as well as for us. The barrier seemed to be the endpoint of knowing that all religions should be living together, but that no one knew how to get there. A problem was identified but no plan of attack was known¹⁵.

There were very conscious efforts by all of the facilitators to never refer to the children as Hindu and Muslim, but rather Manav Sadhna and F.D. Juhapura children. Although the main difference between these two groups was religion, saying the religious categories may have further pushed the children apart, and suggested that religion was their sole identifying factor. Care was taken by the facilitators to referring to children from their separate organizations, instead of religions. Care was taken to also refer to the entire group as “All-in-One,” a name that they themselves had created together. I noticed that the children would refer to themselves as Manav Sadhna, FD and All-in-One, when calling out to particular groups. I think that this naming strategy was tremendously helpful for the children to see and hear beyond the typical categories. I think that the effect of them using these name tags has also helped them to view each other as integral parts of a whole that are not attached to religious affiliation. Continuous work with the children together, as well as having the entire group name itself was also helpful for diminishing the differences between the two groups on the level of religion.

Another way in which the facilitators affected the way that religion could have been barrier, was by choosing not to directly tackle the idea of communal harmony. There are two ways of looking at doing development work that deals with uniting people. One is to see the differences in people, recognize the problems that have existed between them, and set out to on tasks to help bring people together to solve the problem¹⁶.

A different way to look at unity work, is to simply see the need to bring people together. Whether or not there are problems or misunderstanding between the two is an issue that does not need to address. Instead, people from different backgrounds need to become friends, need to see one another as an individual that they care about and can learn from¹⁷. Only then can stereotypes and ideas be challenged within individuals mind. According to this method, to even call something ‘Communal Harmony’ is to further widen the gap between two groups of people, and would prevent natural bonding from occurring.

The approach used to deal with religious difference and identity in All-in-One was a combination of the two identified approaches. Although the children were separated in the beginning with the intent that they would be engaged in discussions about identity and religion, results of activities with the children suggested that the children had already thought about there differences. Facilitators were concerned that he children’s own emphasis on these religious differences would prevent them from seeing the things that brought them together as children, students, Gujaratis and Indians. As are result, the intended discussions on identity and religion were not done with the children. There are still plans for discussions on identity and religion

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that during creativity exercises it was easier for the children to think of things that would push people apart than bring them together.

¹⁶ Seeds of Peace- American based program for bringing together select members from communities in violent opposition together.

¹⁷ SPRAT- Society for the Promotion of Rational Thinking

while the performance is being perfected in order to have the children think about the beauty of their differences and similarities. So in this sense, work with the children has happened only in the context of creating a performance together, rather than the context of working toward communal harmony. However, it is a strong possibility that the children will become messengers of communal harmony, simply by the virtue that they are working on this project, and will be asked questions by an audience afterward about that their experiences. Discussions about communal harmony will therefore have to be done in order for the children to think about why this project is important to them or even other people within India.

Perhaps our decision to not include religious discussions hindered the children's creativity. All-in-One was not pushed to think about their individual religion, and what it means to them, or learn about the other religion and what it means to them. By not exploring their own religion or identity, perhaps they were not able to explore within their own mind where unity was lacking. As shown S2 (See Appendix 2), when children are given a chance to personally think about an idea, they are more likely to participate and share their thoughts. Individual thinking time thus makes collaboration much more efficient and effective. Since our children did not have individual thinking time on the idea of their own personal identity, it may have made it difficult for kids to think about what needs to be done about unity, since they had not had the chance to truly explore unity, diversity or identity in within their own context of experiences. This fact may also have resulted in children not thinking as creatively as they could have in terms of finding solutions or expression of religious unity because they were not given the chance to explore one another's culture and differences in a structured way. Perhaps exploring each others differences through a guided discussion would have helped the children to hear resonance between their two cultures despite their differences.

The choice to not focus on the children's individual ideas of identity, was not an attempt to ignore their differences. The facilitators of the project do not think that it is necessary to ignore differences in order to find similarities. The flexible schedule and need to create a performance, however, was such that adequate time was not allotted for this personal exploration. The children themselves, as demonstrated by their name, understand the value of including the "creativity of difference" where people of different backgrounds exist together in peace and beauty. As previously stated, the children will have the opportunity to discuss their ideas of identity, nationality and religion some point before their first performance. Hopefully the thoughts and experiences shared from that discussion will allow stronger creative collaborations in the future

While trying to better understand this project and its repercussions, many colleagues doubted whether it was necessary to include both Hindu and Muslim children. There is clear evidence that the notorious Ahmedabad riots of 2002 and quite possibly the riots before hand were the result of political initiations¹⁸. However, whether or not politics are involved, whether or not Hindus and Muslims live peacefully together, it is a reality that in many homes there is a distinction between these two religions. Each religious group has been stereotyped negatively by the other. Many of the children themselves have had something negatively said to them about their religion, or even joked themselves about things that 'only a Muslim' would do, or 'only a Hindu values.' There is great diversity within each of the religions that merely exist in Ahmedabad. You will find Hindus who eat meat, and Muslims who are vegetarians. In many ways this project is not to show a riot affected Ahmedabad that it needs to look beyond the riots, or that Hindus and Muslims can work together. Rather, the project is to show Ahmedabad, or

¹⁸ Kamdar, M. (2002) The Struggle for India's Soul. World Policy Journal.109(3) pp

even India, that essentially we are all the same. If the children of Ahmedabad can see this and share it with other children, it will help Ahmedabad to grow together in a more harmonious way, that sees and understands the stereotypes to be hurtful and untrue.

Thus the mere inclusion of Hindu and Muslim children, in some ways the forcing of these two groups of children to exist together, suggests that it does not happen that often, and that perhaps there is a problem that needs to be solved. This inference may have been made by the children and thus resulted in similar storylines and themes that were created in S4 (See Appendix 2). However the name that the children chose for themselves suggests that they do not see religion as a barrier, and instead as diversity that enhances India.

For further suggestions, I would clearly think about the possible repercussions of discussing religion, identity, and other pertinent issues. Clearly plan out the activities that will occur and the vision that you hope to achieve with the group to determine whether or not is important for children to think individually about the issues. Evaluate the proper timing for the discussions and think about how they will effect the group and its creativity after the fact to come forward with solutions or more creative ideas.

Socioeconomic Status and Education

The socioeconomic status varied greatly among the children. Most of the children from F.D Juhapura came from well-to-do families of police officers, advocates and physicians. The Manav Sadhna children were more varied in backgrounds, ranging from children who lived in one roomed homes in the urban slum to children who lived in three tiered houses in villages four hours away from Ahmedabad. Thus the dress of the children varied greatly. Some Manav Sadhna children wore the same two pairs of clothing for every meeting. Many of the F.D. Juhapura children wore new clothes every day. Initially, especially amongst the Manav Sadhna girls, there was a feeling of inferiority. As teenage girls, they were very image conscious, and felt that they “looked poor.” However, as the children grew closer and became friends, it seemed as if the physical expressions of their socioeconomic difference did not have an affect on the children or their creativity.

On the other hand, educational opportunity, which is directly related to socioeconomic status, did affect the children’s ability to be creative. All of the F.D. children were excelling in school, and had opportunities to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities including dance, music and sports. All of their parents were supportive of school, and it was expected that all of the FD children, girls included, would attend college.

The Manav Sadhna children were more varied in educational backgrounds. The girls were the only ones in a full time school, however they were in an all girls hostel that consisted of Harijan young women. None of the mothers of these girls had gone to school beyond 7th standard. It was likely that these girls would not attend college after high school. As a result these girls had a lot of difficulty interacting with and being creative with boys. Their discomfort with them was eased after spending more time with the boys and becoming their friends. The boys were not as committed to school. Two are retaking their 10th and 11th standard exams, debating whether to leave school, and working for money to support their families and themselves. Despite this, many of the older boys from Manav Sadhna were incredibly talented and creative. This may be the result of the emotional support and exposure that Manav Sadhna had given to these children from a young age. The younger boys at Manav Sadhna who live in the slum and are teachers at Manav Sadhna’s community center, were the least creative. This

may be the result of the style of education that they had been exposed to as students in the Tekro.

Thus socioeconomic status did play an indirect role in individuals ability to be creative. The more exposed children, which mainly meant educated, were the most creative. The exposure of children to coed and intercultural activities, which was also linked to educational levels, also resulted in the varying levels of creativity and experimenting with collaboration.

Regardless of whether these two very different socioeconomic status of children mingling enhanced their creativity, their interactions definitely broadened their perspectives. Each FD and MS groups were very aware that they were both from very different economic backgrounds. During one activity where the facilitators were trying to determine the themes that All-in-One were interested in portraying in their performance, a number of FD children mentioned that poverty, and showing compassion to the poor was essential to the play. Perhaps the FD children had thought about these issues previously, however, it is likely that they had never befriended anyone who was 'poor' before. They now have experienced more of the lives of children who were poor, and after becoming friends with them, have shown their own growing compassion and concern for those less fortunate than they. This small example demonstrates the power of these children working together. It suggests that even if barriers of socioeconomic status exist, children by working together see beyond the barriers and can care for one another. The bonds that they build stand stronger than the stereotypes that they were brought up to believe. As a result, there is more reason to increase the exposure of people who are from different backgrounds to one another. At least on an individual level, these children will have the opportunity to care for someone regardless of where they initially came from.

Individual Confidence

One of the greatest factors in the collaborative creation of All-in-One was the diverse confidence levels of children in the group. All-in-One included children from a wide range of experiences, that include young non-formal teachers in the Tekre, high school students who regularly participated in dramatic performances, students who attended all girl schools for their entire lives and had never participated in dramatic activities, and teens who had been professionally trained in dance and drama and had performed abroad in America. In addition, the children are of various ages ranging from 15 to 19. This wide range of experience and maturity, has resulted in the All-in-One's heterogeneous composition of confidence levels. With dance and music, as well as range of exposure to artistic performances, resulted in various levels of confidence. Levels of confidence is directly related to how open a child is with sharing her ideas with a group, and or risking to entertain and share unconventional ideas. In addition, confidence levels are linked to the emersion of 'natural' leaders*. In a group setting, the more confident children would always emerge as the person chosen to represent an idea, or run the group, and in most cases, impose their own ideas. For example, in D/M 3, the more confident children more quickly stated the moves that they thought would be a good idea to perform. As a result, in both groups one choreographer emerged that directed the others. There was little sharing of ideas, and mainly one person expressing her ideas and the others quickly learning the steps rather than question whether those were the most creative or enjoyable to perform. As a result the creative ideas of more confident children were more readily heard and accepted by children, since the confident children were more assertive and convincing with their own ideas. Since the group made decisions for themselves, the more confident children who expressed their creativity were the most dominant creative ideas.

Without question, the children who had had previous experience with performance, in particular the children who had previous professional training were the more confident and forthright with their ideas. However, not all children were confidently creative in the same areas. Most of the ‘natural leaders’ were creative with drama. Interestingly, many of the children who were creative with music, were not the most confident or verbal. Since good listening skills is crucial to musical development, perhaps the shyer children spend more time listening, and thus are more likely to think creatively musically. In D/M4 (See Appendix 3), some of the quieter children had refreshing ideas for lyrics and tunes that could be used in the song. They were more confident at this point to express their ideas because these children were a) more interested in creating music and b) they had spent a lot more time with one another.

In some ways, the variety of levels of confidence has hindered the group’s creative progress. Since some children were very shy, they contributed less to discussion. Their lack of participation at times gave more confident and creative children an excuse to not participate. ‘If she does not need to speak, then why should I?’ In addition, when exercises, such as S3 occurred, where the progression of a story was dependent upon everyone’s participation and ideas, the less creative children would make additions that either a) did not help the story progress or b) was tangential and difficult to follow forward. Thus in the case of a group working towards a common creative goal, it would have been more efficient and beneficial if all members of the group were on similar levels of confidence. However, level of confidence is difficult to judge when auditioning children since an individual’s confidence is greatly affected by group dynamic.

On the other hand, the children who were very shy have greatly increased their confidence throughout the process of this project. Some still do not contribute creatively, but are much more confident about interacting with others in the group and sharing their opinion. There are some other shy children who now express their creativity much more freely, as well have increased their confidence.

Difficulties with Developing Creativity

Individual Creativity verses Collaborations

The question of “Is it possible to develop creativity?” was not addressed in this project. It was assumed that all children were creative, and that their creativity would expand if it were nurtured and given a reason to grow. This assumption may or may not be true. There were two children in the group who made no creative contributions to the group. Whether in terms of music, drama or storyline creation, they would participate but not create. Perhaps it is the result of them not developing their creativity as children, or not being interested in the idea of creativity, or not being comfortable enough with the group to share their creative ideas. Perhaps they felt that they were not being heard, or that they were being overpowered by other children. Whatever the reason, the presence of these two individuals reminded the facilitators that all of the children were coming into the project with different levels of creative ideas and ability to express them. The project tried to work on increasing individual levels of creativity, but the focus was more on using already creative children to collaborate together to for a common idea that would be used by them all. The project may have been more effective if all children were individually on a more similar level of creative development.

The methods used to increase individual creative development is different than that of collaborating different children’s creative efforts. However the former needed to be done to

improve the latter's results. As a facilitator, I wondered about whether there was a particular method that could be used to bring about both individual and collaborative creativity. Time of course, is the ultimate factor. Adequate time spent on developing the children's ideas individually as well as time spent to help them share collectively is the best way to ensure growth on both levels. However attention should be spent on individuals to push their thoughts and ideas to other levels that the child may not have considered. Collaborative efforts in creativity, unlike individual efforts are also dependent on the interactions of the kids themselves. The facilitators spent a lot of time initially balancing different children's suggestions. We would often ask some children to wait, while asking those who had not spoken to share their opinions. This prevented some children from sharing all of their ideas, as well placed shy children in a position where they felt that they were on the spot, especially if they did not have any ideas to share. I am still not certain whether it was the best practice to in some ways force children to share their ideas. However, in those individuals who were initially not willing to share their ideas and were pushed, the confidence of these children increased tremendously towards the latter part of All-in-One's interactions.

Another difficulty of encouraging creative learning is that the implementation of concrete methods to spur creativity may impede upon the creative process itself. Sometimes the mere set up of a situation or an exercise to "bring out" the creativity in children may hinder the mind's natural tendencies to be creative. I struggled with finding activities that guided the children too much versus being too abstract. In addition, the cultural differences between America and India may lead to difficulties in determining how to best go about developing creativity. It is likely that the American and Indian ways of thinking, organizing and creating are very different. Therefore I too have learned how to be creative throughout this project. By working with fellow facilitators, I too partook in creative collaboration. The creative learning that took place on both the part of the children and myself were both experiments in fostering creative growth.

CONCLUSIONS

Best Practices of Collaborative Creativity

Future recommendations for working with children and collaborative creativity is as follows. Create a safe, comfortable environment by first working with the children on non creative activities such as ice breakers or other long term projects. This will encourage a group dynamic is welcoming to all children and their ideas. Explain to the children that the process of creation is more important than what is created. Assure them that any and everything that they create will be beautiful. Reassure them that they will not be judged or penalized for anything that they create.

Have clear instructions prepared and explained to the children. Always give children personal time to process and write down their own personal ideas on a particular assignment. This will ensure that all children will have thoughts to share in a group setting, and that they have ideas recorded that are entirely their own and not influenced by others. If you are working with a large group, try working with small groups of six or less since it is easier to share, listen and discuss in smaller groups than in larger groups. Randomly assigning groups by counting off may work better than preplanned groups. Preplanned groups may cause children to wonder why

they are placed with particular groups versus others. However, be aware of particular aspects that may make group dynamic tense and not conducive to creating, such as internal friendships and affiliations, or personal disputes. Have a method for sharing and collaboration as a part of the exercise, such as giving the instructions of first asking every child to read their written ideas, and then discuss in the small group which ideas they liked and did not like and why. When it comes to collaborating, remind the children that sharing and compromising can only occur when everyone listens to and respects one another.

Consider the idea of having a retreat, so that people of different communities can spend time not only doing activities that are related to the project, but also bonding and sharing in common experiences. All-in-One found the retreat as necessarily helpful for building trust and confidence in group. If you are working with two or more separate groups of people do not work with them separately unless there is a concrete reason and executed goal for doing so. It is more effective to have the participants work together from the very beginning once participants are identified. Early interaction of the designated groups will speed up the process of friendship trust and allow for them to begin questioning themselves concerning the ideas of diversity and similarity at an earlier stage. Try to promote as much intermingling as possible to encourage mutual sharing and learning.

All-in-One's effectiveness in producing a single creative collaboration is difficult to determine. I think that these the effectiveness of the collaboration is also difficult to evaluate because there was a lot of facilitator involvement since the children were new to creative storytelling, and since there was an end product with the specific goal of demonstrating Unity. All of the children had the opportunity to contribute to the storyline, the expected product, of the collaboration. However, when it came to the final shaping of a single storyline, a lot of work needed to be done to bring together the many disparate ideas that the children presented. As with S4 (See Appendix), a lot of work had to be done to converge the ideas. Thus for the sake of time and inability to make everyone happy with the final result, the facilitators and the six selected children took on the role of finally collaborating and solidifying the story. The end product, as a result, does not exactly sound like the stories described by the children. However the base ideas, of showing compassion to the poor, of demonstrating that all religions can live together, or showing the strength of friendship, of overcoming the barriers that exist through love and seeing good within everyone, were all from the children themselves. If time permitted, all of the children would have been involved in the collaboration of their stories. Since six of these children also worked intensely with us to complete the story line, All-in-One was effective in giving some children who were capable and interested the opportunity an ability to collaborate their creations.

The All-in-One project is thus a case study of an attempt at both collaborative creativity and diversity integration. The collaboration itself is a symbol of unity. The children of these two different religious groups working together, creating together, and compromising with each other demonstrate that harmony, positive interactions and cooperation can and do exist. Despite the many barriers and walls that have been placed between them, they have made a safe and comfortable space where they have learned from and taught each other the value of collaborative creativity.

Appendix I

Activities

All of the activities below were conducted with the specific purpose of helping children build a skills that would be useful in furthering their creativity. Some activities, as indicated in the background were conducted to address a specific problem or issue that needed to be addressed. These are not all of the activities worked upon during the course of All-in-One, but simply a sample of activities that varied in their effectiveness to bring out creativity.

MUSIC

M1- Thu Thu Thanna

Background:

Children had done a lot of drama exercises, but did not have the chance to work with music in a creative or expressive way.

Objective:

To help children develop their musically creative skills by changing the melody or rhythm of a small excerpt of music.

Activity:

Children were given a 2 measure melody “Thu Thu Thanna,” and asked to sing the melody in different ways and/or expand the melody if they choose. This set tune was familiar to the children in the context of D/M 2. The children, in previous exercises, learned ways in which they could vary the melody using different tones, tunes, rhythms and syncopations. Children were divided into 2 groups by counting off. They were told to sing the set Thu Thu Thanna melody in three different ways.

Variations:

Instead of altering the tune or rhythm of the 2 measure melody, add a word to the melody. Create 2 lines that in the situation can be sung in the context of D/M2.

M2- Jam on Toast¹⁹ with Variations

Background:

Saw the need to help children to create their own music. Saw the need in the play to recreate sounds that were familiar to create the background music.

Objective: To help children become comfortable with the creative abilities of their voice. To help children learn the importance of listening to one another.

Activity:

Have the group sit in a circle on the ground. Have them each close their eyes. Give them a particular situation, location, or instructions to simply make a noise. They cannot make a noise until they are tapped on the head by you. They must continue this sound, until they are again tapped on the head by you as a signal to stop.

Situations:

¹⁹ This activity was suggested by Reshma Sapre, a volunteer at Indicorps. Reshma has had tremendous creative experience as a spoken word artist and singer. She is currently a social worker with underprivileged youth in Brooklyn New York

- A: Market place
- B: School
- C: Manav Sadhna
- D: Religious place of worship
- E: Busy Street
- F: Make your own Music. Listen to the voices of the others, and make any sound that you think will fit the other sounds currently being made.

During this version, ask one child to begin by making a constant rhythm. All of the children following her do not need to make rhythmic sounds, but need to keep the rhythm in their mind. If the children listen to each other well, their own music composition will result from their improvisations.

M3 -Esa Desh Hai Mera (This is my Country)

Background:

Need to have the children create their own songs to be used in the play.

Objective:

To create a new song with different lyrics from a set song and tune.

Activity:

Children were asked to memorize the words to a popular patriotic Bollywood song. They were given the homework of changing the words to one stanza of the song. They were then placed into groups to share what their new words were to the song and to collaborate to create a new stanza.

Appendix II

Activities

All of the activities below were conducted with the specific purpose of helping children build a skills that would be useful in furthering their creativity. Some activities, as indicated in the background were conducted to address a specific problem or issue that needed to be addressed. These are not all of the activities worked upon during the course of All-in-One, but simply a sample of activities that varied in their effectiveness to bring out creativity.

STORY CREATION

S1-What's the Story?-Workshop on Theme

Background:

A first activity to try to have children work together to create their own ideas for what their play would be about.

Objective:

To determine how children work in a small group setting. To have the children brainstorm ideas for what they want their play to be about.

Activity:

Break the children up into a groups²⁰. Give them three focuses, of time, location, character development. Have them think about writing a story for the their performance, but ask them to emphasis the focus that they were presented with. Give them 10 minutes to work together and then ask them to present their story to the group.

S2 -What's the Story?-Workshop with Photo²¹

Background:

Experiences from previous activities, demonstrated that children had difficulties 1) thinking about ideas for a story 2)creating cohesive stories and 3) working collaboratively in a group setting.

Objectives:

To provide children with a specific catalyst for creative thinking.

To provide children time to be individually creative.

To encourage children to share their ideas, work collaboratively, and present their creative ideas collectively.

Activity:

Have all of the children sit in a circle with a piece of paper. Randomly distribute a set of three pictures. Each child receives a different picture. They are each prompted to write a story that is inspired by the picture that they receive. The children are give 5-10 minutes to write their own story in silence. After wards, place all of the children with the same pictures together in the same group²². Have them work together to create a drama

²⁰ The groups were divided to include four members each. In each group there was one shy child, one talkative child and two more balanced children.

²¹ This exercise was created as a reaction to the results of S1

²² The kids were randomly divided into groups by counting off into threes and being given their photos in the same

performance of the story that they perceive is the best.

S3 -Around the Campfire: Storytelling in a Circle with Variations²³

Background:

Facilitators were concerned that they were offering too many suggestions for storylines and hindering the children's creative control over the story.

Objective:

To have all children participate in the creation of an impromptu story that deals with the themes of Unity that were discussed previously.

Activity:

Children all sat in a circle facing inward. The children were given a particular situation, or starting point in the story. Each child was then asked to add a few lines to the story. The starting situations that were given included:

- 1) A few friends are in a jungle....
- 2) A boy and his family walk into a potential bride's home.....
- 3) People come to a well to get water...
- 4) Two brothers who are fighting...

Variations on Activity:

After a situation was given, each child in the circle was asked a different follow up question to further push their thinking and creativity with the situation. Individual answers were given in front of everyone in the circle so that all children could hear the responses and possibly spark creativity. An example of questions asked from the first scenario were:

- 1) What are the names of the characters?
- 2) Why did they go into the jungle?
- 3) What did they see there?
- 4) Did they meet anyone interesting?
- 5) What did they feel when they were in the jungle? Why?
- 6) For how long were they in the jungle?
- 7) Did they come out of the jungle?
- 8) How old were the friends?

After the children in a group were asked these questions, they were again given the scenario and asked to go around in a circle and further develop the story by their own addition of a few lines.

S4: What's Your Story? Creating the Storyline of All-in-One²⁴

Background:

Children were having difficulty thinking about the stories that they wanted to perform. Allotting individual thinking time seemed effective for children generating their own ideas to ensure equal contribution.

order.

²³ Creative results from this activity were used to form the collaborative storylines for All-in-One's musical drama.

²⁴ same as footnote 23.

Objective:

To let children think about and record their own ideas for stories that they want in their play. To determine if there are any common themes or ideas that all of the children have so that they can be incorporated into the musical.

Activity:

Ask each child to sit at a table with blank paper and pens. Ask them to write a story, any story, that they think would be good for performance in their play. Have them write for 30 minutes. There are no word limits or maximum. They are required, however to write for at least 30 minutes.

Appendix III

Activities

All of the activities below were conducted with the specific purpose of helping children build a skills that would be useful in furthering their creativity. Some activities, as indicated in the background were conducted to address a specific problem or issue that needed to be addressed. These are not all of the activities worked upon during the course of All-in-One, but simply a sample of activities that varied in their effectiveness to bring out creativity.

DRAMA, MUSIC AND ACTION

D/M 1- Market Place Music and Madness

Background:

Help children to create the endings of stories and become comfortable with incorporating music.

Objectives:

To let children create their own endings to a set story, and to help children incorporate music into their performance

Activity:

The group is given the following situation: There is a beggar singing “Thu Thu Thanna” in a market place. He sees that there is a disturbance going on. He is not concerned. He continues asking anyone who comes his way for money for food. An crowd of people come up to him and ask him his religion. The beggar says that he does not know. What happens next? The group is divided into two and is asked to create two different ends to the story and to act it out. The children were later asked to take the tune of ‘Thu Thu Thana’ and create variations/extensions and lyrics so that it could be sung in the context of the play.

D/M 2- The Fat Lady Sings

Background:

Children to explore the various possibilities of storytelling and drama creating even if the beginning is the same.

Objective:

Have the children work together to brainstorm possible endings to the following situation in a large group.

Activity:

Describe the following situation to a group of children:

You are sitting in the back of a crowded bus. You notice that a fat woman is trying to get onto the bus. Ask the entire group these questions and brainstorm answers. ‘What are the possible situations that could occur? How could you express these situations musically?’ Divide the group²⁵ into three groups and challenge them to create a drama of what happens on the bus, and to use music in their drama.

²⁵ The groups were divided such that all of the more talkative and overtly ‘creative’ children were in one group, the shyest and quietest were in another, and the mediating, balanced children were in the final group.

D/M 3- Bharata Humko(Our India)**Background:**

The children were all asked to learn the Bollywood song 'Bharat Humko Jaanse Pyara Hai.' If the children were to use this song, or any other, they must find a way to express it with action on stage.

Objective:

To help children to learn how to incorporate action and dance into their music.

Activity:

After memorizing 'Bharata Humko,' the children were divided into two random groups to create a dramatic interpretation of the song. Each group was given 10 minutes to plan their performance. While the 1st group performs their interpretation, the 2nd group sings with them. Vice Versa to ensure that all are participating all of the time.

D/M4- Voh Ekta Hai (That is Ekta)**Background:**

Needed to create music that captured the children's voices. Children previously had a lot of difficulty creating music.

Objective:

To create a song that will be used in the performance together.

To have the children create their own interpretation through dance or drama that the children will use.

Activity:

Divide the children into two groups²⁶. Have them reiterate the themes, and ideas about Unity in India that have been previously discussed. Have them think of a song, or tune, or words that they will want to use to make a song. Make certain that the two groups are separated and cannot hear what the other group is saying. Leave the room to ensure as little influence as possible in their creative process. After all children have memorized the lyrics and are able to sing the song, have the children work together to create their own interpretation of the song as in D/M3.

²⁶ The two groups were divided by gender. They were encouraged to think of moves that they would perform in their separate gendered groups, as well as think about what they would do together.