# Creating a Network of Educational Centers Serving the Poor in Delhi

Matthew Norton

Azusa Pacific University

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TUL675 Research Project

MA in Transformational Urban Leadership

## **Acknowledgements**

## **Abstract**

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# Chapter I

## Introduction

What community problem or issue are you interested in? How did you decide to investigate it? What do you *already know* about it? How does this relate to the MATUL? You may begin with a gripping story to lay out the scenario or a question to capture interest. Write to make the reader enjoy.

I often pass young boys and girls with big sacks slung over their shoulders being held up by a strap on their forehead. These children should be in school learning, playing and enjoying life. However, various circumstances in their lives have led them to dig through the trash of those who have more. They find items to recycle for a little money, which feed them and their family, if they have one.

These are the kind of children that many of the Christian schools and tuition centers among the poor seek to educate. They know the heart of God is one of compassion and love for his whole creation, and they demonstrate that love by offering free or affordable education to these children. These schools often start out of the simple yearning to love these children. Often the teachers are not trained and they do not have great facilities, but they have great love.

The schools open their doors to these children and teach them to clean themselves, to cut their nails, to read and write and to know of the Jesus that inspires their teachers. These schools operate by the grace of God, and meet the overwhelming needs of those around them.

As I talked to different people about education in India and went around to different schools, tuition centers and organizations to meet with teachers, administrators or others connected to educational centers among the poor I heard a recurring theme; centers lack well trained teachers, resources and legitimacy with the government. On top of that they were often isolated from other similar type centers even in their community. Then, on one of my visits with a foreign Christian worker, after talking some time about slum schools and often about the struggles they have, he mentioned the possibility of a Christian slum school network. He said it could possibly offer *training, resources and legitimacy* for the schools. Over time, he said, it could grow into a more official association, which could help them even more. I liked the idea, as it seemed to be a way to help ease many of the current problems in Christian slum schools.

### Variables

The independent variables in the study are the goals, values, history, and leadership of the different educational centers participating in the study. The dependent variables will be motivation, pathways, shared values and objectives that determine the network development process.

### Research Question

What are the critical factors needed to encourage Delhi’s Christian educational centers to form a mutually beneficial network?

### Action Reflection theological framework

In Genesis 1 we learn that God created everything with his word, and that included humans. I could imagine that the creation of the world was a big task, which the triune God did in community. We see in Genesis 1:26 it says, “Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness”. The father, Son and Holy Spirit worked together to create all that is around us. In the same way God calls us to work together with the body of Christ to do God’s work as we see in 1 Corinthians 12: 12. It says, “just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ”. Thus, the body of Christ needs to work together. This covers all aspects of life including Christian education. Thus, the idea of creating a network that has a vision and goals bigger than the visions and goals of individual schools is at the heart of God for his church.

### Assumptions/Presuppositions

I am coming into this study assuming that the Christian slum schools are not running at their full potential and could improve with the help of other schools. I also assume that the schools want to improve their school for the benefit to the kids and the community.

### Population and Locations

I will gather information from teachers and administrators in the Christian schools and tuition centers of serving poor students. The people I will work with will all be English speakers. I plan to meet with teachers and administrators at the school. If I don’t gather all my data by mid-May, however, I will have to meet them somewhere else because it will be their summer break. If I have to meet them individually then I will meet them at a coffee shop or some place in public. I will conduct a focus group around the needs and desires of educational centers, which will focus on how a network could address those needs and desires. We will meet at Transerve’s meeting space in Lajpat Nagar, the organization hosting my research.

I have been traveling around the city meeting leaders getting contacts at slum schools. I have then contacted the principals of those schools and visited them. They have thus far all been very happy for me to visit. I am still in the process of building relationships and sharing with them the vision for a network of Christian educational centers among the poor.

### Context

(end with what will come in the following sections)

Contributions:

This study will provide in depth case studies of schools and tuition centers serving the poor in Delhi, India. It will also explore the needs, desires and hopes of schools as they relate to improving the school and starting a mutually beneficial educational network.

Gaps:

There has not been much research from the grassroots on what schools would want in a network. I will provide that in the Delhi context.

Limitations:

There are a limited number of schools I am working with, and many of them I have found through the help of western contacts. That may mean my sample is not representative, but in each school they are run by Indians and any western contact is only a supporting role.

### Methodology

Theoretical framework

Action reflection research-transformational conversations

Action then reflection

Incarnational living

Interning at Good Samaritan

### Research Methods

School case studies:

I will use case studies of the different schools to give an insight into the schools founding, current status, goals, vision and mission and how that shapes the way in which they perceive an educational network.

### Research Processes

Finding Contacts:

Before I started the research I knew of a few schools and tuition centers serving the poor, but I needed to seek out the majority of them. I did this by using the contacts I had in the education sphere to point to others they knew running schools, volunteering at schools or connected to a school or tuition center of some sort.

Contacting Schools:

Those who shared their contacts would often offer a phone number, e-mail address or the schools address. I would then follow up with those educational centers and reference the person who gave me their information.

Visiting Schools:

Once I contacted schools they would often happily welcome me to visit. They often showed me around the school where I was cheerfully greeted by the students with a hearty, “Good morning, sir!”. After seeing the school, the principal and/or a head teacher would offer chai or soda and we would start to talk. I would share with them that I am a student working on a final project that focuses on connecting with Christian educational centers serving the poor. I would explain the project in depth and then field any questions they had. At the end I would ask if they would like to participate in the study, and I would say that they did not have to if they did not want to. I then told them to think about it and get back to me in the following days.

Interviewing Schools:

The second meeting will again be at the school and consist of a semi-structured interview to gain more details about the school and learn about their thoughts for a network.

Conducting the Focus Group:

The third interaction will be at the Transerve office in Lajpat Nagar. All the administrators will come together to take part in a focus group. The discussion will focus on the needs and desires of the educational centers and how a network can meet some of those needs.

## Validity

## Research Guide-NONE

## Purpose of Research

This research got its beginning when the needs of many local slum schools and tuition centers kept coming up. The schools and tuition centers had teachers but many had little training. The schools started as ministries to the community and over the years grew, but many of the schools have plateaued and have few other resources or connections with schools throughout the city. They are often quite isolated within their locality doing the best they can with the little they have. Then one day a man connected with one of these schools said it would be nice if there were a network of slum educational centers in Delhi. He said it could be mutually beneficial for all involved as they shared stories, challenges and advice. There could be trainings and conferences that would help the teachers and administrators to do their jobs more effectively. I went around to some of the schools I knew and shared the idea. Everyone agreed a network could bring great benefits. This is thus an exploratory study that seeks to gain a better understanding of what the educational centers in Delhi would like to see in a network and what are the critical factors in moving the idea forward into reality.

## Ethical Issues

### Relationships with Informants

Before starting this research I have interacted with several of the teachers and administrators from some of the schools and tuition centers I will be working with. The majority, however, I met through the exploratory research, and thus did not know them before my first meeting to introduce the research to them. In both cases, there is an unequal power relationship, given that I am a white, male foreigner, and the administrators and teachers may feel compelled to participate in the research because of those reasons. A counter balancing to this unequal power relationship is the fact that I have lived in a poor community my whole time in India and have become conversationally competent in Hindi and quite familiar with many aspects of Indian culture. Thus, this minimizes the difference in the power relationship to levels suitable for conducting research among these educational centers.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

The interviews were conducted in a private, secure and comfortable environment either at the individual’s school, in their home or any other place they preferred. Before the interview I went through the informed consent form and answered any questions they had. I numbered each interview to ensure that the interviewees’ information would remain anonymous.

All the interview data was stored either on my personal computer, protected by password or in a research journal that I either keep with me or I keep it locked in my bedroom. None of the data will be distributed to any unauthorized persons. I kept consent forms in my bedroom, which remains locked when I am not there. The only paper linking the participants’ name and their corresponding number was kept in my bedroom and will be destroyed after five years.

### Potential Stress or Harm

Given that the information participants will share is largely impersonal and about the institutions in which they work, it is not expected that there will be any potential stress or harm to come from the research.

### Consent

Before gathering any information from the participants I went through the informed consent form. I made it clear that they could ask questions at any point as I went through the form or as I conducted the research. Participants verbally assented and then signed the form.

## Outcomes and Outputs

### Research Products

After gathering the data I will put together a report that provides suggestions to the schools and collaborating organizations for moving the network forward. The schools can then take those suggestions and follow them, which should move the network forward. I will provide the report as well as the hold a meeting to share the findings with the schools in an abbreviated form that they can easily understand and put into action.

### Action Outcomes

The teachers and administrators from the schools will have met each other on multiple occasions as well as met with me several times. This should provide the opportunity for various school workers to exchange contacts and make one another’s acquaintance. This combined with Life Education Center (LEC) providing a week long teacher training in the fall should provide momentum for the group to start moving the network forward with the help of LEC and Viva, a networking organization.

### Community Benefits

The schools will engage with one another and they will connect with LEC. Starting in the fall LEC will start to offer teacher training for slum schoolteachers on a biannual basis. At these trainings, many teachers who may not have even finished high school will receive valuable training on how to better teach their students. This will directly impact the students at the schools. They will likely experience increased understanding and learning because of these trainings.

### Data Analysis

I think I may use an inductive thematic analysis. I’m still a bit confused on this. There are so many options and I don’t know which to choose. (based on Research in the Real World)

### Assumptions

Christian

### Validity

Very small sample-but all I need for this network

Not very generalizable

### Clarifications-school/tuition centers

# Chapter II

## Literature Review

The research project was designed as an exploratory study to catalyze an educational network among Christian educational centers in South Delhi based on their needs and desires for their schools. This project brings various topics to the fore: education among the poor of Delhi, networks, specifically educational networks and leadership needed to sustain a loose network of educational centers. I will examine the situation in slum schools, the pattern of networking and the type of leadership needed to sustain such a network.

## What’s the Problem with India’s Poor Children?

The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration in New Delhi came up with a report in 2003 called *Learning Achievements of Slum Children in Delhi*. The report said that the census data from 2001 revealed that 41 million people lived in India’s urban slums. Of those, 3.2 million were in Delhi. (p. 8-9) The urban migration has only continued since then so those numbers are likely even higher today. How many of those people are children, and how many of them go to a good school, if they go to school at all? According to the report, “many children from slum areas do not have access to schools with adequate facilities and teachers.” (p. 10) There is thus a huge need for schools to open among the poor where children from the slums can get a good education.

## What is the Response of the Poor?

Because of this desperate need to provide education to the disadvantaged children of India, Shah and Miranda (2012) point out the mushrooming of affordable private schools in India in the slums and poor communities throughout India. This started in the early 1990’s after the country went through some drastic economic reform, and more jobs required skills as opposed to connections. These school would charge from 50-300 rupees a month. Poor parents were willing to pay these minimal, but substantial to them, fees because they knew of the opportunities it would open up for their children.

## Could Networks Help?

Many NGO’s and faith-based groups opened schools at that time. They charge small fees and seek to reach out the marginalized groups. Many of them are working in isolation, but could do so much more as a school if they were a part of a network. Viva, an international organization created to build citywide networks, speaks of three big advantages of networks. First, a network creates interdependence. The network provides a bigger vision that encompasses the city, not just a single neighborhood. Second, a network bring innovation through “imaginative problem solving” that more efficiently use resources and fit the local community. Finally, a network brings influence. Through the sharing of resources, efforts and contacts the swath of the city influence automatically increases and the transmission of ideas and transformation. (Viva)

### Which Schools Should Be Involved?

In an ideal world all organizations would work well with others and network and collaboration would be care free and easy. Unfortunately, that is not our world, and creating networks of schools takes time, effort, trust, great interpersonal skills and much more. Two researchers at the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation examined various studies on collaboration and came up with some of the key factors that indicate the likelihood of the success of collaboration, in our case a network. They consist of 19 different factors that fall into six different categories environment, membership, process/structure, communication, purpose and resources. The full list is:

*Environment*

* History of Collaboration or cooperation in community
* Collaborative group seen as a leader in the community
* Political/social climate favorable

*Membership*

* Mutual respect, understanding and trust
* Appropriate cross-section of members
* Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
* Ability to compromise

*Process/Structure*

* Members share a stake in both process and outcome
* Multiple layers of decision-making
* Flexibility
* Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
* Adaptability

*Communication*

* Open and frequent communication
* Established informal and formal communication links

*Purpose*

* Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
* Shared vision
* Unique purpose

*Resources*

* Sufficient funds
* Skilled convener

Groups must do well on the majority of these measures for it to be likely that they do well in their collaboration. As I look into the network these will be keep characteristics to evaluate.

## But Who Will Lead?

The Viva model of creating networks requires a network consultant. This is not the most apt name for the position, because it is much more than an unengaged person that sits in an office all day. This person must be passionate and committed to the purpose and people of the network. (Gary Kamal) The consultant, or what I will call the network facilitator would need a servant leadership style in leading an educational network. Robert Greenleaf originally came up with the concept of a servant leader and Peter Northouse developed it further in *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. He comes up with ten key characteristics evident in servant leadership. They are:

* Listening
* Empathy
* Healing
* Awareness
* Persuasion
* Conceptualization
* Foresight
* Stewardship
* Commitment to the growth of people
* Building community

## Outcomes

I hope to work with roughly 10 Christian educational centers in Delhi. I will learn from them what it is the needs are at the schools, what would help them in a network. I will hear from them and then also analyze it along with the literature to come up with some recommendations to see a network formed. From those recommendations I hope that they will form a new educational network that can bring good education to the children they serve.

## Theological Framework

Pastoral Cycle

## Theology of Unity

2-3 paragraphs

In Genesis 1 we learn that God created everything with his word, and that included humans. I could imagine that the creation of the world was a big task, which the triune God did in community. We see in Genesis 1:26 it says, “Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness”. The father, Son and Holy Spirit worked together to create all that is around us. In the same way God calls us to work together with the body of Christ to do God’s work as we see in 1 Corinthians 12: 12. It says, “just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ”. Thus, the body of Christ needs to work together. This covers all aspects of life including Christian education. Thus, the idea of creating a network that has a vision and goals bigger than the visions and goals of individual schools is at the heart of God for his church.

Phil butler-his theological framework

Ephesians 4 unity in action

Philippians

Theology of education

# Chapter III

## The Data

Adfasdfasdf

Asd

Fasdfasdfads

### The Network Building Process (1) Least essential

### A Glimpse of the Schools (2) 2nd least essential

### The Needs and Desires of the Schools (3) The most essential

# Chapter IV

## The Data Analyzed

### How the Network Might Look (4)

Adfasdfasdfasdf

Afadsf

Fasdfads

Dasf

# Chapter V

## Conclusion

How I answered my question/problem (schools performing at sub-par levels) Reflections along the way. Compare and contrast with literature.

Unity of reason for founding, purpose and vision among the schools

A

Af

Asd

Fads

F

Adsf

Asd

Fds

A

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview Questions

### Appendix 2: Focus Group Questions

### Appendix 3: Focus Group Order of Events

# Worship and Prayer (9:30-10:30 am)

## Peter and Amit will lead

# Chai and Introductions (10:30-11:00 am)

## Introduce topic, set tone and schedule for the day (Matt)

# Focus Group (11:00 am- 12:30 pm)

## Matt will moderate and Peter will take notes

# Mingling (12:30-1:00 pm)

## Give time to the people from various schools to meet

# Lunch (1:00-2:00 pm)

## Enjoy one another’s company

# Teacher Training (2:00-3:00 pm)

## Maggie will lead (will need projector)

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