



Progress Report

Name of the Project: Prevent school drop out of children in and discharged from Children's and Observation homes

Project Period: Ongoing

Reporting Period: 1st January to 31st March 2016

Project Goal: Project Objectives:

- Information gathering
- Remedial Education
- Home Visits
- Relationship Building
- Counseling
- Mainstreaming with/without financial assistance
- Follow up to ensure children continue in school

Activities & Achievements: Children in observation homes are one of the most marginalized populations in Mumbai.

The children who live in these Homes come from different states of India and are educated in a Marathi medium school run by the Home. The language difference makes it difficult for them to learn. Remedial education helps in coaching the children in the Marathi language as well as their school subjects thereby helping them understand what they are learning and maintaining their interest to continue education once discharged from the Home.

Sahaara staff procures addresses of discharged children from the home authorities. The social workers then traverse through labyrinthine gullies of Mumbai slums searching for the children's residences. Through such home visits, networking with local schools, facilitating assistance in books and materials, the child is facilitated entry into formal education paving the way to a bright future.

During the period January to March 2016, 153 children were provided with coaching, stationery and experiential learning in Chembur Children's Home, Bal Kalyan Nagari and David Sassoon Industrial School.

Information regarding 37 discharged children was gathered from the Home authorities. These children have been visited through personal home visits. Through family and individual counseling, these children have been provided with the opportunity of continuing education.

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Coaching Story:

CHANDINI* BEGINS TO SPEAK UP!

Some people like to be quiet. They are the best people-watchers, those who listen more than they speak and understand more than they appear to. However, sometimes quietness can be a sign of deeper emotional issues.

When we first met Chandini* in 2015, she was extremely quiet. She barely talked, except to answer the few questions we asked in even fewer words. Her father had contracted tuberculosis in ?? and passed away. After his death, Chandini along with her brother Anand* and mother shifted to her grandmother's house.

Chandini's mother struggled financially as she was the sole breadwinner of the family. She was very worried about her children's future. Seeing this, Chandini's aunt suggested that she admit Chandini and Anand to Bal Kalyan Nagari (BKN), a government home for children whose parents find it difficult to take care of them. Chandini's aunt had already admitted her children there.

Chandini joined BKN in August 2015. Sahaara conducts coaching classes for standards 1 – 5 in BKN so Chandini, ten years old and in 3rd standard, began to attend our classes as well.

When we first met her, we were baffled about how to make Chandini talk to us. We noticed that in class, she didn't talk to any of the other girls as well. She took a long time to write anything and her handwriting was almost illegible.

We were especially surprised when we saw that Chandini's brother Anand was a good learner and very active and talkative.

We took the initiative to talk to Chandini's mother about the situation and discovered that, even at home, Chandini was very quiet. She was mostly silent even with the people she had grown up with.

After hearing this, we began to intentionally interact with Chandini more. Despite her silence, we kept asking her what she ate during the day, how she felt about classes and what she studied in school that week. We also began to practice writing with her so that we could read what she was writing. As we kept persisting through the weeks, slowly we began to notice a change.

Chandini began to replying with more than just a few words. She slowly started to smile at us and her classmates. With time, she began to read and write well. Her handwriting improved and she was able to write much faster than before, keeping up with the class. Amazingly, the other children around her began to ask for her help during class so they could understand the lessons better!

We were so amazed to see this change in Chandini. Today she participates in singing, dance and games during our time together. Recently she said to us "Because of you, I



can write and read well.” Hearing this filled us with such happiness and the hope that we can help many more girls like Chandini in the future!

*Names changed to protect identity

Tracking Story

THE PROMISE OF CONTINUED EDUCATION

Domestic abuse is something that occurs in many homes across India, in more homes than we can imagine. It takes a toll on both the person being abused and the children who witness this violence on a daily basis. Kishan* has had to live with this violence on a day-to-day basis for almost all of the fifteen years of his life.

He grew up in a chawl in Kalyan, a hot, remote area with many small houses crowded together in Mumbai. For as long as he knows, Kishan has been moving between rented houses in this area.

He and his younger sister went to Abyudhya School in the neighbourhood. However, they were frequently bunking classes as they couldn't concentrate on their studies because of the situation at home. Kishan's father worked in ACC Cement in the Raigad district and his mother as a maid in different houses around the area. His father slept during the day, working the night shift. He used to wake up in the evening, drink alcohol and physically abuse Kishan's mother.

A few months ago, Kishan's mother took her daughter and moved to her parents' house in Diva, leaving Kishan behind. Kishan became very upset, dropping out of school completely and taking the train to different places.

It was during this time that a few NGO workers picked him up from Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) and admitted him to Umerkhadi Observation Home (UOH) so that he could be cared for and protected.

Sahaara works in UOH, helping children reunite with their families and following up to ensure they get the education they deserve.

We met Kishan on 15th March in UOH. As we kept talking to him, he began to open up to us about how he felt neglected, that nobody would show an interest in him or care if he did not return.

We counselled Kishan during this time. Soon, we also managed to track his parents down. Although his parents were estranged, they both wanted him to come home and live with them. We helped them through the legal procedures involved in getting Kishan back home.

Three days later, on the 18th of March, Kishan was overjoyed to see his parents come to receive him from the Home!

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Sahaara ensured that he was admitted in the same school he attended before, counselling his parents about the importance of continuing his education. They were so moved by this that they plan to send him to stay with his uncle in another part of the state during the following academic year so that he can focus on studying!

We are so glad we could have a small part in Kishan's life, helping him believe that he is cared for and ensuring that his future is secure with the promise of continued education. We hope that he gets to fulfil his dream of becoming a police officer someday!

*Name changed to protect identity