



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 2017

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 2017, 161 children were provided with coaching, stationery and experiential learning in Chembur Children's Home, Bal Kalyan Nagari and David Sassoon Industrial School.

Information regarding 22 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.

**Sahaara Charitable Society, Kalika Prasad CHS, Sahayog Mandir Road, Ghantali,
Naupada, Thane (West) – 400 602.**

Tel. No: 91-22-25415965

Email: sahaarasociety@gmail.com Website: www.sahaarasociety.org



Coaching Story:

THE CHANGE IN AMIT*

Many families in India have just one earning member. But what happens when that one member passes away? Almost all families lose their only source of income, and inevitably, they aren't able to care for their young ones.

Here is the story of one such boy left to fend for himself.

Amit* was born on 1st January 2005, to a low-income family living in Chembur, Mumbai. His father was an alcoholic working at a local restaurant. Due to excessive drinking, he passed away leaving three children to the care of their unemployed mother.

Having to cope with the stress of being unable to sustain the family and care for her children, she spiralled into depression. One day, she left her children and ran away. Amit was only a young boy at this time. He doesn't remember much about his family.

He remembers only that he was left to the care of his grandmother for a while. But due to her old age and financial struggles, she couldn't take care of him either. Eventually, enrolled him into Bal Kalyan Nagari Home (BKN) in Mankhurd, Mumbai.

Sahaara conducts coaching classes for children at BKN, in order to help them with their education and plant seeds of hope for a better life ahead.

We met Amit during the academic year of 2015-16 when he was enrolled into our coaching classes at BKN.

When we first met him, he came to us as a shy and unresponsive child, unable to read or write and with a fear of public speaking. We noticed also that he was a special child and needed personal care and attention. We also counselled him regarding his personality and academics, hoping that he would grow in confidence and do better with his studies.

Over time, Amit has started to find more confidence and hope every day. He has become more responsible and is willing to answer questions and interact with the teachers during class. We asked him to be the class monitor and this made him very happy and boosted his confidence levels. He has also improved in reading and writing and says that his favourite subject is Marathi.

He hopes to someday become a dancer.

We are grateful to have witnessed such an improvement with this thirteen year old boy! Amit's future is beginning to look a little brighter as we continue to walk alongside and work with him. Through the work we do, we can only hope to touch many such lives and bring joy and hope to these children.

*Names changed to protect identity

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Tracking Story

FROM TRAPPED TO HOPE

Within the city of Mumbai, there are children who live difficult lives. There are also children who are uprooted and taken away, trapped in lives they could not imagine. Rohan*, a young boy lived with his parents and three siblings in Wadala, Mumbai. He grew up regularly attending a local Hindi medium school. But as he grew older, he was surrounded by bad influences, became addicted to drugs and he began to attend less and less of his classes at school.

On 6th December 2015, at the age of fifteen, Rohan was kidnapped while he was out in the city!

With no understanding of the situation and unconscious for hours, he woke up in the dark with a group of unfamiliar boys. Over time, they realised they had been taken to Surat, Gujarat. For three months, these boys were forced to work there. One day they found the opportunity to run away, boarding a train to Delhi.

One of the boys offered Rohan a place to live. Rohan lived with this boy's family and worked as a waiter at a small, local restaurant (dhaba) there.

In January 2017, the dhaba owner and Rohan travelled to Mumbai together. While in the city, Rohan ran away again was found by the police, who admitted him to Umerkhadi Observation Home (UOH).

On 11th January, UOH contacted Sahaara to help with Rohan. Sahaara hopes to help children like Rohan, with the aim to reunite them with their family and find hope again to live their lives.

We met Rohan on 20th January. Initially, he told us he was an orphan from Delhi. To validate the information he gave us, we checked in the area but found no details on the whereabouts of his parents. Around the same time Saif*, a boy from Wadala, was sent to the home and recognized Rohan. He informed his sister who contacted us and gave us the details of Rohan's real home.

Sahaara tracked his family and found them. After counselling Rohan, we realised that he was afraid that he would be kidnapped from the same area again and that's why he was reluctant to meet his parents again.

We counselled both Rohan and his parents with the goal of building a relationship. His parents visited UOH and after a while, Rohan agreed to go home with his parents. We approached the Child Welfare Committee for his release and on 23rd February, he was happily reunited with his family.

Rohan will be re-joining school in the next academic year. He aims to work as a mechanic someday and we hope he will achieve all that he dreams of. From being trapped in a life he didn't choose, Rohan now has hope for the future!

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