



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 October to 31st December 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 October to December 2017, 142 children were provided with coaching, stationery and experiential learning in Chembur Children's Home, Bal Kalyan Nagari and David Sassoon Industrial School.

Information regarding 17 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:

From Being Abandoned to Abandoning Fear

That he was discarded in a garbage bin when he was just a month old, found by the police and taken to Asha Sadan Children's Home is all Arun* knew about himself while growing up. Loneliness and abandonment was something this boy became very familiar with, especially as he was physically disabled.

When he turned six, he was transferred to Chembur Children's Home (CCH) – a government run home, where orphan and semi-orphan children are taken care of till they are 18 years of age.

Life at CCH was not easy for Arun as he was constantly bullied by other children for his physical disability.

The constant bullying and the stigma of being "handicapped", shattered his confidence in his abilities and made him an angry yet timid young boy who would keep to himself.

Sahaara has been conducting coaching classes for children at CCH. Here, each child receives the attention and help they require to grow and be nurtured into following their dreams.

Our staff met with Arun as he enrolled in our classes in 2011. Our teachers saw beyond the façade of tantrums and anger which Arun frequently displayed. We knew beneath that he was a lonely child craving for attention.

As we began to give him personalized attention, counselling and constant encouragement, we saw Arun slowly begin to display his talents and abilities. He began to participate in sports and other activities in school.

We also counselled other children not to bully Arun and to be sensitive to him and his difficulties. We would use opportunities to speak well about Arun in front of his classmates, thus building confidence in him.

The result was brilliant, we began to witness a truly confident boy who started to excel in all the things he set out to do.

Recently, Arun took part in a dance show at the home where he was appreciated by the authorities and his classmates. He now has friends at the home who are sensitive and do not bully him for his physical disability.

We are happy to be able to have the opportunity to encourage boys like Arun, once abandoned at birth, now abandoning his fear of loneliness and rejection, to embrace confidence in who he is!

*Name changed to protect identity

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Tracking Story

Finding Aman*

Sometimes, we all have the urge to run away from our current scenario and the responsibilities that weigh us down.

In teenagers, the urge to run is often when they are faced by seemingly insurmountable issues.

Aman* is 14 years old and studies in Standard 8 in Royal English School. He lives in Dharavi, one of the biggest slum areas of Mumbai, a dirty and crowded area.

Aman's father is a taxi driver but his income is low and the family, (including his mother and two older siblings), barely subsist on his salary on a month by month basis. Due to this, the family is often wrought by tension and worry.

Aman added to this struggle by being irregular to school and roaming around the neighbourhood instead of focusing on his education. He is at a critical juncture in his academic life (students are not promoted automatically post Standard 8). So, when his parents found out about this, they reacted by beating him violently.

Aman was so distraught that he resolved to run away and never return. On the 11th of November 2017, he caught a local train and reached the southernmost tip of west Mumbai where he was caught wandering and taken into care by the local police.

Aman was admitted in Umerkhadi Observation Home (UOH) on the same day for his protection. Sahaara works in UOH, to help track the parents of the children who are lost and cannot find their way back home.

We met Aman two days later and began to counsel him regarding his situation. After discussing the potential location of his parents, we were able to find them and ask them to visit him in UOH to take their son back.

We had a time of counselling for both Aman and his parents where we counselled his parents not to beat their child for not studying and to give him the quality time and attention that he required.

We were also able to encourage Aman to pursue his education so that he can fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer, just like those who had taken him into their care!

*Names changed to protect identity