



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 2018

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 2018, 152 children were provided with coaching, stationery and experiential learning in Chembur Children's Home, Bal Kalyan Nagari and David Sassoon Industrial School.

Information regarding 45 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

BEYOND THE PAST

Children who live off the street are often deprived of basic necessities of life. The Indian embassy estimates that 314,700 children live on the streets of cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

Raj* was less than 10 years old when he and his little brother started begging on the streets for their survival. Plunged into poverty, without a mother and a father trying desperately to make ends meet, Raj has always fended for himself.

One afternoon as he and his brother sat begging on a railway station for food, the police caught them and as they were very young, they were admitted to a government home. The home authorities tracked down Raj's father and called him to pick up the two boys, but when he came, he felt that both his sons would benefit much more from living in the home than with him on the streets.

Within two months, he was shifted to Chembur Children's Home (CCH).

Sahaara has been working in CCH since 2005, providing supplementary education to the boys who live in this home.

Raj was admitted to our coaching classes in June 2017. He immediately went through our Gauge Test and was sorted into Level 1, as he had not attended any previous institution for formal education. We found also that as he was used to going through garbage and living on the dirty streets, even after he joined CCH, he would frequently be found near the garbage cans. Due to this, he developed boils and infections on his body. He kept wearing torn and dirty clothing to our classes.

However, Raj was very clear about his desire to study further. He had not even had the opportunity to go to school and now he enjoyed the games, activities and classes we conducted. After a few sessions on cleanliness, some incentive through positive appreciation and marks, as well as our assistance in getting his clothes stitched, Raj also began to remain clean and tidy.

During our medical camp in September 2017, he greatly benefitted from getting his skin infections checked and became much healthier. He began to actively participate in things such as dance and fancy dress competitions. He learnt how to play and interact with other children through this as well.

Now, when we ask Raj what he wants to become in the future, he says "police officer"! We are so glad that we had the opportunity to help Raj grow beyond his past and look towards a much brighter future!

*Name changed to protect identity



Tracking Story

TRANSFORMING LIVES

According to a Childline report on “Child Protection and Child Rights” runaway children are the most vulnerable as they are easy victims of abuse and inhuman treatment. They are often engaged in petty theft or prostitution for economic survival.

Mukti*, a teenage spirited girl from one of the urban slums of Mumbai, found it easier to rebel against the monotony of her life, than fit in. This 17-year-old loved hanging out with her friends rather than go to classes at school. Instead she would fund an outing with friends by stealing money from home.

Her behaviour got her in trouble with her parents, who would try to discipline her through increasingly harsher means. The constant fights and unrest at home however kept fuelling her rebellious behaviour. She longed for her parents’ attention, but the ceaseless struggles to keep the family floating above the poverty line, came at the cost of neglecting Mukti’s emotional needs.

One day in January 2018, Mukti decided to run away. Along with her boyfriend, she hatched an escape plan and stole some gold jewellery from her parents. The duo was soon caught by the police at a railway station 37 kilometres away. On 15th January, she was admitted to Umerkhadi Observation Home (UOH) in Dongri, Mumbai.

Sahaara helps children residing in UOH reunite with their families and continue their education, through counselling and follow up meetings with the child and family. During one of our regular visits to UOH, the Superintendent suggested we try and help Mukti.

We met Mukti four days after her admission to the home. Once we heard the whole story, we began to counsel her, hoping to see a positive change in attitude through the sessions with her.

We also decided to meet Mukti’s parents and counsel them too. After tracking them down, we found that Mukti’s parents were convinced the home would be a good place for their daughter to be disciplined. They had run out of patience with her!

However, after some intense counselling, her parents began to understand that love and attention are the best tools to help Mukti be disciplined and make good choices. It would be better that she came home, rather than stay in the home!

Mukti’s parents brought her home on 26th February 2018. She has recently started attending the college that she had earlier dropped out of. Her parents have told us that she has changed quite considerably and they are witness to her transformation! We are glad that through counselling and follow-up, we had the opportunity to change a life and see Mukti transform.

*Names changed to protect identity