



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 July to 30th September 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 July to September 2017, 147 children were provided with coaching, stationery and experiential learning in Chembur Children's Home, Bal Kalyan Nagari and David Sassoon Industrial School.

Information regarding 11 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:

A STORY CHANGED

There is a beginning and an end to every story. Most times, the beginning is difficult, filled with trial and struggles that are beyond the scope of our imagination.

Firoz* began his life in a small village near Ahmedabad in Maharashtra. He doesn't remember much; his birthday or his daily life.

But he remembers that he had around ten siblings and that he was thrashed regularly by these people, who should have loved him. He remembers that it became so bad, that at the young age of eight, he ran away from the place that should have been his haven.

To make it even worse, while he wondered where to go, he was involved in a road accident! Bystanders admitted him to a nearby hospital where he was found to have sustained several head injuries. Due to this, and his orphan status, Firoz was sent to the Nivas Matimand Home for mentally challenged children.

This was in the year 2011. By the year 2016, Firoz's IQ was tested and found to be acceptable for his age.

He was shifted then to Chembur Children's Home (CCH). Sahaara provides coaching and computer classes for the children who live in CCH.

We met Firoz in July 2016, when he began to attend our coaching classes.

Firoz was very quiet when we first met him. He was unable to read and write, and because of all the trauma he had previously been through, he was too scared to interact even with us. During our group activities in class, he remained quiet and aloof.

Noticing his reticence, we began to counsel and encourage him to participate in our classes. He had been put in our Level 1 class which consists children who are weak at academics. Though Firoz found it difficult and struggled through understanding the subjects at the beginning, with constant encouragement and guidance, he slowly began to pick up speed and become more interested.

We appointed him class monitor during the year and he enthusiastically took over that role. This helped him interact with both us and the other children. He also began to love participating in our Fun Club activities which involve drama and stories every Friday.

At the end of the year, Firoz graded well in Level 1 and was promoted to Level 2 for the coming year. He has slowly become more confident and expressive.

Though the beginning of this story involved struggle and trauma, we hope to stand by Firoz and watch how his story changes with the support and love he needs to grow into a brilliant young man!

*Name changed to protect identity

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Tracking Story

Reunited and Cared For

Have you ever lived life without your family? Have you had to see them leave, maybe for a significant amount of time or maybe forever? Who would take care of you then?

Bimal's* father passed away in 2006, when he was just five years old. A while later, his mother left him, his two elder sisters and younger brother, disappearing forever. Nobody knows what became of her.

Bimal's aunt and his grandmother took in the four children, providing shelter, food and education for them in the crowded slum of Bhanasgaon in Osmanabad, Maharashtra.

Bimal was always interested in studying and while his sisters both ran away from their home, he stayed and kept studying all the way to 8th grade in a school near his home. This is when our story begins.

One day in May 2017, Bimal took a train to a place called Pandharpur. On the way back, two days later, he boarded the wrong train and found himself in Mumbai's main train station Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus.

As he was just sixteen years old, he was taken by the police and admitted to Umerkhadi Observation Home (UOH).

Sahaara works in tandem with UOH, helping the police of the city escort children who have been lost, make their way back to their families.

Bimal was introduced to us the day after he was admitted to UOH. After hearing his story, we managed to track down his aunt and grandmother in Osmanabad. They were overjoyed to hear that Bimal had been found!

But as they were financially not very well off, they explained that they would not be able to make the trip to pick up Bimal and complete the necessary paperwork.

We assured them that not only would we help with this, but we would also be able to escort him back to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in Osmanabad, where we asked his grandmother to meet us.

After completing the necessary paperwork, Bimal was officially released on the 12th of July 2017.

We travelled to Osmanabad with him and were privileged to see him reunited with his grandmother. We rest assured knowing that Bimal will be able to complete his education now with family who cares for him, and hopefully fulfil his dream of becoming a mobile mechanic one day!

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