Name of Project: Impart computer literacy to poor children in India

Project Period: Ongoing

Reporting Period: 01st January to 31st March 2018

Specific Objectives of the Project:

- To improve access to computers
- To increase computer literacy of the children
- To deliver quality computer education

Achievements of the Project:

- Improvements in the grades of the children.
- Innovative teaching methods employed
- One to one individualized attention is given to the students

Number of beneficiaries: 10 beneficiaries

Key Activities:

The two computer centres currently ongoing are in the following homes:

- Chembur Children's Home (CCH), Mankhurd
- David Sassoon Industrial School (DSIS) Matunga

Each center is well equipped with 10 computers. Each batch consists of 8-10 students. The computer classes are being carried out with two batches each day at each centre (Monday to Friday). The total number of beneficiaries is 10 (4 in DSIS and 6 in CCH).

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Sahaara believes that every person has a dream, and our work centers around ensuring that marginalized persons are able to articulate and work towards achieving their dream. Children living in Mumbai juvenile homes are one of the most marginalized children in Mumbai. Institutionalized, these children are most often from highly poverty stricken families.

As a part of the holistic intervention therein, Sahaara imparts computer education to the children between fourteen to eighteen years of age in the juvenile homes. Sahaara's in-house computer course delivers a fitting foundation to the children preparing their skills for the technology-driven world outside the homes. The children attending the computer training get a start which will help them break out of the poverty cycle and fulfill their dreams of a stable future.

Below is the story of a child who has benefited with the help of the computer training carried out by Sahaara personnel.

Becoming a 'Good Citizen'

Crimes committed by children below the age of 18 are on the rise in our country. According to the National Crime Records Bureau 2013, we saw a rise in the crime rates by juveniles by 13.6% as compared to 2012. But change and transformation can also be seen in the children who are labelled as 'in conflict with the law'. Many are now on the journey to become law-abiding citizens of the country. One of them, is Javed*.

Javed doesn't have many fond memories of his parents. All he can remember is being taken care by his aunt from the tender age of 2. Most of his memories are of his friends and the boarding school he was studying in from the age of 4 onwards.

Seven years later, at 11, Javed was shifted to another boarding school in Mahableshwar, where he committed his first crime. He stole Rs 18,000 from his school office and fled to Mumbai to his aunt's house.

In Mumbai, for the next one-and-half years, all Javed was in the company of friends who influenced him negatively. Their activities involved many petty crimes.

One day in November 2017, they entered a well-known hospital and stole Rs 5000. They were caught immediately and charged with robbery. It was Javed's second robbery - he was convicted and sent to David Sassoon Industrial School (DSIS), a correction facility run by the government for children in conflict with the law.

Sahaara conducts computer classes at DSIS, hoping to inculcate positive behavior patterns and attitudes in children through activities, games and sessions. We met Javed in January 2018, when he enrolled in our computer classes.

Soon, we noticed an eagerness in Javed to learn. The more attention we invest in him, the quicker he picks up software such as Microsoft Excel and Word. His interest in computers was quite evident as he also punctually attends our classes. We also encourage him to learn English and assist him with his reading and writing skills.

After attending a session conducted by us on the importance of education and hard work, Javed has reduced the hours he watches television and devotes that time instead to his academics. He has also developed the habit of reading books to improve his skill in English. He loves to participate actively in all the activities and games conducted during the week.

The change in Javed is apparent, there for us all to see. He is developing an interest towards his academics and we can see a hard-working and well-mannered Javed slowly materialising.

When asked about his plans for future, he says "I want to become a good citizen and learn more about computers!"

*Names changed to protect identity

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