

Doorstep School – Keeping Education Moving

Schools on Wheels Project Activity Report

The disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in education has been unprecedented. Education remains the most critical path to social mobility and the closures and restrictions are having an economic impact on poverty struck families which have led to many to drop out of school altogether. As poor families struggle to make ends meet many send children to work instead of to school.

The disruption caused by the Covid-19 may have far-reaching consequences on children's lives. At the end of October our Global Giving Project has raised nearly **£5000** of the **£15,000** we aim to raise to support Door Step School to mitigate this adverse impact using a range of lateral strategies.



Schools provide more than just education in India. Over nine crore children across the country depend on the education system for midday meals. If schools remain shut, many of them will be deprived of essential nutrition too.

Doorstep School have taken a holistic approach to supporting the education and nutrition of the children who attend our Schools on Wheels.

They are providing relief rations for families so that they do not pull their children out of school to work, and teaching and supporting families and children to continue to learn in as Covid-19 safe an environment as is possible, given the challenging circumstances in which they already live.



A story of change

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 7 year old Arpita was a regular student on our School on Wheels. Her inclination towards education was very positive. She is one of the finest students in the class. She lives with her father, grandmother and her younger brother “Ladu” in a shed made out of polyethylene sheet and few utensils on the streets near Raghuleela mall in Mumbai.. Her mother passed away few years ago as a result of a chronic illness.

Her father and grandmother wake up early every day and go for rag picking on the street, selling whatever garbage they could collect and earning money to get through the day. Arpita and her little brother are child beggars on this street. At the end of the day they also help in selling the garbage and through that money combined with their alms, they purchase food for the day.



**Picture is representational*

After the COVID lockdown, their daily routine was deeply impacted and so was their income. Their father and grandmother were at a loss as to how to feed the children. They could only arrange for some tea powder, sugar and dry breads for the kids. If anything remained, they would eat themselves. They could not even expect help from their neighbours since everybody was in a similar situation.

At Door Step School, the team was worried about the challenges school on wheel beneficiaries were facing. Teachers were constantly in touch with children and their families over phone calls. Looking at the emergency situation Doorstep decided to provide free ration and essentials to the needy families. As staff arrived in Arpita’s street to distribute food grain and ration kit, Ladu and Arpita came running and excitedly asked if they would also receive this help.

On receiving the grains, they immediately stored their share in whatever small containers they had. They were thrilled that they would be making khichadi after a long time and even shared the recipe with the team from Doorstep School! Their grandmother was extremely thankful and earnestly requested monthly continuation of this support so that they could survive this pandemic.



Adapting our work during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Apart from during the first 2 months of lockdown our Doorstep colleagues on the ground were able to keep contact with all children who normally visited our School on Wheels. At first families shifted to their native villages in the first lockdown phase but started coming back to Mumbai after June 2020.

During the first lockdown period, many parents contacted our local staff for ration support. Throughout the last six months 1175 people have been supported with ration kits including essential food supply and sanitary products.

At Doorstep School, as a response to the new challenge of physical distancing, we adopted using what's app-based communication to reach our students. Many children do not have access to mobile phones but we were able to form a WhatsApp group of 21 children and a teacher started sending digital material for them to study. This was not an easy task, she started from scratch and even trained the children and parents on how to download and activate what's app.



Children who are not on What's App group are being reached through lane wise classes. With this new reach out method, no new resources have been engaged and we are reaching out to more than 73 students every day.

Since there was no space on the sidewalk for lane wise classes, we followed the space and arranged to have classes in their homes. If the place provided by the parents was safe for the children, classes were started.

A group of 4-5 Children were invited to form a bubble in this way and the children's classes were arranged according to that group. Worksheets were printed and distributed during teacher and coordinators visit. Children were asked to solve these worksheets at home collaboratively and have the solved worksheet reviewed by the teacher in her next visit.

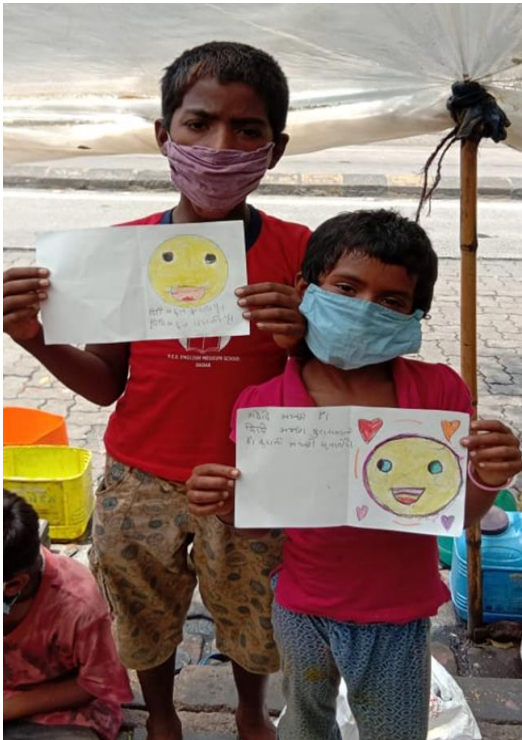
Teachers also motivated parents to help children.



Covid-19 Awareness

Parents were made aware about coronavirus while collecting data in the settlement.

- They were taught how parents could protect themselves and their families, what are its symptoms, how to prevent it, and how to care for children.
- Awareness was spread door to door and visiting homes. In total there were 6 meeting in different location and 87 parents present for awareness training, which they took back to disseminate in their communities.
- During lockdown our training department also conducted digital training on many topics like COVID-19 awareness, precautions and safety measures to stop the spread of Corona.
- Regular trainings on TLM and program related topics were also conducted on weekly basis.
- Hand Wash activity was undertaken with all School on Wheels children. The six steps of hand wash were show to the children and they were then done by the children.



During trainings more than 4000 worksheets were created by teachers and trainers to ensure ongoing learning for the children who normally attend our Schools on Wheels.

Teachers day and literacy day celebrations were also coordinated out to show our gratitude towards our amazing dedicated teachers. Every teacher of Door Step School has gone out of his or her way to teach and inspire. The celebrations were done by asking children to make cards for teachers.

Independence Day and teacher's day were celebrated virtually using the Zoom online platform. In both these events, the programs students, parents and teachers presented their skills such as dance and poetry.

In the last 6 months we have helped 3 children to gain admission in formal school. For these children the formal school is conducting online sessions but due to unavailability of mobile phone they were not able to attend classes. We arranged for one phone to be provided for them so they can attend proper school.



Feedback from Parents



Akshara's father said

"During the lockdown we had the opportunity to understand our children living with them. Thanks to the worksheet you gave to the children, we also got a chance to remember the study we did today. We began to remember a little bit of what we had forgotten through the children's study. And because of that we were able to explain in to our children. "

Mother of Mohan Madan Singh

"Children were getting restless at home. We are happy that you restarted your classed for them. We do not have any work but our children have." -

This can only be achieved through the generosity our donors, volunteers and supporters show for the disadvantaged children we look after.

Thank you to our supporters at Child Action and Global Giving!

