

## **About Rainbow Homes**

Rainbow Homes Program (RHP) is a community-based care model for children formerly on streets. Since 2002, we have reached out to over 10000 street children. Currently, we run 54 homes caring for 4120 children in 10 cities - Delhi, Patna, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Anantapur, Chennai and Mumbai.

The Rainbow Homes Programme aims to embrace, educate and empower the most disadvantaged of India's children. Our highly committed home teams care for children who have lived on the streets, children who have been orphaned or abandoned, children who have run away from violent and abusive situations, children who have grown up in violence, children who are the victims of sexual, physical and mental abuse, the children of farmers who have committed suicide and the children of sex workers. Through our program, we strive to ensure that our children access their rights, in loving, open and safe residential care homes which allow them to grow into happy, responsible, confident and empowered citizens.

Our home teams are filled with people from underprivileged backgrounds, and with comprehensive capacity building programs, consistent support from state and national team members, our homes boast of a warm familial atmosphere in which our children thrive. For our children, our focus is centred on their care and protection, but also includes their educational development, their readiness for life's challenges and their ability to deal with the emotional and mental issues that emerge in their lives.

The uniqueness of the Rainbow Home Program is that we partner with State Governments through the public-school model. Most of our homes are housed inside running or unused school buildings. We believe that the government has a key role to play in ensuring rights-based care for street children, especially those who are the most vulnerable.

## **About the Education Program at Rainbow Homes**

Education is a crucial component in enabling and empowering our children. The purpose of education is not solely to traverse school examinations nor is it simply preparation for college or the working life. Education encompasses several other skills, competencies and attitudes which are needed to negotiate the world of adult responsibilities, relationships and dilemmas. Education is meant to develop resilience, self-confidence and the ability to think critically.

Our children come to our homes after years of living on the streets without access to medical care, pre-school education, or sufficient nourishment. Oftentimes, the parents of our children have been unable to provide them with a living environment conducive to the full development of their minds and bodies. Our children therefore find assimilating to regular academic engagement and the rigours of school and assessment harder than others. The government schools where our children are enrolled often do not have the capability to support these most vulnerable children who aspire to overcome a learning gap which has grown over several years. While all our children are enrolled into age-appropriate school levels when they join our homes, the pre-existing gap in their learning poses a significant challenge to their ability to traverse the school grades in which they find themselves.

The Rainbow Homes Program caters to this need by running an after-school program which aims to support their academic, social, emotional and psychological development while also enabling them to develop the necessary skills and attitudes which will allow them to negotiate the world beyond with confidence.

### **How Covid-19 has affected the Rainbow Homes Program**

The Covid-19 pandemic, the resultant lockdown and restrictions on movement and assembly have led us to recast how we conduct all activities within our homes. Our home team members who earlier followed a rotating residential role have now been at home for almost 3 months. The after-school sessions for children have been suspended as our teachers are unable to come to the homes. All homes have been stocked up with food and basic medical supplies. With schools closed and our homes under complete lockdown, our children haven't been engaged comprehensively with their formal education needs. To keep the children engaged and learning through this period, various interventions are being introduced at the homes. Some of them are listed below:

- Art and Craft and other co-curricular activities
- Video lessons and worksheets being shared by their schools
- Classes taken by teaching staff remotely using video-conferencing technologies
- Online resources such as videos, virtual tours etc. facilitated by home staff
- Movies and television

However, many homes do not have sufficient laptops or computers nor do they have strong and consistent internet connections which could enable access to online learning platforms and other learning content for our children. This makes it difficult to introduce such interventions uniformly and effectively across all homes. Even when the lockdown restrictions are relaxed, many constraints will remain with regard to reopening of schools. Travel within the city also will also remain problematic considering the risk of infection. Under these circumstances, the need for strengthening the digital infrastructure at our homes becomes a most crucial need.

We aim to achieve a greater use and integration of online resources within our existing learning paradigm. The education resource team at the national level is working on developing educational programs to meet our learning objectives and strengthen the state and home teams' understanding and capacity to execute these programs effectively.

### **What we Propose: Digital Strengthening**

Currently, the infrastructure for digital access and capacity for effective use of digital resources are both limited in our homes. Customized plans for each city based on what is feasible on-the-ground for the home and state teams have been created but with the absence of teachers, the learning gaps our children struggle with are growing wider.

For our children to stay in touch with the school requirements, as well as to continue exploring their own interests and hobbies, access to the internet, remote learning platforms and teachers and facilitators becomes key.

An adequate number of desktops, laptops and a robust audio-visual setup (big screens/projectors, webcams, speakers) must be available in each home to facilitate these aims. Given that children in different grades may have to attend separate online sessions at the same time, multiple sets of resources will be required for different groups of children to achieve this.

Each home should have the following digital infrastructure and connectivity:

1. A computer lab with 4-5 desktops for children to learn to use computers. Apart from serving as computer lab, these could also be used by older children for their studies as well as remote learning classrooms when needed
2. 3-4 laptops for middle and high school children to use for remote learning sessions along with teachers/facilitators in smaller groups. These could also be used by older children to individual work online.
3. 2 audio-visual projection sets (1 set of projector & speakers and one 32" or 36" LCD screen with HDMI port/cable) so that two groups of children can have remote classes at the same time
4. 4G connection to be used exclusively for educational purposes by children

Component	Per home (Y1)	Budget Guidelines
Computers	2,80,000	8 computers (desktops and laptops @ 35000 per system)
Projector	35,000	1 projector @ 35000
LCD TV	20,000	1 LCD TV @ 20000
Speakers	2,500	1 speaker set @ 2500
Webcam	6,000	4 Webcams @ Rs. 1500 per item
Mic	6,000	4 microphone sets @ Rs. 1500 per item
<b>Total (One-time)</b>	<b>3,44,500</b>	
4G Connection	6,000	@ 500 per month (annual expense)
<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>6,000</b>	

#### **Immediate Outcomes:**

Our children will get the opportunity to continue and expand their learning journeys. Without regular schooling, the worry of examinations or heavy homework loads, we have the opportunity to allow our children to focus on

1. Their own areas of interest
2. Foundation competencies and skills
3. Education for life

While our teachers are extremely dedicated and ready to continue working, the difficulty to organise effective channels of communication between teacher and student remains a challenge.