

Progress report

October 2012

Providing basic education to poor, deprived and vulnerable children in slums of Delhi.

About the project –

Noon.ch and ASHANET have been kind enough to support the learning centers project for the third consecutive year. Both Noon.ch and ASHANET share the total cost of running the four centers and each provide funding assistance upto 50% of the total cost for running 4 learning centers. As part of the project, funds have been provided for meeting teachers' salary, centers' running cost, for purchase of books and stationary for children, for organizing some events for children and for meeting the project related overheads.

Activities at Centres –

Opening of a new centre – Our centres have been running for almost 4 years now in the Bapu Camp slum and students have been moving to upper grades. Some of the students reached grade 6 and needed more attention in terms of academic support. The learning centre was no more an ideal environment for them to cope with their higher level of studies in the schools. This was worrying us for quite some time and we wanted to separate out the senior students from primary school students. In the month of January 2012, we started the fifth centre in the compound of Bapu Camp centre. We rented out one more room in the same house. This centre has been set up to address the more specific academic needs of the students who have moved into grade 6.

We were fortunate to find a well qualified lady local teacher for these students. Her name is Ms. Aasmin. She is a young dynamic girl in her early twenties and has good experience of teaching senior class students as she teaches in a school during forenoon time and has been also taking tuitions (extra academic support) classes for local children. Since most of our senior students are girl students, we could not have found a better teacher for them. Prior to her joining, Ms. Sangeeta

Sharma taught these students for a few months. She had to discontinue as she joined a higher education course.

All such senior grade students were put in this new centre and Aasmin is grooming under the mentorship of our senior teacher Ms. Shalia Parvez, who runs the centre for junior class students in the adjoining room. At present the admission to the centre has been restricted only to our own centre students. We want to watch closely as to how the students gain from a dedicated teacher support. Once we start seeing the positive growth, we would open up the centre for admission of new students. In the meanwhile, new students are being taken-in at the Bapu Camp to fill for the vacant seats created as a result of moving out of the senior students.

Making of Christmas tree – Like every year, this year the theme for vacations was Christmas. During December vacation, we proposed the idea of making Christmas tree at all centres. Children loved the idea but at the same time they were hesitant as they did not know how to make a Christmas tree; some of the kids had only seen pictures of a Christmas tree. We could foresee an opportunity where not only children would happy and busy during vacation but would also get an excellent exposure on the entire assignment.

We purchased thin flexible wires, green colour kite paper sheets, stuff for decoration (small goodies, stars, glass balls and other stuff for christmas decoration), glue, bamboo sticks and mud planters. In order to help children gain confidence, we shared with them pictures of Christmas trees and held small workshops on how to make a 'christmas tree branch'. Once children learnt the skill, they spent days in making the Christmas trees. They themselves were amazed at the size of the trees. The tallest tree was around 5ft tall and was at Bapu Camp learning centre.

As a reward for the wonderful work done by children, Christmas get-togethers were organized at each centre in the month of January and they were given away eatables and goodies stuff. It was indeed a fun filled activity for children.

Donation of toys and educational games to CFH – Through the efforts of ASHA, we were connected with an individual by the name Mr. Deepak Verma who wanted to donate unused toys for use by children below class 5. Mr. Verma sent us two cartons full of toys, wooden blocks, puzzles and other educational stuff. We divided the stuff among four centres and assigned the responsibility of taking care

of the toys and their tiny parts to the respective teachers. Children were thrilled to receive the toys and promised to take care of the toys.

Library books – The library corners which were set up last year on the suggestion of Dorris and Klaus, continued to attract lot of readership by children. We were asked to get new sets of books. Children loved to read short story books with moral; with lots of pictures and animated characters. We purchased new books and rotated the sets in five centres. Teachers organize story narrations for children during which children present the books they have read. This helps teachers to find out if the child has been able to comprehend the book read by him.

Worm removal camp – In the month of April, stomach worms removal camp was organized by the local health department in the government run Primary schools. All our school going children attended the camps and benefited from the camps. Our centre teachers had done class discussion with the children to encourage them not to miss the school on the day of the camp and that they should take the oral medicine for de-worming.

Volunteer program – In the month of August, CFH had a few volunteers come in from overseas, from Canada and The Netherlands. The volunteers spent time with children at one of the centres supported by another organization. They had brought goodies and other stuff for children and did activities with children. At the noon.ch and ASHANET supported centres, they distributed shoeboxes full of surprise stuff – stationary, stickers, paints, soap, toothpaste, brushes, coloring book, stuff for decoration, etc. The shoeboxes were kept at the centres for use by children. And each one of them got a sock monkey. The kids were happy beyond their own imagination. Now, the kids use the stuff every Saturday.

Theme charts – This summer vacation the theme for the summer camp was to prepare big wall size poster-charts on a select theme. Children joined chart papers to make a big wall size paper and made big posters. The themes selected were – Lotus temple, Delhi, Good habits, Global warming, Caring girl child and jungle scene. Children came out with amazing ideas and each poster looked so majestic and meaningful.

Besides, other activities were also organized, such as, crafts, drawing, collage, book reading, and story-telling. The older kids first completed their summer holiday homework at the centres, after which they got

busy with these creative activities. During summer break, the centres opened in the morning and remained opened for two hours only so that children could get back home before it became too hot. This ensured continuity of children at the centres and a big respite for parents in the hot summer.

Celebration of Independence Day – Like last year, this year also, we celebrated Independence Day at all the centres. Children had prepared small speeches, dances on patriotic songs and skits to mark the occasion. They wore fancy dresses for performances. The respective teachers unfurled the national flag and talked to children about the importance of the day and the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters to gain independence. Later, sweets were distributed to all children at the centres.

Visit by Miriam Hoenig from noon.ch – In the month of April 2012, we had a guest's visit from noon.ch. We took Ms. Miriam to two of our centres at Bapu Camp and Sambhav Camp. There she met with children and spent time with them. The children were very happy to exchange talks with Miriam. She told them about from where she came and how she felt to be in India. Miriam was very much touched by the affection of the children towards her at the two centres.

Annual Day celebration – it has become an annual feature to organise a grand day at every centre once a year. In the month of January 2012, we celebrated annual day at each centre separately. The annual day celebration helps to boost up children's morale and welcome the new year with a positive note. Various competitions were organized, and prizes were given away to the winners. All children received goody bags. Children put up the skit, songs, dances on the occasion. Despite of chilling winter, children participated with lots of enthusiasm and energy. Children did the anchoring of the program and it was a big fun party for them as well as for us.

Children's progress –

We are extremely happy to share with everyone that there are around 135 children are coming regularly to our 5 centres. Over the years there has been stability among children and the dropout rate has reduced to minimum. Children are moving to next grades and their performance has been improving. The parents are also extremely

cooperative and do not withhold children at home unless there is any urgent need. All this is being made possible by the untiring effort of the teachers. The teachers provide all kinds of support to children and that is one reason why parents have no hesitation in sending their children, especially girls, to the centre. Seeing the increased needs of the girls who have moved to senior classes, we carved out a new centre with specific aim of meeting their academic needs. This move has helped these girls to continue to come to our centres as their families are not in a position to bear the cost of private tuition for them. We encourage these girls to continue to come to our centres and learn as much as they can.

At present all four centers are running at the same time, that is, from 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Challenges – With each passing year, we are also learning to cope with new challenges and we feel happy that so far we have been able to handle the challenges satisfactorily. From the past few months, it is being observed that quite a lot of the families are moving from Bhatti Kala and Bhatti Khurd villages to the nearby slum – Sanjay Colony, due to the increased rentals in these villages. It is being considered to shift the two learning centres from these two villages to Sanjay Colony. Most of the children at our two village centres are from the families living as tenants in these two villages. It may be recalled that these families had earlier moved from Bhatti Mines and Indira Nagar slum areas to these two villages due to the demolition of slums by the local authorities. CFH moved to Bhatti Kala and Bhatti Khurd villages along with these families so that children continue to attend our centres.

Staff induction –

We are happy to share that we have a new teacher in the CFH family. She is Ms.Aasmin. she is doing her graduate and brings with her ample experience of teaching children. She has been appointed to teach girls who are in older classes. The idea of bringing her was to cope with the increased and special needs of the girls who are now in higher classes. The students are happy to have her as their teacher.

Snowball effect of funding support from noon.ch and ASHANET

As always, the funding from Noon.ch and ASHANET has been of immense support to us. We get so many enquiries from individuals and groups. We have become so visible. This year we had an international group of volunteers visit us for a week in August. It was a first time experience for us to host so many volunteers. Language was not a barrier as the group roped in a few local volunteers who spoke good English as well as Hindi. The volunteers did a variety of activities with children including teaching them English, playing games, etc.