

Progress report

September 2014

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

The year 2014 was filled with achievements and challenges. Everyone at CFH – children, teachers, and all of us enjoyed the year at the learning centres. The Government of India has enforced a new law for the Corporates. According to the new law the Corporates have to spend 2% of their profits on corporate social responsibility (CSR). This enforcement brought a few enquiries at CFH from the corporates. One of the Corporate house celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, with our centres children. Another good news from the centres is that four girls from our centre of senior girls appeared for their 10th grade examinations and passed with good grades. There were a few staff changes at the Learning Centres and we had visitors to our centres. Most importantly, ASHA Frankfurt kindly agreed to replace ASHA Delhi for funding support to the Learning Center project.

About the project –

Noon.ch and ASHANET have been kind enough to support the learning centers project for Concern for Humanity. Both Noon.ch and ASHANET share the total cost of running the five centers and each provide funding assistance upto 50% of the total cost for running 5 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.

This year ASHA Frankfurt came forward to support the centre with 50% cost of the learning centre. CFH is extremely thankful to Rohini, for creating this linkage with ASHA Frankfurt.

Activities at Centres –

Celebration with DISH TV - In the month of October, closer to the festival of Deepawali, DISH TV, through their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative – Aprajita, visited our learning centre, and celebrated Deepawali. The girls from around 6 learning centres got together at one centre and had a gala time. The DISH TV team played games with children, danced with them, and did fun activities with them. The visitors had brought little goody bags and clothes/dresses donated by employees of the entertainment giant. They gave away goodies to children and later decorated the learning centre with glitters, stickers and other festive decoration material.

This was the first ever CSR activity of DISH TV and they chose to celebrate with our girls. They got our reference from ASHA website.

Our centre girls visited ZEE TV Network office – On the occasion of Children’s Day, 14 November, 2013, senior girls from our learning centre were invited to the studios of the ZEE TV network. It was a full day program. Eight girls with their centre teacher and field supervisor went on this outing. They were shown a Bollywood movie, were taken around the recording studios and to the news transmission rooms. The girls performed a street play on discrimination of girls in the families. The play was much applauded by the audience. It was recorded by the channel and later telecast on Zee news on the same evening.

Centre white washing – The room that was taken on rent to run the second learning centre at Sanjay colony was very shabby and landlord was reluctant to get it painted. Due to high rentals we were unable to go for a nicely painted room. Children themselves proposed to paint the room and make it a lively place. We provided them with paint and brushes and they painted the room inside and on outside wall they painted animals and animated characters. Once the news of room painting reached the other centre, they also requested for material for painting the room. Hence, both the learning centre rooms came out beautifully.



Recognition of CFH by the South Delhi District Office - The South Delhi District Officer sent for an invitation to CFH for watching a Bollywood movie at the movie hall. All our teachers went to watch the movie 'Entertainment'.

Teachers’ Day Celebration – The Teachers’ Day was celebrated at all the centres on 5th September – the National Teachers’ Day. As a mark of respect for

the teachers and to recognise their contribution in moulding children, all the teachers at the Learning Centres were felicitated. They were presented with gifts.

Disaster mitigation sensitisation and awareness – Disaster Management Authority (South Delhi) organizes regular mock-drills, awareness programs, rally, etc. in south district of Delhi to spread awareness among people and to ensure their safety. They primarily target schools, slums, hospitals and other vulnerable entities under their awareness programs. DDMA conducted a series of disaster mitigation sensitisation and awareness drill at the Learning Centres of CFH. The latest drill was conducted on 9 September. The field staff of CFH and children of the Learning Centres spread a message around in the slums and brought good number of people from the local community to attend the awareness program. The Learning Centre children actively participated in the mock drill program.

Visit by a Yoga group – Recently, in second week of September, CFH had a few visitors from Switzerland who were here in Delhi on their way from Ladakh after a meditation and yoga camp. They visited some of the centres, spent time with the children and appreciated the work being done by Concern for Humanity.

Centre for senior students– This academic year, a group of girls from the junior learning centre graduated into the senior girls centre. It was a moment of happiness for girls to formally enter the next level and all of us felt proud and satisfied to see the girls moving up on the ladder.

Help-books for senior grade students – The teacher of the senior grade learning centre was provided with a set of help-books for grade VII – X, to enable her to use these help-books for self reference and for use by girls coming to the centre. The help-books are expensive and it's not possible for parents to buy these for their children.

Reading practice – we continued to stress on the need to do reading practice by children at the centre. More new books were added to the library. Book reading everyday for half an hour is mandatory at each centre. This means that teacher has to facilitate loud reading in the class by students who can read. Children choose a book from the library section and read it out to the group. Teacher corrects the students in case they wrongly pronounce some words. The younger kids listen to the stories read by older children. At present this activity is being done only for Hindi language book reading.

Training of teachers in English language – In the month of January, 2014, Ms. Kathryn MacPhee, a retired vice principal, from Perth, Australia again visited our centres. This time she brought a book to teach colors and had made laminated characters to match the story. These characters had been drawn from the story and children were engaged into the story. Almost all children got the chance to present the story to the larger group. They not only spoke their parts in English but were careful with their pronunciation and also enacted their role

orders properly. Kathy had brought a few cards games for younger children and sentence formation sheets for older children. Children were extremely participative throughout the session times.

Kathy has been teaching from past 40 years and has been supporting, guiding and moulding teachers in the schooling system in Perth, Australia. She has been specifically involved with children who have recently arrived in Perth or are on refugee status and for whom English is a new language. It involves not only teaching the language but skills that are essential to help integrate them into mainstream schooling.

Kathy would be visiting us again in January 2015.

Making of greeting cards – This year, during Christmas vacation time, children made greeting cards and exchanged with each other. They were provided with material – charts, colourful papers, sequences, glitters, decoration stuff and glue. Children wrote nice messages for each other and wished each other a fantabulous Christmas and new year.

Making of Rakhi and friendship bands – In August, children were asked to make 'Rakhi'. Rakhi is a festival of Hindus when the sisters tie a thread around the wrist of their brothers to take a pledge from them to protect their sisters. Children made beautiful rakhis. This festival was merged with the celebration of friendship day. Children were introduced to the new idea of making and sharing friendship bands. For this, no support material was provided to children. They were asked to organise all decoration stuff on their own. Children collected decorations, beads, pictures, buttons, etc. and came out with creative ideas of making friendship bands.

Annual Day celebration – Celebration of annual day is becoming a permanent feature of the annual calendar of CFH. With every passing year, children prepare with more enthusiasm and with a professional touch. In January, the annual day was celebrated at each centre. We try to keep the annual day celebration an indoor affair due to local reasons of social security of children. At some of the centres where there was enough space the parents also attended the program. The Bapu Camp and Shambhu Colony centres organised a combined program in a big hall. The annual day celebration helps to boost up children's morale and welcome the new year with a positive note.

Children prepared songs, skits, dances, recitations for presentation on this day. Also, competitions were organized, and prizes were given away to the winners. All children received goody bags. Chilling winter could not stop children's enthusiasm and energy. Children did the anchoring of the program and it was a big fun party for them as well as for us.

Visit of Rohini, ASHANET – In the first week of April, Rohini from ASHANET visited the learning centres for doing an annual review of the progress made at the centres. This time she visited all six centres. During the visit, she met with

the children and the teachers and discussed about the centres' progress. She was happy to converse in English with children of the Sanjay colony centre (influence of Kathy's visit at the centre). Rohini was satisfied with the progress but had her concerns about teachers training. We promised to address this concern in the next reporting year.



Summer vacations - Like every year, many children went to their villages during summer vacations. Keeping in view this trend, immediately at the beginning of the summer vacations, the learning centre teachers helped children to complete their holiday home works so that before children go away on vacation, their holiday homework is complete. And with the remaining children who stayed back in the town, the teachers re-decorated the centres with new posters, children's work, etc.





Handicrafts item making– this vacation children were asked to brainstorm and come up with ideas about what they would like to do during the vacation days to make it an enriching experience for them. Children opted to make handicraft items out of waste material. They used polypet soft drink bottles to make pen holders and small table trays for putting pins, clips, etc. They cut the bottle near the base, rounded the raw edges, made thin braids of newspapers and wrapped around the shape to decorate it. The final product came out extremely good. They made photoframes, and other decoration stuff at the centres.

Library books – The library corners which were set up two years ago on the suggestion of Dorris and Klaus, continued to attract lot of readership by children. We bought new books for all age groups. Children loved to read short story books; stories with a moral; pictures and animated characters stories books. The sets were rotated amongst the five centres.



Celebration of Independence Day – The Independence Day was celebrated at all centres spread over a week in the second week of August. Unlike last year, the week of the Independence Day celebration was extremely hot and humid. All the celebrations had to be confined to the learning centre room as outside it was hot. Children had prepared small speeches, dances on patriotic songs and skits to mark the occasion. On the day of celebration at Sanjay Colony, the program had to be postponed as there was no electricity. The children were not willing to compromise with the cultural program. It was unanimously decided that the function would be celebrated at a later date. The Independence day was celebrated on 15th August for Sanjay colony centres (CFH centres remain closed on this national holiday. As a special case and because of pressure from children the program was performed on 15th August). We had to even put up a tent to beat the hot sun. Children had made paper bags to put the goody bag stuff in them. The celebrations made children really happy.

Meeting parents of children – this year all teachers have started organizing meeting with the parents of the children. It has been made compulsory to meet the parents atleast once every month. During the meeting the teachers share the progress of children with parents and explain them about the journey of children at the centre so far. All those parents who came appreciated the efforts of the teachers and ensured their full cooperation towards sending children to the centre regularly. The attendance of parents at the meeting has remained poor as most of them are out working and not available at home to attend the meeting. The teachers are working out ways of reaching out to such parents.

Teachers training – In August, we started another initiative – teachers’ training. This had been a much pending task which been getting left out due to logistics issues. The slums are located in isolated place where commuting is not

easy. Besides, the centres suffered in the absence of teachers. Due to many similar issues, getting teachers together was not easy. So far we had been meeting and talking to teachers on a one to one basis or in small groups. We held a half day long all teachers' meeting cum training at the Field Coordination office. The topic of training was 'Why Reading for children is important?' During the training we talked about the importance of reading; how reading can be encouraged; how to make children interested in reading; how to keep children attentive during reading sessions. We are working on doing teachers training on a regular basis in a more organised manner.



Children's progress –

Girls clear matriculation – we are extremely happy to share the good news that four girls from our senior girls centre had appeared for their tenth grade examination and all four of them passed with really good marks. All four girls have taken commerce in XIth.

This year the result of students was quite satisfactory. All children passed the exams with good results. Two of our girl students from the senior girls centre, came second in their classes.

We are extremely happy to inform that there are around 132 children regularly coming to our 5 centres. Over the years there has been a 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.

At present all five centers are running at the same time, that is, from 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. although the children start coming to the centre by around 2:30pm.

Challenges –

Academic needs of senior grade girl students – this academic year four girls from the centre graduated to XIth grade and opted for commerce stream. They found Economics and Math a little challenging subjects and joined private tuitions as our present centre teacher, Yogita was finding it difficult to cope with their advanced level demand. Also, the girls were hard pressed for time to spend full time at the centre. Yogita, is competent to teach all subjects to girls upto tenth grade. In order to keep the girls in the loop and ensure that they continue to come to the centre, a mid path solution was worked out. These girls now come to the centre for only one hour and during this time Yogita helps these girls for other subjects.

Space for learning centres - The rental costs for hiring rooms for running the centres continued to increase. Despite best efforts to keep the rentals low, the room rentals of the learning centres are now almost the same as the salary that we pay to the teachers for the part time job. Even though we pay the demanded rentals, there is always a fear that we may be asked to vacate the premises any time. In case the landlord gets someone to pay more rental, we will be asked to vacate. With the result, all the efforts that were put-in in decorating the room in making it a lively place for children go waste. At times this also affects the continuity of children to the centre as the distance to the centre is one of the primary determinants for children to enroll in the learning centres.

We always try to look for a room which is big and well ventilated and has some open space in front for children to be able to play and do some activities. This also costs more money.

Change in boys-girls ratio at centres – The Delhi Government's order of re-arranging the timings of morning shift and the afternoon shift in the government schools in an attempt to undo the co-education in the schools continued to create confusion at the field level. In our project area, one senior secondary school changed the session timings as per the circular while the other continued to follow the old schedule. With the result the attendance of boys in the centres remained poor, despite our efforts of bringing them back to the centres. Rohini and Doris had indicated that we must bring back the boys to the centre or organise for morning shift at the centres to reach out to the boy students. Due to budget constraints, it was difficult for us to go for the later option. All the learning centre teachers were advised to re-visit the field to bring back the boys to the centres. But not much success could be achieved. The change in the shift

and re-grouping of gender was brought into force last academic session by the Government of Delhi.

Need for re-shifting location of centres – The learning centre at the Bapu colony has been in place from past 5 years and during this period almost all children in its catchment area have attended the learning centre at some point of time. And in this academic year we have probably enrolled the last batch of all eligible children. In the next academic year, we will have to move a couple of lanes interior in the same slum to reach out to the needy group of children. We are anticipating that coming March, we will have to open new centre while present two centres in the Bapu colony continue to run till the children from primary level graduate into the learning centre created for senior grade students.

Staff Update –

One of our old teachers, Ms. Shazia, met with an accident. She got injury and multiple fractures in her ankle bone. She was operated upon and rod was implanted to set the bone in place. It took four months for her to completely recover from the injury and be able to walk. During this long period of immobility and stress, we retained Shazia on payroll and paid her the full salary so that she may be able to look after herself.

We are happy to welcome back Mrs. Shaila Parveen. She indicated her willingness to come back to CFH and we happily accepted her request. She replaced Ms. Rose Aftab, her daughter who was teaching in her place to the younger kids.

Ms.Yogita replaced Ms. Asmin. We were fortunate to find Ms.Yogita in the closeby vicinity to replace Ms.Asmin who was unsure of her continuity as a teacher at the centre. Ms.Asmin had appeared for a permanent job and was waiting for the results to be declared. Ms.Yogita is an equally qualified teacher and teaches senior girls.



Ms.Yogita at the centre

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 a large number of enquiries from individuals and groups. We have become quite visible. We are expecting a group of international volunteers sometimes in March 2015.