

Progress report

September 2021

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

There is infinite beauty in hard work that can beat physical beauty hands down. Women have always been on the frontline, whether at home or at work. Pandemic is no different.

For once, the world's foremost beauty and fashion magazine recognises women for who they really are by putting Asha workers on the front cover of their recent issue.

As Cosmopolitan says, "Armed with ill-fitted masks and just a tiny bottle of sanitiser, the ASHA worker is the biggest unsung hero of rural India."

Gratitude.



One of our teachers, Menka is one among these thousands of ASHA workers, who has been tirelessly working in the slum. We are proud of you, MENKA!!!!

The year 2021 started with much hope that COVID-19 will fade away and life will be back to normal. Soon the front line workers across the country started to receive their vaccinations. Next were the senior citizens, and then 45+ were opened up for receiving their jabs. Simultaneously, the offices and businesses were also being opened up on 50% attendance basis, to pep up the confidence of the general public. Schools were also opened up for senior grades on a 50%

attendance basis. However, by end of March 2021, the downward curve of COVID-19 started to move upward sharply and the signs of second wave were much in visibility. Schools were again closed and strict lockdown was once again imposed in April, May, and June.

The second wave was much more devastating than what everyone was expecting. This time it attacked the middle aged and young people and with those with co-morbidities. Many families lost their near and dear ones. And this situation caused much panic around. The vaccination drive was on full swing and the number of casualties were soaring new heights simultaneously.

Our health warrior, Menka, was a big support to us throughout. She, by virtue of being one of the ASHA workers¹, kept us updated about the ground reality and how we should prepare ourselves.

Witnessing the devastation caused by the second wave, there was a much anticipation of the third wave affecting small children. CFH took stock of the situation and prepared the teachers to remain alert and be ready in case the situation demands so.

In this backdrop we present below our report of hopes and joy and that of mutual support during the journey through the ups and down of COVID-19, the Pandemic.

Virtual connectivity with Learning Centre students – We are extremely happy to share that all our teachers continued to remain in touch with as many students as possible through the online mode. Pandemic was a time when everyone was going through a mental stress and it was very important to remain composed. Our teachers played a very important role throughout this period. Teachers kept in regular touch with children to –

- To provide them with emotional support,
- Help overcome the stress and trauma,
- To do counselling and advise children to follow all COVID norms and stay indoors,
- To check out with children about their wellness and if they needed any support.

Our teachers spent a lot of time doing activities with children. This was one effective way to bust out the stress building among children. Teachers kept children engaged in activities and provided them support in their academic work. Teachers sent assignments to children and also helped them to do the homework which was being sent to them by their respective school teachers. Children were equally responsive to our centre teachers and posted back their completed assignments. Children demonstrated their creative skills and made many handicraft items using the stuff available at their homes. All the important days and festivals were celebrated online with children, including, Diwali, Christmas, New Year, Republic Day, Independence Day, Yoga Day, etc.

COVID protection sanitization kit – We distributed sanitation kits to all centre students of CFH. The kits contained N95 mask, surgical mask for double protection, pocket size sanitizer spray, and anti-germ soaps. The spray bottles are

¹ ASHA Worker – The ASHA worker is the trained health worker appointed by the health Department at the grassroot level, to work in the community. ASHA means Hope.

refillables. The teachers were provided additional big cans of the sanitizers so that children can refill their sanitization spray bottles.

In addition to this, we provided triple layered cloth masks to all children. These cloth masks were collectively stitched by our tailoring centre trainees and teacher. The tailoring teacher and her trainee students stitched over 700 cloth masks for distribution to children and for distribution to among the community.





Glimpse of activities at the centres

Learning Centres - – We are running 13 learning centres spread across six slums. The two new centres were set up in informal way in September this year, and since the response turned out to be more than our expectation, we identified rented rooms and formally opened up these centres (with limited attendance) from October onwards. The biggest challenge and the reason for opening up these new centres is that these centres have children studying in grade 3. Due to the lockdown, these children have passed Grade 1 and 2 but so far have not got the opportunity to go to school and not seen their teachers and classmates. So, practically, these children have to learn from scratch. And our teachers have to put lot of effort in helping these children to fast catch up with their studies before they are promoted to Grade 4.

All the Learning Centres are running well and have children, mostly girls, from the local community. Children have graduated to the next grades and continue to attend the centres. We continue to provide free facilities and support material to children to enable them study well in their schools. We continued to provide supplementary reading material at the centres wherever there were children of senior grades. And most importantly, despite the pandemic, most of the old children have stayed in the slums and have continued with us.



Here is a detailed recap of the activities held across the centres during the year.

- **Laptop use by children** – We had received 12 used laptops from Alex and Volker. During the pandemic our senior students used these laptops for doing their school projects and for studying online. The computer training workshop for children which was organized in February 2020, proved to be useful to children. The pandemic created a situation where school studies were taking place online. And it reiterated the fact that we should work towards providing opportunities for children to learn basic computer skills.



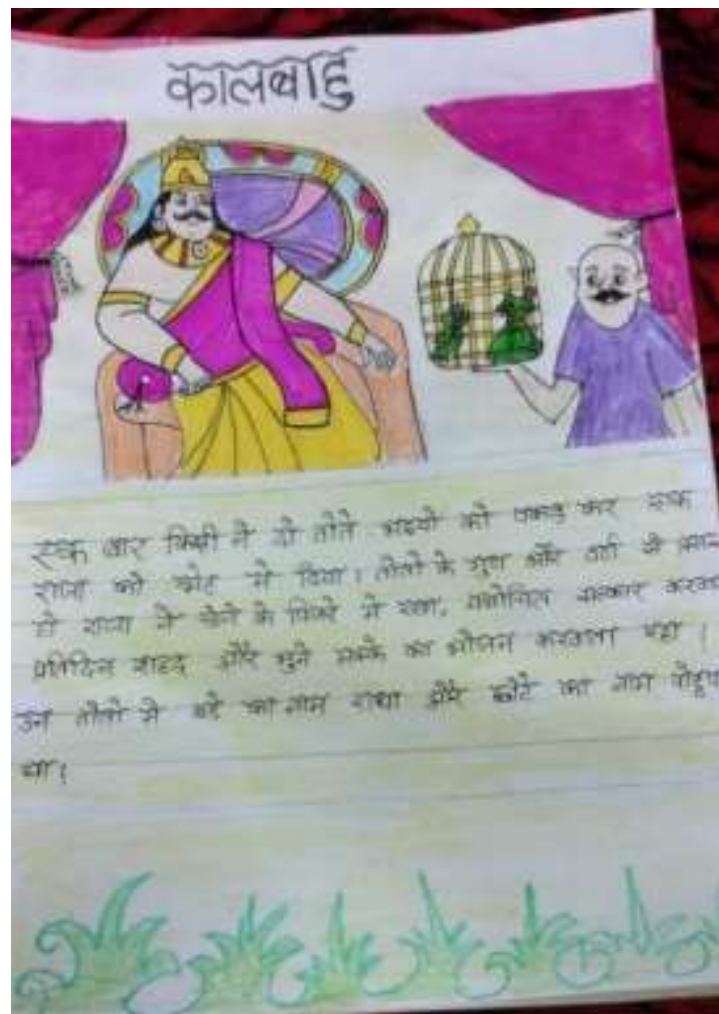
- **Summer Camp – Due to the COVID, this year also we could not organize summer camp for children**

However, the work with the children was constantly on and we celebrated all festivals and important days with our centre children.

We realized that over a period of time the centre children have acquired/honed their creative skills. Some of them did amazing sketchings, shadings, drawings, paintings, while others came out with beautiful artistic decoration pieces. We are exploring volunteers to extent art classes for those who already have artistic hand.

- **LearnSanskrit.com and drawings** – Our centre children enjoyed making drawing to depict scenes of Indian Fable stories – Panchtantra, Jatak

Kathas. These drawings were created for the stories on the LearnSanskrit.com. The website has kindly accepted CFH as one of its preferred NGOs and the users of the website are encouraged to donate to CFH. During the year, we did receive a few small individual donations ranging between \$50-100.



- **Distribution of goody bags** – Throughout the pandemic period, our moto has been to share happiness with children. During the times, when there was soft lockdown, we organized numerous online competitions for children and distributed goody bags to all of them to encourage their participations.

Children were called one by one to their respective centres to collect their goody bags as well as nutrition.

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- **New Teachers on-board** – The time seems to have taken a full circle. We have four new teachers onboard, of whom, two of them are passouts of our centres.



Soniya, has replaced Jyoti at the Shanti colony centre. Jyoti has joined IT stream.



Reena has been appointed for the Sanjay Colony learning centre.



Komal (Nandini) has replaced Sangeeta at the Bheem Basti centre. Sangeeta has recently become the proud mother of a baby girl.

Komal is a passout of the MILA Learning Centre and is now pursuing graduation from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). She is very good in dramatics.

Teachers' vaccination – Except for Shazia, all other teachers have received their first dose of the COVID vaccine, a few of them have received their second dose as well. Although government had opened up vaccination for 45+ age



Nishu has been appointed for the Beeru Camp learning centre.

Nishu is a passout of the Bapu Colony Learning Centre and is now pursuing graduation from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). She has a very artistic hand and does very good art work.

group in May itself, however due to long queues and shortage of vaccines, they couldn't get the jab earlier. Shazia is undergoing treatment for her nose and has been advised by her doctor for not to go for vaccination at this point.

Academic achievement –

Despite the disrupted school studies, we are extremely proud to share that this academic year 16 students from our centres appeared for their board examinations, of these 13 were from Grade 10. The three girls who completed their senior secondary schooling are now pursuing graduation from the Open University. Due to the intensity of the pandemic, the schools remained closed for almost entire academic period, and students studied by attending the online classes held by their respective schools. Only in January-February, 10th and 12th grade students were called to schools to attend physical classes on turn basis but were soon stopped as the second wave started to pick up.

There were no board examinations this year, students were given grades and marks based on their academic performance during the year. The schools carried out semester assessments through the project work, assignments, and internal tests. It gives a satisfying feeling that our children performed consistently well in their online classes and scored very good results in their respective board examinations. Their results are presented in the table below:

S.No.	Name of Student	Class	Result in Board Exam
1	Rafiya	12 th	84%
2	Sofia	12 th	84%
3	Sapna	12 th	66%
4	Ashsiya	10 th	65%
5	Geeta	10 th	70%
6	Mallika	10 th	60%
7	Priyanka	10 th	68%
8	Shikha	10 th	65%
9	Anjali	10 th	61%

10	Priya	10 th	49%
11	Ritu	10 th	55%
12	Yashpal	10 th	58%
13	Nikhil	10 th	66%
14	Harsh	10 th	54%
15	Laxmi	10 th	48%
16	Urmila	10 th	53%

Diwali celebration with Teachers – this year, we distributed 5L capacity pressure cookers and sweets to our teachers on the festival of Diwali. The lockdown period has caused lot of hardship for everyone and we thought to bring a little cheer and happiness to everyone in these times of restrictions. Our teachers were much happy with this thoughtful gift.



World Yoga Day, June 21, 2021



Joy in disguise and self learning – In the past one and a half year, children have had the best of long vacation they could have ever asked for. Pandemic created a situation where teaching was happening online and children had all time to do something new. Many children learnt new skills of using google effectively, watching DIYs (do it yourself) while others spent time playing games and watching videos and chatting. Below we present some of the glimpses of the beautiful art work done by them and it simply reflects their JOY. Overall, they are happy of achieving new skills.

Important days and festivals celebrated during journey through Pandemic





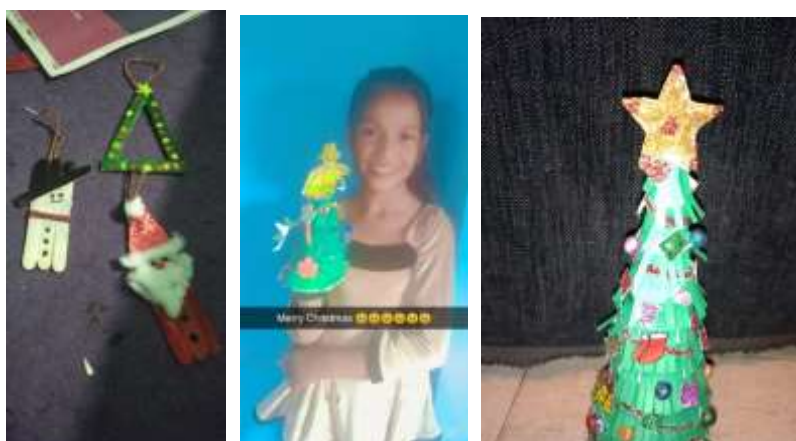
INDEPENDENCE DAY – JAI HIND



GOODY BAGS for ALL Seasons



MERRY CHRISTMAS



Art, Craft and Drawings



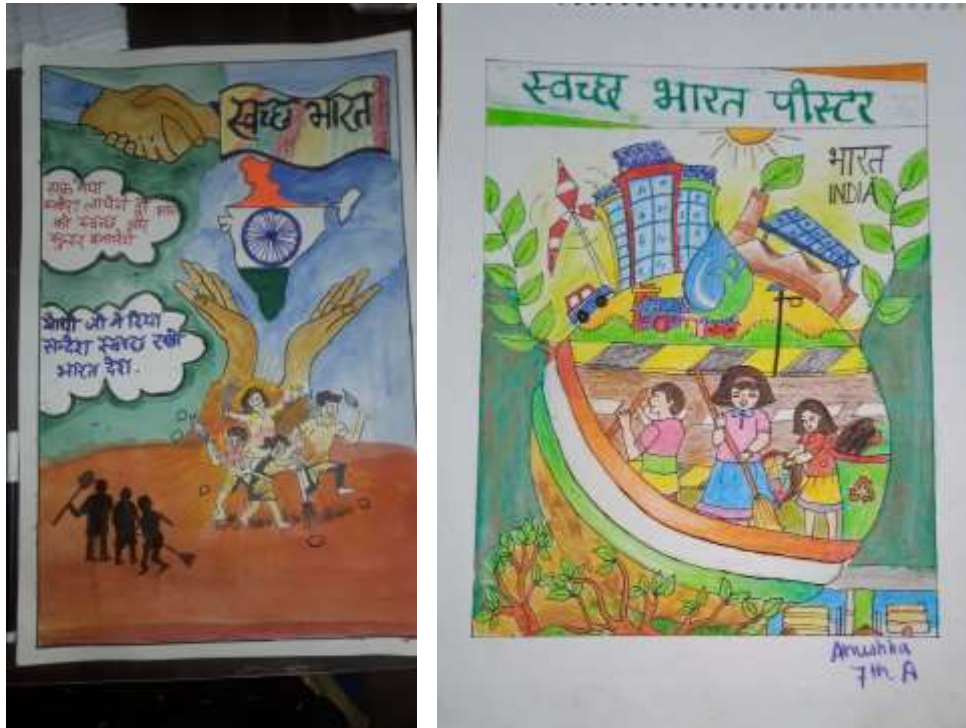






Posters and Charts to commemorate important days

Clean India



World Environment Day



World Population Day



Save Girl Child



Mahatma Gandhi Birth Anniversary



COVID-19 Awareness



The Road ahead – During the past one and half year, our children have suffered a lot on the academic front. Despite the best efforts by their school teachers, parental and our Learning Centres' teachers support; children have suffered significant learning losses. The absence of real teacher – student interaction, has

caused a lot of long term setback to the learning graph of these children living in the slums. The schools were conducting online classes, but not all children could benefit from those. Many parents did not have means to arrange for the gadgets needed for attending the online classes. And those students who were given smart phones by their parents, spent the time watching you tube videos and in playing online games.

We were always aware of this situation and planned out as road map for bring children back on the track. And we wanted to use the 'opportunity in disguise' for the benefit of children. The lockdown situation provided enough time to give individualized attention to children and help them in the best possible manner. So we decided to call 4 students at a time to the centres and give them dedicated time.

- a. **Printed worksheets** – From the month of August, when we realized that the number of infected cases were going down, we started to call children to the centre on a weekly basis and give away worksheets and nutrition together. Teachers checked the worksheets and when children visited the centre on the subsequent week, the teachers discussed the mistakes in the worksheets with the children, and gave them the next sets of worksheets along with the weekly nutrition.

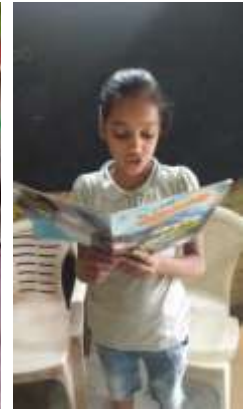
Along with this, the teachers made children write on the black board, for one on one practice.





- b. **Book reading** - From July onwards, we started conducting loud book reading on a one to one basis with children. The centre teachers insisted that regardless of the grades they are studying in, all children coming to centres read story books. Teachers then give them work to be completed while children are at centres and our focus is only on Hindi and Math.





- c. **Individual centre wise plans** – Each teacher has done analysis of each student on his/her learning loss in the past few months and accordingly have grouped children into three groups – weak, progressive and satisfactory. The idea is to bring all students at the same level in the coming 2-3 months. Our focus is on Hindi and Math. Towards this, for building fluency in Hindi, teachers are doing loud reading with children, giving them dictations, making children write passages and for coping with math, students are learning tables, doing sums using the four basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. We were very much aware of this concerning situation and constantly brainstormed this topic during teachers’ meeting.
- d. **Setting up new centres** – It always gives a happy feeling to see old and new faces of children at the learning centres. Many of them joined us when they were in junior grades in school and over the periods have moved into higher grades and they need more focused attention. Hence, at the first opportunity, we set up two new centres, thereby taking the total number of centres to 13. We have opened new centres at Sanjay colony, and at Beeru camp. The new centres have been set up to cater to more children. We plan to add senior wings to these two centres in the coming months.

Nutrition program – We resumed the nutrition snack distribution in January this year but it was again stopped due to onset of second wave. However, from July onwards, we have been regular in distributing snacks. Initially we gave them supplies on a weekly basis, but from September onwards continued to implement nutrition program at the centres till mid-march after which the centres were closed down. Children at all the centres – morning and evening received nutritious snacks five days a week. We distributed peanuts, savoury lentils, butter cookies and cream biscuits to children. Occasionally, we distributed spicy savoury snacks on consistent request by children. This year we could not distribute any fruits as it was not feasible.

Our suppliers for the snacks are big respected brands, namely, Haldiram, Sunfeast and Cremica. Despite many external factors, the suppliers continued to supply us the snacks at the same rate, thus we were well within our budget.

In addition to the regular distribution, on special celebrations, such as, Annual Day, Christmas, Children’s Day, etc., we distributed goodie bags to children. The goodie bags are always a welcome as they contain more happiness in them – fruit juice, chocolate cookies, some junk stuff (which all children love to eat), etc.



Teachers' meeting and training – We did limited activities with our teachers during the year. The reason being the second wave of the Pandemic attacked the middle aged population and all our teachers are in the age group of 25–45 years. In contrast to the first wave, when people were falling ill and were recovering, the second wave was much intense, devastating and was much damaging. There were much more casualties than the first wave. Keeping all these factors in mind, teachers' safety and protection was our utmost objective. We insisted that our teachers remained indoors at home and that they connected with the centre children only through phone calls and online. The teachers meetings were therefore got restricted. We started to meet the teachers in person from July onwards. We focused on helping teachers improve their pronunciation and thus their reading and writing ability. It has been planned as a series of workshops, where teachers themselves read, write and do self-introspection. Teachers are enjoying doing these workshops and are happy to self-check and improve themselves.

The other focus of our teachers' meetings has been to discuss about helping children cope with the learning losses and about the strategy of meeting children in person in small groups.

