

Mithra Foundation

Project title: Empowerment of girl children through education

Food aid for Mithra school children

Mithra Foundation is an independent, secular, voluntary organization working among the migrant population living in the slums and pavements of Bangalore City. It was started in 1992 by a team of health, educational and development professionals. It was formally registered in 1995 and since then got fully involved with the community to achieve its aim namely “the empowerment of children and women”. Though its focus group is the dalits who have migrated to a fast growing city, Bangalore, the priority is given to the girl children and adolescent girls. Presently Mithra works in twelve slums located in the northeast of Bangalore city covering 60,000 migrant populations.

Mithra has four trustees who are the legal holders of the organization. It is expanded to an advisory committee which is decision making body for all the major issues. They are the policy makers too. Eight out of twelve are women. They represent the organization with the government and others. They delegate the powers and responsibilities to the unit chief of each sector. These unit heads are known as co-coordinators. Each sector is staffed with teachers or animators. There are 42 staff members, either full time, part time or on consultancy basis.

The main aim of Mithra is to improve the socio-economic status of slum community by integrated development and empowerment process of women and children. It was formed from the realization that unless the poor and the underprivileged children are given with appropriate and relevant life education, any amount of input and resource spent on them at later stage is futile. Hence early education program especially to the girl children of the poor is critical.

Mithra works not only at micro level in the slums, it also takes up programs at State level such as training of primary school teachers and Human Rights education program for high school students. Around 250 schools from 12 districts participate in this program

Project background and need for intervention:

Following are the other relevant information:

- Under 14 and above 5 constitute 45% of the total population.
- Only one third of them reach safely the end of primary education.
- The school dropout is an acceptable common practice.

- 75% of the school dropouts are girl children.
- Truancy rates are very high and many of the truants end up in informal sector.
- Girls participation is of considerable rate.
- Juvenile delinquency rate is on the increase due to rapid growth of the slums.
- Girls constitute 40% of them.
- Health status especially of the girl children is poor.

The present project addresses issues of girl children.

The poor children especially the Dalits and among them the girl children are our primary beneficiaries. These are the children of the migrant workers who are employed in the informal sectors for daily wage. These migrant families are displaced from the drought hit backward districts from the adjacent States. Therefore our program for the educational support to girl children includes also the family support and community programs.

The specific challenges to girls' access to education in our society:

1. The illiterate parents and especially the mothers.
2. Alcoholic parents and poverty.
3. School drop out as a prevalent practice.
4. Irrelevant education system
5. Poor delivery of education in the government schools.
6. High Cost for the private schools
7. Consumerism.
8. Gender biased mentality & discrimination
9. Poor housing
10. Social exclusion
11. Social structure.
12. Male dominant social institutions like, religion, schools, politics etc.
13. Malnourishment and lack of care at home.
14. Under stimulated family background.
15. Lack of encouragement and motivation.
16. Dowry system.
17. Media and the distorted values that are being propagated.

The educational program for the slum children include:

- Pre-schools for the children from 4 to 6 at slum centers.
- Running of alternative school for the underprivileged.
- Supplementary education
- Mother's meetings
- Cultural competitions
- Summer camp
- Especial coaching classes.
- Educational trips
- Child labor camps.
- Awareness and support to the disabled children.
- Awareness and health related assistance to children.

Mithra school:

Mithra School aims not only to give the academic education but the over-all development of the students. The teachers see the children not only their ability to study and excel in lessons but their over-all growth, mental, physical, emotional and social. Mithra School caters to all children irrespective of creed, race, region, sex and religion. Among them the girls are given preferential option.

The outcome of the crude and bad practices of elimination of Girl children has started exhibiting its adverse impact on the society. The girl fetuses were aborted, female infants were put to death, and girl children were discriminated till they were killed at primary level. If survived through they were subjected to all forms of harassment till they realize why they were born in the first place. There had been massive campaign by NGOs like Mithra to do away with such violence of Human Rights.

Now the Sex ratio has come down to 926 in many parts of the country. It is 958 in Karnataka. This is being reflected in the pupil's population also.

Mithra identifies these girls from the slums and promote their education as their basic right. The right to education for children and especially for girls is being spread in the communities where Mithra works. And once these girls were put into formal education to join the mainstream, Mithra tries to help them out. One such venture is the girl child project.

Mithra follows the state syllabus and collaborate with the local government. We participate in all the activities of the government such as census taking flag demonstration, media works recommended by the education department of South Zone of Government of Karnataka.

Presently the School has classes from L.K.G –VIII std. The strength of our school is 200 in the beginning. Well qualified teachers were appointed in the school. On the beginning our children struggled a lot to cope up with their studies, but our teachers worked hard & made their learning better. The Subjects were English, Kannada, Hindi, Maths, Social & Science & also Computer. To evaluate children regular tests are conducted and the children's academic performance is monitored.

The prizes were awarded both for academics, good behavior and above all for the children in distress. This means due to adverse socio-economic background and untoward incidents in the families, children could cope up with the studies and managed to secure reasonable marks. This we do recognize in our school.

The pupils of Mithra School learn also dance, Music, Yoga, Martial art - Karate, band training, Art classes, gardening, tailoring and computers. Other skills such as reading, debate, quiz, speeches, fancy dress, dramatics, essay writing, indoor and outdoor games, educational trips etc are inbuilt in the curriculum that the children of Mithra would excel in overall development. Indoor games, sports items were also part of their syllabus. The school celebrates various special events to make the children more active.

Garden Project: The purpose was to instruct the children to have a school with creative garden. In the month of August we started gardening class for V, VI, VII and VIII Std Students. The students cleaned the place for Garden for Two weeks. They planted Coriander, Chilly, Tomato, Onion, Tulasi, Rose plant for the first time. Children enjoy doing the garden project.

Food aid program: Physical health is very crucial to total development of the children Mithra helps these unfortunate children not merely with the education alone but also with regular health programs. The inference by the medical personal is that they need some additional nutritious meal a day so that their level of learning and living will drastically improve. The food aid is very much needed for these children who are constantly under scarcity of food at home.

Mithra gives food aid for all the children while they attend the classes. The food aid consists of any of the followings:

- Indigenous nutritious powder. It contains nine cereals well dried and ground. Sprouted cereals,
- Boiled vegetables with Variety rice,
- Egg, Milk, Biscuits, Bread, Fruits, any two

- The meal would consist of rice (carbohydrate) , dhal (protein) vegetables (Vitamins)

Other activities of Mithra include:

- Teacher's training course.
- Woman sangam formation.
- Savings and credit
- Trainings and capacity building of women and their leaders
- Legal education and services
- Counseling and support to women in distress
- Economic activities to enhance household income.
- Human rights education program - Karnataka (School level)
- Vocational Skills trainings
- Health camps for children and women.

The future plans, in short, are :

*Uniform to the girl children. There are quite a number of girl children who are in need of proper school dresses. Mithra has come across children discontinuing their education for want of proper dress. It will be good if Mithra can fulfill this need of girl children.

*Domestic violence in the slums is so common that Mithra contemplates to take up an initial survey cum research with the assistance of a forum of women lawyers.

GRANT REQUEST INFORMATION However the financial assistance is sought only for the mere educational help to the girls and meal a day for Mithra School Children. **20000 USD for one year.**

M	
i	
A. Educational support to Girl Children project	
B. Food aid to all children project	
Budget for one year in USD	
Girl child project for 92 girl children	USD
Note books and text books	21
Uniforms, shoes, bag, edu.materials etc	63
Educational trips & Special programs	23
Travel, health etc	19
Total cost per child	125
For 70 children	8750
 Food aid to children of Mithra (250 Children)	
Rs 6 per child per day for 300 days	45
For the whole school of 250 children	11250
Grand Total	11250