

Padho aur Badho

An AROH-GAIL Initiative



From the President's Desk

It is a pleasure to bring out the second issue of the Newsletter of Padho aur Badho, a programme initiated by the AROH Foundation in association with and support of GAIL. The programme focuses on the out-of-school children and dropouts in the 6-14 age group and is aimed at bringing all these children in our target communities to the formal schools, thus giving them a better future through proper education.

We are glad to inform you that we have been able to establish all 50 centres, to be set up under the project, in slums of NOIDA and East Delhi and we are now reaching out to nearly 1500 poor and deprived children. Most of these children are victims of difficult circumstances and belong to such abysmally poor families that they are forced by their parents to work in nearby industries and households. Many of our centres are catering to children who literally grow up on garbage dumps and are seen sifting piles of garbage to earn small money. Their dirty hands and feet tell their sad story, but the shine in their eyes when they come to the Padho aur Badho Centre and wear their I-Cards, is unmistakable and a reward for us.

The newsletter aims to inform those who are concerned about our activities and also to open a window of opportunity for them to get involved with the programme in various ways if they wished. Our helping hand would go a long way in bringing a meaningful difference in the lives of these less privileged children.

Neelam Gupta
President
AROH Foundation



SAYING NO to Child Labour!



Despite all policy pronouncements and the efforts made in the last 60 years of her independence, India, one of the largest democracies in the world is home to thousands of neglected and destitute children. It epitomizes the unique combination of development and marginalisation, and witnesses that currently there are about 5 to 6 crore children without physical access to formal primary schooling facilities available within radius of 1 km of their habitations. The existing political will and bureaucratic apparatus of the country does not show much inclination towards providing the same even post the introduction of Article 21A into the Indian Constitution which ensures the Right to Basic & Primary Education to all children in the age group of 6-14.

The statistical information regarding child labour can never be taken to be precise, as there are areas where no accounting has been done, not only in India, but in the world. There are innumerable workshops and factories that have cramped up rooms where children work, eat and sleep. No one from the outside world would even know that they are working there. According to the statistics given by Indian government there are 20 million child labourers in the country, while other agencies claim that it is 50 million. Children in need of care and protection or under difficult circumstances, estimated to be nearly

35 million by the Ministry of Women and Child Development – GOI, as being without any socio-familial support.

AROH Foundation believes that as education contribute directly to the objective of human development by preparing the individual to access information, 'economic opportunity', employment and income, hence, it is social and development non negotiable.

Restoring the childhood of millions of neglected and marginalized children and ensuring the provision of their rights comprises the primary mission of AROH. AROH believes that the rights and needs of children are synonymous. For the same reason, all children deserve the basics of education, food, clothing, recreation and medical care.



Most of our beneficiaries are victims of economic exploitation and often do work which is physically and mentally harmful for them and their future growth. They are ragpickers, teastall workers, errand boys in factories, shoe polish boys, car cleaners, etc. having drudgery writ large over their faces, hands and feet. It is a challenge to bring them to the centres and restore their rightful childhood.

AROH has been able to touch those pockets where the entire community is thriving on child labour. It is sad to note how the exploitation of little children for labour has become an accepted practice in these communities and perceived by the local population as a necessity to alleviate poverty.

In many of the pockets of East Delhi, children work as rag-pickers and their parents make them work for long hours in unhygienic conditions. The situation of child labourers in these slums is also desperate. Children work for long hours at a stretch with only a small break for meals. The meals are also frugal and the children are mal-nourished. Parents sacrifice their children's education to the growing needs of their families and younger siblings and view them as wage earners for the entire clan.

Our Centres have created a stir against child labour in these shabby hamlets where each child suffers from exploitative situation. To pull them out from such a scene is no easy task. After encountering parental resistance, we often face severe resistance from their employers. But AROH is determined to uproot the demon of child labour, from the lives of our little angles.

AROH has been able to bring 1500 such children, working as child labour to Padho aur Badho Centres. We also look after them under our intervention Khilta Bachpan which takes holistic care of these kids.

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OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

In the last month, we have been able to catch up establish more centers to reach our target and the total count is 50 now which have been established in different communities in Delhi and NOIDA. More than 1500 children have enrolled with these centres and many of them have been enrolled in schools as well and are enjoying the learning experience. The centres located at Dallopura, Khichdipur, Kalyanpuri, Trilokpuri, Khoda, Kondli, Agapur and Sector 8 in NOIDA to name a few has been working to provide basic education to the out-of-school children in these areas.



Proud to display their I-cards - Kids at Ashok Nagar Centre

Centre Feature: KALYANPURI Block 13



Happy faces of children at Kalyanpuri Block 13 Centre

The slum population of Delhi is estimated to be three million. A huge majority living a life of abject despair and destitution in one of the fastest growing cities of the world. Still they are survivors, their spirit is not dampened by the hardships and bitterness they endure. They have modest dreams, as humble and honest as their eyes, hands, their poor, hardworking bodies. They dream for a better life, a better future.

All children at the Kalyanpuri Centre belong to the families of rag-pickers who have been forced into the 'trade' to gather more junk which can bring additional income. Apart from rag-picking, these children also fall prey to petty thefts and drug abuse. It is most important to hold their hands and prevent further trafficking of the childhood.

Much of the slum is a garbage dump. The plethora of open drains and sewage nullahs run right between the

dingy one-room 'homes' where children play and occasionally fall into them. They are mostly blocked and full of black shiny sludge. Women gather around hand pumps to collect 'toxic' drinking water in knee deep slush flowing out of these drains while children run barefoot all across these inner-lanes covered in kichar (decaying wet mud), domestic and human waste.

The children become the worst sufferers in such slums as they remain under a constant threat emanating from there abysmal environment. They are exposed to stagnant water, open drains, heaps of rubbish, noise and air pollution which have left them living on a platform of diseases and miseries. The overcrowding, unsanitary conditions and lack of education combine to push them into one of the highest scores of deprivation and poverty.

None of the children in this locality has ever seen a school. The parents are poor migrants who do not have enough earnings to sustain the family. Each one has to be two working hands if one has to live and survive. Besides, the documents, resident proofs and affidavits needed for school admission are not there. How can they go to school when schools do not take them, the parents ask?

AROH has developed a unique NFE (Non-Formal Education) model that has transformed the education system in such localities. 50 Padho and Badho centres set up in partnership with GAIL India are bringing hope in the lives of nearly 1500 slum children through a customised intervention. In the slum clusters of Kalyanpuri alone there are four AROH Padho aur Badho centres reaching out to 120 deprived beneficiaries.



A garbage and waste-filled lane in Kalyanpuri Block 13.



Deprived out-of-school children of the block who are now enrolled at the Padho and Badho Centre.

Knowledge enlightens, empowers, questions, seeks and implants an urge for propulsion. In these centres, learning is promoted by nurturing positive experiences in early childhood which becomes a decisive factor for the quality of life the child will enjoy later. There is a wide range of programmes and activities relating to their needs.

What AROH strives for:

- To lift these children from a life of abject poverty and deprivation to a life where their basic needs are met and rights are protected. They are protected from being forced into working as child labour, begging and rag-picking, while being prepared for

mainstreaming into a formal school.

- AROH helps their wards in preparation of documents required for school education and get them admitted to formal school nearby at the earliest.
- We look for opportunities to provide meaningful exposures and experiences to the kids which enrich their lives and give them a taste of life which their more fortunate counterparts live. Buddy Bus of Nirula's is one such programme.
- Through Joy of Giving, we urge the better privileged to support these families by donating their

They too, have a right to dream, right to education and right to a life of dignity and security! Don't they?

In this sub-human realm of decay, dying and decline, bloom a million dreams of a better and beautiful life.

AROH strives to give these little ones a helping hand before the dreams die out and get buried in these

garbage heaps. AROH tries to provide opportunities of a more equitable life by taking these children under the fold of Khilta Bachpan, an intervention that brings a ray of hope in the lives of these less privileged children.

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used things like books, clothes, stationery and toys.

- Through these kids, we are able to reach out to each member of the family and help them through our other interventions, thus enhancing support for a holistic community development.

For more information: info@aroh.in

EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

A Workshop on strategies for high quality, Effective educational efforts

On 8th of March 2010, the first Educators' Workshop was organised for the educators of the centers of the NFE Program. The workshop was aimed at empowerment of the educators as well who would be better equipped after attending such workshops when it comes to taking care of their centers. The workshop was hosted at the Head Office of AROH and educators of 30 centers participated in the same.

The workshop was more of a platform for the teachers to exchange their issues and challenges they had been facing while working at the center. The solutions exchanged would certainly be helpful for the growth of the centers.

The workshop began with a welcome address given by Ms. Jyoti. She mentioned about AROH's history and how it has shifted from research work to field work serving the underprivileged over the past few years.

Then Ms. Shilpa and Ms. Ambika took over and started the discussion on the strategies of the project. They informed the educators about the importance of having the chart papers in their classrooms, meliorating the look of the room and putting the AROH sign boards outside their centres. The educators were told to teach their students to exercise, do prayers and maintain their personal hygiene apart from the regular studies. They were also asked to conduct a counselling session with the parents every Saturday or so.

One of the strategies was dividing the students in different levels according to their intelligence so the lower level students could seek help of the higher level students. The educators were also told to motivate the students at their centers in every way possible and to prepare their students for competitions like painting, storytelling, poem recitation etc. that AROH foundation conducts from time to time.

After the discussion, the educators were asked to share amongst themselves their experiences. Some of them recited their self written poems; few shared their creative ideas of teaching using puppets and puzzles. Main inputs were given by Rajni and Kamla (Khichdipur centres) who have a teaching experience of 3 years.

Later the participants were divided into 6 groups of 4-5 people and each group was given two chart papers. In 45 minutes time, using their skills they had to build creative tools for teaching Hindi swar vyanjan and number counting. The groups then presented their brilliant and impressive creations. After a short tea break, Ms. Shilpa enquired about the educator's needs for their centres apart from the basic things already being provided by AROH foundation. The main demands included colours and a bulletin board.



Educator Seema sharing her experience



Padho aur Badho functionaries conducting the workshop



Educators engaged in an animated group discussion



Educators attending a counselling session.

At the end, the educators were asked to fill up the feedback forms expressing their views about the workshop's content, design, instructors, results and how they would improve this workshop. The session concluded with a vote of thanks and by telling the participants about the new PADHO AUR BADHO's monthly newsletter.

Shilpa, Jyoti, Ambika, Priyanka and a few other volunteers conducted the 3 hour long workshop.

Issues and Challenges

We have already been able to enrol a lot of kids from the localities we have been setting up our centers. The children have been provided with the environment which is very conducive and comfortable and thus they enjoy coming and attending classes at these centers.

Committed educators like Maya very devotedly go into houses of these slums and encourage the children to attend classes in order to ensure a better and sustainable future.

But according to the educators, one major problem which they face while striving for a better growth of these children is that the parents of the kids are not co-operative at times as they see these kids as more earning hands. Thus what is proposed is regular counselling sessions with the parents of the kids where they can be sensitized about the kind of growth we envisage for their kid.



Educators have a tough time convincing the parents for sending their children to the centres.



The challenge is to keep the children and the centre spic and span, and slowly the kids are managing their own hygiene.

Worth a Mention...

Educator : Maya

Age : 26 Years (Married)

NFE Centre : Village Dallupura, Delhi

Maya has passed class 10th from a school near Haridwar and has been teaching at AROH's NFE centres for the past 3 months now. She says, "I enjoy teaching these children and it has become a very vital part of my life now." The students did not know anything in the beginning when they joined the centre but now they can easily read



and write English alphabets, Hindi swar-vyanjan and numbers. She appreciates the few talented students studying at her centre. She doesn't mind spending a couple of hours extra to teach a student who really wants to learn. Apart from studies, she tells the students how important self hygiene is. Maya loves her students and when her students were asked about her, they said they love her too. She personally monitors each and every student of her centre which makes her closer to her students. Maya admires the efforts of AROH and is glad to be a part of it. She feels that it is leading to her growth as well.

She is pleased to have been able to motivate the kids around to join the center. But the parents need to be counselled as well on a regular interval as this would lead to an over all development of these kids. She says we must not limit the number and should strive towards enrolling each and every kid in the locality.

Her dedication is exemplary.

Buddy Bus Ride - this time for Khichdipur Block 8

We have been able to seek support towards this noble cause from the major eating chain Nirula's in the form of BUDDY BUS Program, where every fortnight a bus from Nirula's comes to one of the centers of the NFE Program and take the children to their



ice cream production unit in Sector 1, NOIDA. The kids are first oriented about the same and then they get to visit the whole unit and gather information on the production system.

This time Block No 8, Khichdipur, Delhi was the lucky NFE Centre who on 2nd April, 2010 along with their educator Rajni visited the Nirula's. At the end of the trip, the children are offered with Buddy meals, which the students tend to enjoy the most. The students are asked to discuss about the visit when they are back in the center. This tends to give them a learning experience in a very different way. The trip is meant to be a fun cum learning excursion.

Upcoming Events...

- 5th April 2010, Health Camp being organized for the Khichdipur NFE centres.
- 22nd April 2010, Earth Day celebration by all the NFE Children through Tree Plantation Programme
- 1st May 2010: Labour Day by creating awareness about child labour
- 9th May 2010, Mother's Day celebration by the kids of NFE centres through Painting Competition at the head office of AROH, F-52, sector 8, Noida
- 20th June 2010, Father's Day celebration through a cultural programme at the centres

HEALTH CAMP at Khichripur Centre

More than 100 children were examined at the health camp organised by AROH Foundation on **23 March, 2010** at Khichripur through the AROH-Smile on Wheels mobile health care van. The four-member team which comprised of Dr. A. K. Pandey and three para-medical staff diagnosed the children. The age group of the children was between 5-14 years. Free Medicines have been distributed to the diagnosed children. The referral card of all the children was made by the doctors in health camp so that they may provide free health services to these children every month. 105 of the registered kids were examined on the first day itself. Most of the children we found to be suffering from skin ailments resulting from poor sanitation and hygiene or were lacking in oral and dental health. Improper sanitation in their dwelling areas and lack of knowledge about health and hygiene among their parents were found to be the main causes. The parents were also counselled and made aware of hazards.

Since most of our centres are located in areas where healthcare facilities are non-existent, this camp brought good cheer within the community and the parents were happy to have their children examined by a qualified doctor. A general check up record has been kept by us and follow-ups will be done periodically. 'AROH-Smile on Wheels' will effectively cater to the health care needs of the underprivileged population.



An APPEAL

We have initiated the donation drive called the "**JOY of GIVING**" and urge all to join hands with us in this endeavour. We are delighted to state that AROH Foundation has been making efforts to provide educational opportunity to the out-of-school children from weaker and marginalized sections of the society. We are providing free-of-cost education and care to them at our centres. However, since they come from poor background, they are unable to afford stationery items, books and notebooks, toys and educational games, etc. Most of these items are often thrown away after slight use by our better endowed children. 'Joy of Giving' would enable them to help a needy kid by giving away an item which they no longer use. In turn, they also learn to value what they've got in life.