



Hari Sankar Foundation

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Quarterly Activity Report

Jan 2023 to March 2023

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Introduction

Location

Jivacha Pada, a habitat of Tribal/Adivasi community situated in Aarey milk colony, Goregaon East, Mumbai.

Mission

Hari Sankar Foundation is an initiative by Kusters, Netherlands in Memory of Hari Sankar, founder of Kusters Engineering India. A non-profit organization started in April 2012, with the prime objective of carrying forward the ideals of engineering excellence, humanitarian values and extra commitments which Hari Sankar always stood for.

Goal

Wellbeing of children, families through sustainable development process.

Outcomes

- Enhanced academic performance of children 3 - 12 years in target area.
- Enhanced intellectual wellbeing of teenagers 13 - 18 years.
- To prevent children and women from being abuse and trafficked.
- Improved health seeking behaviour

Accomplishments

Education

Coaching classes

A project was initiated to provide coaching classes for students from the Adivasi community who were struggling academically due to the poor economic conditions of their families. Many parents in this community are illiterate and unable to support their children's studies, leading to poor academic performance. The coaching classes, consisting of 40 students (24 in primary and 16 in middle and high school), were conducted effectively during the reporting period. The project focused on improving students' learning in English, mathematics, and science.

The coaching aimed to enhance students' skills in reading and writing, preparing them for academic success. Currently, the students are well-prepared for their examinations, and there is hope that they will perform well in the upcoming annual exams. The project has observed that the children are actively participating in classes and studying with enthusiasm. Additionally, parents have become happier and more supportive, encouraging their children to study at home.

A mother of a primary school student expressed gratitude, stating, "We are very thankful to the Harisankar Foundation because our children are studying well due to the coaching classes."

Skill Training

Computer Classes

The Harisankar Foundation's project is also committed to educating the youth of Adivasi Pada (hamlet) for life. The objective of initiating the skill training program was to equip youths with various skills so they could provide additional income for their families, especially since most parents work as laborers with limited earnings.

The skill training program began in November-2022 with basic computer education, where 5 students were educated on basic computer knowledge, including Excel, Word, PowerPoint, letter drafting, and internet use, among other skills. After four months of rigorous training, all 5 students graduated in Basic Computer applications in February-2023. The team members of Kusters Engineering generously contributed their valuable time to facilitate teaching and support these most needy 5 students.

Upon completion of the course in February-23, the Harisankar Foundation organized a program to honor all graduate students with certificates. A student expressed gratitude to the Harisankar Foundation, stating, "Now, I could get a good job and support my parents." Such expressions from students highlight the pressing need for employment opportunities in Adivasi Pada. The foundation aims to increase the number of students in the next batch of computer education, encouraging them to learn advanced computer applications that will help them secure good jobs and support their families.

Sketching Classes

The Harisankar Foundation recognizes the power of sketching and animation as a very effective tool for allowing children to express their thoughts. Many of these children are under stress due to issues such as neglect, poor education, and inadequate basic facilities in their living conditions. In an effort to address this, the foundation sought the assistance of Mr. Shashikant Sir, a member of Kusters Engineering, who initiated classes in the month of October-2022 with 12 children from Jivacha Pada.

The classes proved to be a highly creative and joyful activity for the children. All the children enthusiastically participated in the sketching classes and learned about expression, sketching, and storytelling through the medium of paper. These classes provided a means for the children to express themselves and share stories truthfully. Additionally, the activities helped them build team spirit and exchange the joy of learning. The project genuinely experienced the significance of sketching and animation in the lives of these children.

A student from the classes shared, "Now I can sketch my feelings and thoughts on paper." This reflects the positive impact of the program in empowering the children to communicate and express themselves through art.

Children and Women Empowerment

Child rights and child protection

During our engagement with children and families in Jivacha Pada, the foundation has recognized the vulnerability of children, particularly in a bustling metropolitan city like Mumbai. Considering the potential challenges related to child protection, the project strategically partnered with 'Shakti Vahini,' an organization dedicated to preventing the trafficking of children, especially girls. Under the 'School for Justice' Program, the Harisankar Foundation collaborated with Shakti Vahini to conduct an Awareness Program on Child Protection, benefiting 25 girl children.

Mrs. Savita Ranbhise, a social worker from School for Justice, adeptly covered the following topics during the program:

- Child Rights
- What is protection
- Why girl children need protection
- How to prevent Child Protection issues
- How to be safe

The awareness program provided valuable insights to the girl children on issues related to child protection. A participant expressed gratitude to the Harisankar Foundation, stating, "Now I came to know about my rights," while another girl conveyed appreciation, saying, "I am very thankful to Harisankar Foundation; I learned how to protect myself in dangerous situations." This feedback reflects the positive impact of the program in empowering these girls with knowledge and awareness about their rights and safety.

Women Empowerment

The Harisankar Foundation is dedicated to working with children, families, and communities. In the realm of families, the foundation organized a program on the occasion of 'International Women's Day' to share the message of women empowerment. On March 8, 2023, the foundation conducted a program with the assistance of the women's group from Jivacha Pada, where 50 women enthusiastically participated.

The objective of this program was to sensitize women on 'Gender Equality,' recognizing that the Adivasi community tends to be male-dominated, and in many cases, women have to compromise. The foundation invited Ms. Suvarna Telgote, an Advocate from the Mumbai High Court, to guide women on their fundamental rights. During the session, Advocate Ms. Suvarna emphasized women's rights and the freedoms granted by the Constitution of India, covering topics such as:

- How women can be Empowered
- The Law on Domestic Violence
- Opportunities for women in employment
- Protection of women

The Harisankar Foundation also invited Mrs. Riju Shilpi, a social worker, to provide guidance on Gender Equality. Mrs. Riju highlighted various opportunities for women to become entrepreneurs and contribute to family earnings, supporting the primary breadwinner. She also discussed how women could support other family members, fostering family love, togetherness, and sharing each other's burdens. The program provided a unique experience for all participants. A mother of two children expressed gratitude, saying, "We did not know about our fundamental rights, but thanks to the Harisankar Foundation for opening our eyes." This feedback underscores the impact of the program in empowering and enlightening women about their rights.

Celebration of Indian Festival

The Harisankar Foundation is also dedicated to enhancing Indian culture among children, recognizing that many are increasingly engaged with the internet and social media, potentially isolating themselves from various aspects of Indian heritage. On the auspicious occasion of 'Holi,' the foundation organized a small program where children learned about the triumph of good over evil, symbolized by removing bad habits and burning them in the Holi fire. The children also gained insights into the various colors symbolizing joy and unity in life through the program.

For the festival of 'Makar Sankranti' (The festival of Harvest), the Harisankar Foundation conducted a program where children learned to express gratitude to solar energy for sustaining life and providing food on our planet. During the program, children received small gifts of snacks from the foundation. The project observed that children were genuinely happy to participate in such programs and to understand the reasons behind the celebration of Indian festivals. After the program, a boy expressed, "I never thought that we have to thank Solar Energy, but through this program, I learned." Following the program, the tradition of sharing 'Til-gud' (Sesame-Jaggery) was observed, with participants exchanging these treats and saying, "Take sesame-jaggery and speak sweetly."

Health and hygiene

Repairing & Renovation of Common Toilet

Toilets are a fundamental and essential necessity for any community and family. In the Jivacha Pada area, an Adivasi community faced the challenge of lacking individual toilet facilities, relying on a common toilet. Unfortunately, this existing facility had deteriorated significantly, becoming unhygienic and unfit for use. The slum, housing 250 people, grappled with the daily inconvenience of accessing a suitable toilet. Frustrated and without proper facilities, some community members resorted to open defecation, contributing to an unhealthy atmosphere.

Harisankar Foundation became aware of this critical issue during its quarterly meeting with community leaders. Recognizing the urgency and importance of the matter, the foundation decided to address this pressing need. Engaging in discussions with the community, repairing the toilets situated on a hill in the area seemed challenging. However, with the collaborative efforts of the community families and leaders, this seemingly difficult task transformed into a possibility. The community expressed their happiness as the common toilets were repaired and renovated, totaling eight (four for women and four for men). Community youths took on the responsibility of cleaning and maintaining the toilets for the future.

After the repairs were completed, the toilets were handed over to the community, putting an end to open defecation, and the community members began using the facilities. Before the handover, Harisankar Foundation organized an awareness program on the health and hygiene of the community. During this session, community members were educated about the importance of toilet cleanliness, the elimination of open defecation, and general health and hygiene practices.

One community member expressed gratitude, stating, "We are thankful to Harisankar Foundation for providing our basic need for toilets." A community woman added, "It was embarrassing for me to resort to open defecation, but now, Harisankar Foundation has resolved the issue of toilets." This feedback underscores the positive impact of the foundation's intervention in meeting a basic necessity and improving the overall well-being of the community.

Picture Gallery

Coaching and Computer Classes



Festival Celebration



Sketching Classes



Renovation of Toilets



Health and Hygiene Program for Women


