

CHANGING THE FUTURE FOR FAMILIES IN THE SLUMS OF INDIA

A REPORT ON
LITTLEBIGHELP
COMMUNITY CENTRES

A TFWA CARE
SUPPORTED PROJECT

LittleBigHelp
www.littlebighelp.com

Community Centres



68 CHILDREN FROM THE SLUM ARE NOW IN SCHOOL

Thank you so much TFWA Care for your support of a total of Euro 78,782 (DKK 585,962) to cover the expenses of running LittleBigHelp's 3 Community Centres for one year. Your contribution has already had a huge impact on more than 700 children and adults in the 3 different slum areas where we run our 3 Community Centres. In the following report we will share about the work that is being done, and the progress we have made in reaching our targets.

The Community Centres' focus is on creating awareness and to promote children's rights in local slum communities in Kolkata, India. The overall objective of the Community Centres is to prevent vulnerable children ending up as street children and living a limited life in poverty and addiction. We want to develop a child-friendly society, and mechanisms that protect children from all forms of abuse, violence, neglect, stigma, discrimination, exploitation and give them the opportunity to break with their social heritage, which often perpetuates poverty for the rest of their lives.

The aim of the project is to work with the local community to create long-term solutions to the causes of children ending up as street children. LittleBigHelp works with the conviction that we should give the people we work with, the support and the opportunities and tools they need to improve and change their lives by themselves.

THROUGH THIS PROJECT, WE ARE WORKING TO PROMOTE SEVERAL OF THE WORLDWIDE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AMONG OTHERS TO ERADICATE POVERTY, ZERO HUNGER, GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, QUALITY EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY.



OUR ACTIVITIES ARE RUNNING ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE:

1. 3 Community Centres are running in 3 different slums.
2. The Centres are open for 6 days a week where 97 vulnerable children come everyday for food, education, health and safety.
3. In January we enrolled 68 out-of-school children in Government school after they completed a school-preparation course in the Community Centres.
4. Besides the formal education, the children also participate in creative and fun activities.
5. 90 Home Visits each month and 35 Guardians' Meetings since January have been conducted to create awareness about the importance of education.
6. Outreach work and community mobilisation is central to ensuring a sustainable development and assessing and addressing the challenges in the community. Since January 13 community consultation meetings and 160 stakeholder meetings have been held.
7. Through the Centres we facilitate health checks for the 97 enrolled children and through health camps 316 children and adults were given a free health check.
8. Since January our professional counsellors have conducted 24 group counselling sessions for the children in our Community Centres.
9. The children are guided and encouraged to develop good personal hygienic habits, such as hand washing, as part of our behaviour change initiatives.





OUR ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL

1. We are running our **3 Community Centres in 3 different slums.**

- *At present we are working with 147 households in Dumdum slum, 82 households in Santragachi slum and 86 households in Ramkrishnapur slum.*

2. The Centres are open 6 days in a week and vulnerable children in need of care and protection from marginalised families come everyday to the Community Centres for **food, education, safety, health and hygienic support** and to participate in co-curricular activities. The Centres are run in collaboration with local clubs and local stakeholders.

- *On a day-to-day basis, we presently have 97 children between 6 and 14 years of age attending our 3 Community Centres.*
- *Between January and May 2017, 8403 meals were provided to the children in the Centres.*

3. We support parents in the process of **enrolling their children in local schools** and we continue to offer social and academic support through tutoring and recreational activities for these children.

- *In January we enrolled 68 out-of-school children in Government school after they completed a school-preparation course in the Community Centres.*
- *Out of the 68 children, 30 are still attending the Community Centres to receive academic support.*
- *We have identified another 30 children, who are left out and drop out, who will be enrolled in the Community Centres in the upcoming academic session.*

4. Besides formal education, we keep the children at the Centres active through **creative and fun activities, and daily exercise.** The team follows the structured schedule at the Centre, which comprises of both educational and recreational activities. The children are given opportunity to play outdoor and indoor games and are encouraged to participate in painting and creativity classes.

5. Through **guardians' meetings and home visits**, our team supports parents and help them become aware of the importance of education for their children and also help ensure that they have access to Government schools.

- *We identified 15 children who were involved in full time child labour and who were therefore not attending school. After intervention from LittleBigHelp who helped make their parents aware of child rights, the children left their work and are now enrolled in school.*
- *From January to May 2017, 35 guardians meetings were organized across the three community centres.*
- *Each month, a minimum of 90 home visits are conducted across the three centres.*
- *Our team motivates and encourages the parents to visit their children's schools and they help them improve their communication skills as well as understand the school system, so that the parents feel confident to discuss with the school teachers regarding the academic progress of their children. Their insecurity in discussing with the schools and teachers is often a hindrance for them enrolling their children in school.*

6. **Outreach work and community mobilization** is a central part of LittleBigHelp's work. The team regularly interacts with the street connected children and their families. They continuously assess the vulnerability of the children and in this way identify those who are in need of care and support. The outreach team conducts stakeholder meetings and community consultation meetings with the objective of informing them about the various project services carried out by LittleBigHelp and ensuring active participation of the community.

- Between January and May 2017, the team has conducted 13 community consultation meetings.
- Awareness has been provided to the community on the following topics, among others:

- General health and hygiene
- Safety, child protection and child rights
- Rights and entitlements of the community
- Accessibility to existing Government resources
- Obtaining residential proofs, citizenship cards, health cards etc.
- Awareness of immunization and ensuring accessibility of mothers to the health centres
- Adult literacy
- Importance of education for the children

- The team has attended 160 stakeholder meetings with various Government Departments, social welfare department, railway, hospitals, schools, doctors, local clubs, political leaders and representatives of local self Government as a part of community development initiatives.

7. Through the Community Centres we facilitate **health checks** and promote an understanding of mother-child health.

- Our team has identified 159 children between 0 to 5 years and 129 mothers in the 3 respective slums, and are facilitating the process of ensuring that these children and the mothers are getting referral health services.

- All 97 children presently in our Centres have all received a health care check. A doctor visits once a month to check the children.

- In the end of 2016 we conducted 2 Health Camps where more than 316 children and adults received a free health check by medical practitioners of Government hospitals.

8. Our professional counsellors conduct **group counselling sessions** for the children in our Community Centres. In critical cases children are supported to avail referral services through professional psychiatric institutions. To promote and maintain a mental wellbeing of the children in the Centres, the team organises regular meditation and mental relaxation sessions.

- Between January and May 2017, 24 group-counselling sessions have been held.

9. Special emphasis has been provided on developing good **personal hygienic habits** among the children attending our Community Centres as part of our behaviour change initiatives. The children are guided to practice basic hygienic habits such as washing hands before eating, regular bathing, and washing of clothes. Adolescent girls are guided to practice hygienic care during menstruation and they are now collecting packed sanitary napkins from the Government hospital to maintain proper hygiene.



MEET SANGEETA

From school drop-out to school girl

Sangeeta is 11 years old and lives in Dumdum slum. Her father is an alcoholic and does not contribute financially to the family, and her mother, therefore carries the entire responsibility of caring for the family. She works as a domestic helper and earns a meagre income but manages to provide the basic needs of her children.

Sangeeta went to school up to class 1, whereafter she dropped out and instead spent most of her day collecting plastic by the dangerous railway tracks that run through the slum.



Sangeeta is now back in school after completing a school preparation course at the Community Centre



The major reason why Sangeeta dropped out of school was not because of the family's tough financial situation but because her mother was hesitant to visit the school, as she was uncomfortable interacting with the teachers and the school authorities.

Our team met Sangeeta's mother in the slum and after assessing the family's situation they encouraged her to let Sangeeta join our Community Centre for a school preparation course. She agreed and at the same time, the team motivated her mother to enrol Sangeeta in school again, by helping her understand the importance of education, basic child rights, and helped build her confidence in communicating with the school.

Sangeeta is now back in school after completing a school preparation course at the Community Centre and her mother regularly attends the parents'-teacher meetings in school and makes sure to regularly follow up on her daughter's academic development. By attending school Sangeeta's chances of breaking the cycle of poverty have now increased tremendously.

Our team will continue to follow up on Sangeeta's progress, and continuously ensure that her family supports her in her education.



We look forward to sharing the total impact of your support together with case stories, photos and statistics, in February 2018.

Thank you for your huge support.

All the best from the LittleBigHelp Team