

Six monthly report – July 2008 – Jun 2008

Children are the first call on agenda of human resource development – not only because young children are the most vulnerable, but because the foundation for life long learning and human development is laid in these crucial early years. It is now globally acknowledged that investment in human resources development is a pre-requisite for economic development of any nation. Early childhood (the first six years) constitutes the most crucial period in life, when the foundations are laid for cognitive, social, emotional, physical/motor development and cumulative life long learning. Child survival, growth and development, has to be looked at as a holistic approach, as one cannot be achieved without the others. There has to be balanced linkages between education, health and nutrition for proper development of a child.

Working and living with the children here at Bet, I've come to the conclusion that We the elders are the decisive element in the house. It's our daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher/guardian, We possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is our response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.

Education development

Regularization of the morning and evening group study

Objective:

To strengthen and improve the academic performance of the children

Strategy:

Divided the children into smaller groups with group leaders to help them

Outcome:

The elders assist the younger ones in their studies while the in house parents (salima and supriya were taking weekly house exams).

However, the routine of in house exams wasn't continued for long as the children didn't go to school because of the strikes and thus were revising the previous lessons while they were at home

During the Ramzan, the elder children made it their routine to study in the morning hours and keep themselves updated with the class work

It's a hard task during the school days as the children hardly get time to study effectively and efficiently as in the evening they have to go for their religious studies to Darasga and then later in the evening there are power cuts

During holiday season the children study 5 hrs in a day with a timely breaks of 15-20 mins after every 2hrs

Film facilitation: Khuda ke liye

Objective:

Media plays an essential role in teaching children about things happening in and around us

Strategy:

The children were given an overview of the movie

- They were given a few question to ponder over to find answers while watching the movie.
- The questions were:
 1. Were you able to understand what message the movie wanted to give?
 2. What actually does Islam preach?
 3. Did the movie help you?

Outcome

- Many took the movie on an entertainment basis.
- Only numbered girls understood the importance and the essence of the movie

Availability of daily newspaper for reading

Objective:

It's not only important to have book knowledge but it is also necessary to know what is happening within and outside the country

Strategy:

The in house parents made an effort to bring the newspaper daily for the children to read

Outcome:

The in house parent also thought of subscribing for a local newspaper and the main newspaper but it was difficult to get a subscription as all the shops were closed during the strike

Not many make an effort to read the newspaper as they prefer watching news in the evening or listening to the news on the radio.

Admission in Private school**Objective:**

Not only is it imperative to study in a school but it is equally important to study in good schools

Strategy:

- Approaching the private schools
- Briefing the principal and teachers about BWF and Bet
- Preparing the children for the entrance exams

Outcome:

Understanding today's competitive world BWF has decided to send as many of its children to private school as against the Govt. primary school

There is a vast noticeable difference in the way the education is delivered to the children in the private schools.

15 children have successfully got admission in the private schools

Tutorials for the children**Strategy:**

- Private tuitions for the children.

- Three subject teachers: English, Mathematics Science have been arranged who will be coming to Bet and teaching them

Outcome:

The children at times found it difficult to understand their subjects especially with the pace that the teachers taught.

The house parents realized that the performance of many children was going down.

With the increasing number of children here in Bet, it was becoming difficult to assist all the children.

Sing and learn

Aziz Sahab (Local co-ordinator and Advisor of Anantnag Home) has beautifully taught the concepts, names and contents of chemical names and their properties by simply making a song with the same.

Since it has been incorporated into a song the children were able to learn it faster than just cramming.

He has not made them learn it but at all times makes them also revise the essence and the meaning of the entire song

All the twenty children at Anantnag home know a number of songs that are based on some important reading material and thus know a lot about their favorite subject science.

Here at Kupwara home , there are animated CDs of rhymes and stories that is played for the younger ones to learn and enjoy the session of rhymes.

Child development

Inter- State Essay competition

With the help of Nitin and Tillotama 6 children participated in an essay competition

Sarvar Jaan won the first prize. It was not only encouraging for her but it also very motivating for others as others developed that spirit to participate in such competitions in the near future.

Photography workshop

This workshop-cum-expedition's objective was to help children learn more about themselves, Kashmir and most importantly about photography with an interest.

- Help the selected girls understand the concept of photography
- Refine their skills
- To learn with an experienced photographer,
- To leave the workshop-expedition energized, with an amplified interest in photography, visual storytelling and to documenting Kashmir through their lens

With the help of Nitin and Tilotama a video was made where the 6 participants described their vision of Kashmir and Mumbai by giving a short interview

The workshop was conducted by Nitin where he was assisted by Supriya where ever he needed to express his thoughts in a more comprehensive manner.

- They learnt that the secret to taking great “ pictures” is to observe your subjects, connect with them, and use your camera to its best advantage.
- The secret is in seeing. Ask yourself: What do I look at, and how do I see it? Good photograph has qualities that display the skill, art, interests, and personality of the photographer.
- They developed a new vision
- It helped them understand that Photograph is a message sometimes it describes an emotion, an impression or a statement

Personality development

English speaking classes

Objective:

To help our children come at par with the children of the outer world

Strategy:

Division of children into small groups recitation and repetitions of new words and sentences used in common day to day life.

The children are made to read and repeat small stanzas in English and then are explained the meaning both in English and Urdu

Use of basic books on English so that the base foundation of learning the language is easy

A working knowledge of English has become a requirement in a number of fields, occupations and professions so it has even become a necessity to help our children learn this language.

Outcome:

The grasping power to understand English and get a grip over the language is slow but none the less steady.

Miscellaneous Developments

Students coming over as interns to Bet

It is a source of encouragement that students from well recognized colleges are opting to work as interns in Bet and BWF. Interactions and meeting such interns' help the children of bet to develop a vision as to what do they want to do when they go into higher classes. The interns help in strengthening our work as they share their set of experiences and strengths with us and give in their inputs to do better and progress well. Intern from Pune has helped us get support from residents of Srinagar in Kind which is indeed commendable and was much needed. Her interaction with residents of Srinagar has helped bet in getting a recognition there also.

Library in our Bet home

To encourage reading habits in children and their thus encouragement towards participation in the library, essay writing and elocution competitions are organized

A number of good books of diverse subjects were donated to Bet. A library has been made utilizing the empty space of the respective rooms and books have been kept there for the children's enjoyment

A library is housed in one of the centre and has a collection of books on various themes and topics. Regularly debates and discussions on the emerging current issues are organized at the center.

Limitations

1. The complexity of bringing proper aid to our three homes while carefully circumnavigating language and cultural barriers , and attempting to understand

- the political situation and requirements proves to be more challenge than we anticipate
2. Unable to get local support for medical facilities or support in kind (absence of teachers for giving tuitions to our children)
 3. Initially the Kupwara home didn't have an internet connection so there were delays in submission of report and official documents Thus, the communication with the outside world and organization for the purpose of strengthening network and linkages became very slow. Now that we have been able to get an internet connection, there are power cuts for as long as 3 days continuously thus interrupting our connectivity with the outside world. This is going to worsen during the winter snowfall season
 4. Space crunch: Today we have 73 children in Kupwara home and 20 in anantnag, with the increasing number of children in all the respective homes we are finding difficult to adjust in te given space. There are number of children who are on waiting list an awaiting their admission in Bet. However we are unable to give them admission , firstly lack of space and secondly non- availability of a bigger home in closer vicinity
 5. Non fulfillment of promises made by some local members and residents

Future Plans

Health Development

Medical Camp: A basic health check by the local doctors. The check up will be general medical test but will include

- Blood test
- Hemoglobin test,
- Height ,
- Weight

Child and Education Development

Personality Development Workshop in Srinagar for 1n half month

Key organizer and coordinator: Mr. Muzamil Jaleel (Journalist)

The workshop will include:

- An educational tour within the Kashmir valley
- A detail Introduction of the Kashmiri culture to the children
- Improving English Speaking Skill
- Personality development classes : how to speak in public stage competitions
- Tutorials for subjects like Maths , Science and English
- Session by qualified doctor on some major diseases like AIDS

Education Development and Community Development

A session by the fire fighters: the team here in Kupwara has decided to organize a community session where the community and children of BeT will be addressed by the firefighter on

- Precautionary measures to prevent a fire mishap ,
- Safety measures incase of a fire
- Medical measures incase of burn injuries

Staff development

Efforts are being directed to get in touch with organization working on the same line outside the valley and have made their recognition in the NGO world. To organize visits for the staff to these NGO and attend a workshops organized by such organizations.

Staff capacity building initiatives would be a regular feature to bring more efficiency and effectiveness in the field level interventions with the community. Trainings on community mobilization, child psychology, and development of activity based child friendly teaching learning material and documentation will be brought into the home as reference material. Continuous efforts towards building the capacities of community motivators is done and will be done. Training programs will soon be conducted to

update the instructors on various policies and amendments of the government towards strengthening the rights of children.