

Title of the Project: SATYAKAM

Duration of the Project: 1 year

Site of the Project: Kalabagan slum

Justification:

Jabala is running this centre in Kalabagan slums since year 2004. Slums in any city are densely populated area where half or more of all households lack improved water sources, improved sanitation, improved solid waste management, sufficient living area, durable housing, and secure tenure or combinations thereof reflecting the levels of inequality in the city.

High levels of inequality in cities can lead to negative social, economic and political consequences that have a destabilizing impact on society. This is true in places experiencing both high levels of inequality and endemic poverty, which increase the political tension and social divisions that can threaten national security and economic development. The children living in these slums quite are most vulnerable to the environmental hazards caused by the poor quality of sanitation hygiene etc. as well as the emotional stress rising out of living in a cloistered space and fighting for everyday's survival. Therefore, slums in any city require special intervention for the harmonious physical and mental growth of children living in slums.

In this context, Jabala Action Research Organization has tried to create a space for children in the form of community centre in the slums of Kalabagan. The need was felt because Kalabagan slum grew amidst the upcoming posh south Kolkata; its inhabitants catering to the service needs of extremely rich people inhabiting the southern part of fast expanding Kolkata. Like any other fast-expanding city, this part of Kolkata also has stark disparity between the classes in terms of access to education, health and other services. Jabala tried to address this disparity by offering educational, vocational as well as recreational services to the children to grow up in a safer environment.

The services that are being offered in the Kalabagan centre can be mainly categorized into Educational training, Job readiness trainings and Leadership Training through Dance, Drama and Football workshops.

Program Focus:

- Education support in form of enrolment to formal schools
- Coaching support
- Education Materials (Books, Excise copies, Pencils etc)
- Cultural therapies in form of theatre, story building etc to build confidence and shred inhibitions
- Games and Work readiness training
- Home and School Visits to Monitor Progress
- Mothers meeting

Education:

The majority of the children living in this slum area are offspring of parents who are illiterate and poor. Many of the children in this area therefore are victims of vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy. Many of them do not have conducive economic and cultural home environment to continue their studies. Many of the parents, even if willing to continue their children's study can't give coaching support. As a result, the children can't cope up in the school and eventually drop out. To arrest this drop out, Jabala has started providing tutorial support, especially in mathematics and Sciences to the girls who are studying in higher classes. We have three teachers who give after school support to the fifty plus children and adolescents at present. The teachers help them in doing Home tasks, solving out problems, if any. The teachers do home visits on a regular basis in order to keep a close connection with the student's family as well as inform the family of her progress. The teachers organize Mother's meetings once a month where the mothers are being made aware of the status of their children regarding educational performance. The teachers at our centre also keep regular contacts with the school authorities where the students are studying at present. In fact, this consistent liaising with the school authorities has motivated some of the school authorities to the extent that this year, some of the students were given concessions in the school fees. The school visits on our part also helped the teachers at the school in understanding the problems of our students. They have started treating them with more empathy and this eventually has helped in better retention of students in school.

Case Study

A Girl Student: (Name hidden) is 14 years old. Naghma's father works in a bag-making unit and her mother works as a maid. Naghma has a brother who studies in class X. The family of this child is so impoverished that they still don't have electricity at home. This child was exceptionally brilliant at studies. However, she was always afraid that her studies might get discontinued any day as it is extremely difficult for her parents to support them for higher studies. She is now totally sponsored by Jabala. This year she stood second in her class. Her teachers often cite her as an example in the school.

Besides the tutorial support, Jabala also provides enrolment and school fees to those who could otherwise get drop out owing to lack of money. The criteria for selection of the beneficiaries were: the economic condition of their household, the student's eagerness to continue studies, her regularity in attending schools and they have been selected after rigorous home visits by our staff for the project.

Comparative table showing increase in % of marks for few children:

Name	Class	Last Year aggregate %	Current year aggregate %
Student 1	V	86.67	88.50
Student 2	IV	76.67	88.67
Student 3	III	75	91.33
Student 4	IV	40.67	50
# 5	III	35	47.67
# 6	IX	65	71
# 7	II	76.67	81.33
# 8	II	77.33	86.67
# 9	I	63.33	77.6
# 10	IV	68	76.67
# 11	VII	35	38.21

Exposure visits: Besides the tutorial support, school fees support our children from this centre are taken out to exposure visits..

Job Readiness Trainings:

Training in Beautician's Course: During our community visits, we have found out that lack of employment opportunities is an intriguing problem, especially for the young women. We have kept in mind four factors while choosing the vocation: a. employability, b. student's willingness to learn that particular vocation, c. cost effectiveness, d. skill enabling entrepreneurship. Considering all these factors, we have chosen Beautician's course. There was great willingness among the young students to learn the know how's of beauty business. Beautician's training is a very low cost venture where a trained individual can start earning almost without any capital. So in terms of entrepreneurship, it is very much cost-effective. And Kalabagan, being situated near posh residential areas of south, will help them find jobs in beauty salons and even in individual clients.

Case Study

Child 1 was in her teens when her father lost his job because of his alcoholism. She always wanted to finish her school. But since they had no one else in the family to fend for them, she had to discontinue school and take up odd jobs to run the family. She used to come to our centre since she was a child. So, she continued coming to our centre. When she has heard that Beautician's course would be offered, she has decided to join the centre. From her experience she knew that if she learns beauticians know how's, she can attend individual clients. Rani now works as an independent beautician and earns at least 100/- per sitting.

Training on Tailoring:

Apart for the beautician training fifteen girls were part of the tailoring training. The following skills were taught

1. Taking measurements
2. Cutting as per the measurement
3. Stitching
4. Cross Stitching
5. Embroidery

Girls were taught to make blouses, handkerchief, petticoats, churidar etc.

Case Study

Child 2 lost her father early so to earn livelihood she works as part-time domestic helper along with her mother. But she has a dream that drives her to study in schools, play football, and learn how to dance and eager for a tailoring course. She is now a student of class VII of Rajendra Siksha Sadan Girls High School.

Leadership Training:

Jabala believes that besides education, taking part in cultural activities as well as physical activities like games and sports helps towards integrated development of a child. Engagement in various recreational activities not only helps her in finding out her creative self but also helps in instilling confidence. This enhanced self-confidence helps her in building resilience to cope with her situation in a more effective way. Therefore, Jabala conducts regular classes in dance and football as part of its leadership training.

Football for emancipation:

The physical world of men and women is gendered in our country. Girls are socialized into gender stereotypes since her childhood that includes what games she would play. She is never allowed to play power games like Football as it reveals

certain parts of her body. While football is considered exclusively as a boys' game, she is confined to play with dolls, at the most Kabadi. Jabala considers sports as a movement beyond physical exercises. Therefore, Jabala has started coaching the adolescent girls in to football. It served dual purposes: on the one hand it helps shaping her body and mind, enhances her focus, concentration as it is a total game, on the other hand, it actually helps her in overcoming taboos around her body. So in the end, playing football becomes an empowering activity for an adolescent girl coming from a very conservative Muslim background. Jabala already has its girls' football team and some of the players are playing professional football in the league matches. Every Sunday they take part in a coaching camp at Rabindra Sarobar Stadium under the tutelage of national Coach Kuntala Ghosh Dastidar.

This summer the girls got trained in a one months' specialized Summer coaching camp where girls from all over Kolkata got trained too. After the completion of the camp, there was an inter-school tournament where two of our girls Rinki Khatun and Rima mondal played. The coach sees great playing potential among these two girls.

Dance Classes: Like football dance is also based in coordinating body movements. It not only has physical exercise values, as a creative exercise, it relaxes mind and helps in overcoming shyness. Again, like football dance is also gender stereo-typed as a girl's area. In order to break this gender stereo-type Jabala has started training boys in the dance classes.

Theatre Therapy Classes:

The children were part of five workshops held at Kalabagan. They were made aware of basics' of theatre, voice training and movements. Few of the children participated in the Children Drama Festival at Muktangan covered by **DESH PATRIKA**

Mothers' Groups: Jabala's strategy to work with children incorporates working with mothers too. Since family plays the most crucial role in a person's intimate life, it is imperative to involve mothers into the process of growth of her children. Our staff members make extensive home visits and every month the mothers congregates in a meeting where they have been informed about the progress of her child in our centre. The mothers have consolidated in an informal Mother's group. Most of them work as maids in other people's households. So, they seldom have time to meet others, chat for some time and relax. Our centre provides a kind of space for them too. Recently, Jabala has organized a film show for them. They enjoyed it very much.

School & Home Visits:

The executive and the teachers regularly followed up with the school authorities and guardians at home on the progress of the children.

Outcomes of the Project till date:

- The project has started with 50 children. There is no drop out till date.
- The children are doing well in the schools. They attend schools regularly. Their academic records are progressing consistently.
- Children took part in children drama festival
- Children have organized a cultural event to celebrate poet-laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore's birthday. The children have conducted the event.
- Children showed resistance in protecting their mother from Domestic violence
- Girls are playing football and aspiring to become players

The above programs and outcomes are direct result of tangible support from ASHA for Education (Dallas Chapter) for two years till May'10. Since then the program is run by Jabala from its own sources. As Kalabagan centre do not have any support from other funders. If the funding is not continued it may not be possible for Jabala to run the same for a long time, also we shall need to cut down on the activities and number of children.

Statistics shows 83% girls drop out from schools after VIII th standard due many reason one of the major reason is poverty. The program till date not only recorded 100% successful retention but also showed improvements in dropout management.

Even we are provided with the budget provided last year ie.01.06.2009-31.05.2010. We can sustain the program. The amount was Rs2, 70,229.00

It is worthwhile to mention here in addition to your support we provide the following services to the centre:

1. Counseling Support (Both Individual & Home Counseling)
2. Health Support- a) Check up camps, referrals, HIV/AIDS orientation etc
3. Exposures to field of interest like taking to theatre, movies etc
4. Organizing events, sports, cultural events etc

All the expenses are provided from Jabala's own sources