

GIRL CHILD-Quarterly report for July-September, 2002

July through September, 2002, saw a continued increase in the number of girls helped in the Mumbai area. In all there were 35 girls

Saathi's Girl Child Project also had additional help through block placement from local universities as well as an international trainee placed through AIESEC. Pooja, a second year student from TISS is working with the project for one year, and has been placed with us since July, 2002. She works directly with the girls in introducing them to Saathi as well as conducting an adolescent's skills class on Mondays and Tuesdays as well as ongoing recreation programs. Additionally, we have had three other workers for block placements, two from Nasik and one from Pune. They assisted with Project Asmaan, the Girl Child Project, and the QICCA coalition. The student that took part in Project Asmaan later has joined the staff as coordinator of the project. AIESEC helped to place an American trainee with Saathi who is conducting a review of the organizational structures of both centers (Agripada and Kamathipura) as well as assisting in fundraising, networking, web page design, and other miscellaneous areas suited to her management background. The ongoing review by Bhavani continued through this quarter with presentation of the findings set to occur in October.

OUTREACH

Outreach efforts at Mumbai Central Terminus continued and relationships are strong. The relationships with the GRPF and RPF are especially noteworthy. In addition to the referrals of incoming girls to Saathi, they have begun to help in the repatriation process, ensuring that the girl gets on the correct train safely if the train departs too late for a Saathi staff member to accompany her to the station. Also, they are taking part in the work at the observation homes, interceding when necessary and following up when there are problems. Some of the boys living at the station have also banded together into their own informal organization, Dosti Sangh, and are making increased efforts at helping with referrals.

Outreach in the Playhouse area continues through follow-ups with past cases. New outreach is not being conducted there.

Bandra Station outreach has not begun due to a lack of staff. However, the momentum of outreach at Mumbai Central has reached a self-sustaining point allowing our outreach staff members to spend less time there and begin to do work at Bandra.

NETWORKING

Referrals and relationship building in anticipation of future referrals continued with several institutions including: Salaam Balak Trust, CORP, Anmol, Snehasadan, Sukhshanti, the observation home, Bal Asha Trust, Beggar's Home, Kasturba Home, Jyoti Terminal Care Center for AIDS, and Jaipur Childline.

Organizations that aided in repatriation outside of Mumbai included: the government home in Kolhapur (1 repatriation, 1 long term home referral), Sidur in Hyderabad (1

repatriation), and Lokvikas in Nasik to aid in a follow up. Contact with the Pune government home for the mentally challenged (Shirur) was attempted, but there are currently no vacancies.

In early August, a program was conducted with other NGOs from the Area Council of E Ward. Salaam Balak Trust, CORP, Nair Childine, Saathi, and Hamara Club all helped plan and/or took part in the program.

Work with QICCA continued with most of the Girl Child Project staff taking part in some aspect. Staff attended meetings and helped with administrative tasks.

VP Road Police Station has been contacted for a case follow up and efforts are being made to build a relationship for future assistance needs.

The training programs for the GRPF/RPF are still on hold due to the transfer of a new commissioner and citing by the GRPF of a recently increased workload not allowing time for additional programs. A meeting is being scheduled to address this.

Mansoor, Altaf, and Deepali conducted a weekend camp held by the fledgling NGO Dosti Sangh. The purpose of the camp was goal setting, developing organizational structure, and learning effective outreach and networking techniques.

DAY CENTER ACTIVITIES

Regular schedules to be followed by the girls have been started. This allows for stability throughout the day as well as a better expression of expectations. Included in this schedule is the daily NFE, held for one and a half hours. Additionally there are craft classes given which include things like stitching and other activities to enable the girls to use their creativity.

Envelope making as part of the Saathi Paper Project has also started including the girls and we have 2 girls who have completed training and make the envelopes now at the center and several more girls still undergoing training. For other vocational training, we have one girl enrolled with Oasis for stitching, two involved in the YWCA Mehendi course, and several others in the Paper Project. We are also identifying girls to take over particular responsibilities within Saathi to act as part time staff assistants. This would be a stipend position and tasks would include medical case follow-up and other errands.

In August, a field trip was taken to Nehru Planetarium.

Group sessions were held to discuss gender issues and sexuality. These sessions were conducted by Bhakti, Bhavani, Raja, and Mansoor. Drama therapy classes with Raja are also ongoing.

An adolescents' skills workshop has begun under the supervision of Pooja, a block placement student, and Sophia, center coordinator. Sessions are held twice per week

following a prescribed progression of topics ranging from growing up during adolescence to self empowerment.

HEALTH

The efforts put into building a strong relationship with the hospitals paid off this quarter. When a girl was taken for medical care, the waits were short and several of the tests were done free of charge. Additionally, ChildLine has offered assistance with medical papers to also help expedite getting care.

A number of girls are undergoing treatment for tuberculosis. The treatment is being done through a collaboration with Sewri TB Hospital. Routine illnesses are still handled at Nair Hospital. Physical therapy, when needed, is being handled by Children's Orthopedic Hospital. Severe psychological issues are referred to Muskaan Child Guidance Clinic as well as the Borivali Shhradha Nursing Home for Psychiatric which provides free treatment, medication, and shelter to the girls referred there. Pregnancy tests and related issues are handled by Bal Asha Trust (test, counseling, prenatal care, etc).

RECREATION

A play was staged by the girls and boys expressing their thoughts and concerns over issues in Gujarat. Audience turnout was good and coverage was given by Times of India. Dancing Feet continues to give lessons and a dance recital was prepared for with practice being held every day. They had a show in September. The girls also attended a mela sponsored by ChildLine as well as a cultural program done in conjunction with several other NGOs for which the girls performed.

A two and a half day camp was held in Malad to discuss what Saathi means to the girls, what their goals are, and plans of action for attaining those goals. Additionally, women's issues were discussed as well as the girls' relationships to one another and team building.

After receiving requests from the girls for morning sports, badminton, cricket, and yoga are now conducted daily.

SHELTER

Night shelter is still provided through collaboration with CCDT and Prerna with some girls going to each. There is now a Saathi employed night attendant at each shelter. The night attendant at CCDT (Kavita) is now continuing the NFE given during the day with reinforcing activities in the evening. She also reads current events from the daily newspaper and conducts morning exercises. A weekly meeting has been scheduled between Deepali, Kavita, and the CCDT director to resolve any problems that arise during the week in an attempt to proactively handle the relationship. Alternatives are also being considered to prevent the girls from being split between the two shelters.

FUTURE PLANNING

Events being planned for include:

Training/orientation for GRPF/RPF, follow up on past relationship

Vocational exposure visits

QICCA involvement continuation

Gujarat intervention

Bandra outreach starting

Project Mainstream (further vocational training)

Visit to Post Office for NFE exposure visit