



Report of the Trustees of the Health, Education & Development Foundation 2018-19

We are happy to report that the past year has seen the flowering of several new initiatives and reinforcement of certain initiatives we had taken earlier.

The principal focus of our activities has been on:

- a) Modern English School, Chedda Nagar
- b) The Aroehan-HEAD Livelihood Project in the tribal areas of Jawahar-Mokhada, Palghar District in partnership with Aroehan.
- c) Small Interventions with Child Reach for differently-abled children.

MODERN ENGLISH SCHOOL

Medical Examination of students

In a major initiative and a first for the School, medical examination of 1630 students was done under the auspices of the Bhaktivedanta Hospital. This had the enthusiastic backing of the school authorities.

It was agreed that the cost of the medical examination at Rs.45 per head would be equally divided and borne by the parents, the School and HEAD. In case of any additional cost, such as spectacles, it was agreed that the cost would be

borne by the parents. Trustees L.K. Narayan and C.Ravichandran principally coordinated the project on behalf of HEAD.

The medical examination was conducted over a period of 5 days commencing 7th August, 2019, very effectively and successfully. One of the students from Child Reach, another NGO we are associated with, was engaged to compile the data in Excel Format, under the guidance and supervision of our Trustee L.K. Narayan.

A total of 1630 students were medically examined, out of which 470 students were reported to be suffering from mostly minor ailments. Eight students had significant ailments, the details of which have been conveyed by the school to the parents for further attention and necessary treatment.

It is clear that this is an initiative which deserves to be carried out on an annual basis and Trustee L.K. Narayan is in the process of devising a proper method of storage of the information so as to provide a useful accessible, historical record of the children's medical status through the years they are in school.

“Study skills Workshop” for Standard X students

This was a program initiated by Chairman N.S. Iyer and carried out earlier in 2017-18 which was much appreciated by the students, teachers and management. The program is devised specifically for the Students of Standard X, who are naturally subject to greater stress and pressure, in the run-up to exams which could determine their future, in many cases.

Accordingly, the program “Study skills Workshop” was repeated with the same faculty, namely Benedict D’Costa, Softskills Trainer & Consultant, who had done an enthusiastic and wonderful job in prepping up the children the previous year.

The cost of the program was equally shared by Modern English School and HEAD.

Sanitary Napkin Project

‘Red is the new Green’ is an initiative about educating people and spreading awareness about menstrual sanitation and menstruation. *This wonderful initiative strives to reduce the social stigma and economic inequality attached to menstruation through sustainable solutions.*

The idea is to introduce awareness on a subject which is virtually taboo, install sanitary napkin vending machines and educate regarding safe disposal solutions.

This initiative of HEAD spear-headed by Trustee L.K.Narayan, was in partnership with the Lions Club of Juhu, who were ready to install a sanitary napkin dispensing machine, along with an incinerator.

Modern English School decided to install the Sanitary Napkin Vending Machine which is manufactured by Tendril. Representatives of the manufacturer visited the school on 8th October 2018 to deliver and explain the features of the machine to the school management and teachers.

C. Ravichandran, Trustee who closely supervised the project, reported that the machine has since been duly commissioned.

This is a coin-operated vending machine. The cost of each pad is around Rs.2.50 and assuming that the use is around 3000 nos.per month, the total cost of the pads dispensed will be around Rs.7,500.

It was decided that the sanitary napkins will be initially supplied free to the girls and HEAD will bear this expense till March 2019, which is the end of the school academic year.

Scholarship Project:

Meanwhile the Scholarship project under which the expenses of 8 students are being, in the main, funded by HEAD ran into some problems, with 4 of the children progressing very well academically and the other four falling behind.

This is a matter which has been taken up very seriously, with multiple alternating visits to the school, after almost every test and exam by the Chairman N.S. Iyer, Treasurer C.Ravichandran and Seshan Ranganathan, to identify the causes of the slippage with the help of Ms.Urmi(student Counsellor). The object is also to re-assure the students and their families that we stand firmly with them. We are also ensuring that some amount of special attention is provided by MES so that the children are prepared for re-exams in subjects where they have not performed well.

There is unanimity at HEAD that we stand committed and the program needs to be carried forward in the interests of the 8 children being assisted. It was, therefore agreed and the balance 50% payment, being the 2nd of the bi-annual instalments was paid over to MES.

We are happy to report that the school has taken special efforts to ensure that re-exams are conducted and the children sufficiently prepared, so that all 8 students are likely to sail through this year.

AROEHAN-HEAD LIVELIHOOD PROJECT

The project was kicked off with a visit by Trustee Seshan Ranganathan to the tribal areas of Jawahar/Mokhada which is 100 kms away from Mumbai where Aroehan, a reputed NGO originally floated by Nirmala Niketan, was running several of its check-dam, solar, livelihood & educational projects,

- From all appearances it appeared to be the larger project which HEAD was in search of, to widen its reach and effectiveness in the areas of health, education and development. It was felt that this could be an ideal prospect for intervention by HEAD.

AROEHAN is physically present in the project area, with adequate staff, expertise and local connections, including locally recruited staff. *It hence appeared to be the ideal partner for delivering much-needed intervention in a beautiful land, where people are paradoxically desperately poor and backward.*

- There was scope for:
 - Financial assistance to the tribal for cultivation of Jasmine.
 - Solar power for domestic use, streetlighting and powering pump-sets
 - Vegetable cultivation.
 - Check Dams
 - Education
- Trustees Seshan Ranganathan, L.K. Narayan & C. Ravichandran made another visit, along with AROEHAN representatives on 6th July 2018, to Amle Village and Suryamal in Mokhada taluka which is around 100 kms away from Mumbai.

- This was followed up with a meeting, Trustees of HEAD had with Ms. Anjali Kanetkar, Founder Member of AROEHAN at Mantralaya, In this meeting, they could gather further insights about this project.

Basically, there 4 areas are identified where HEAD could have interventions here. They are as follows:



- Jasmine & Vegetable cultivation
- Check dams and vents
- Solar/Hydel Power
- Ashram School

● Given both the options and the implications of entering into an open-ended, much larger project in which we would be necessarily working over the long-term with another organisation such as Aroehan, several visits were undertaken over a period before we firmed up on our planned intervention in the area.

- The fundamental question before HEAD was whether to enter all at once, into a total transformation project of a village or two, in all its aspects or limit ourselves to just one project such as Jasmine (Mogra) Cultivation. The total project would entail expenditure of around 10 times, say Rs.25 lakhs to that of single project, say Rs. 2.5 lakhs.
- *The Jasmine Cultivation Project is significant in the sense that it will, if successful, relieve nearly 50 heads of household from the necessity of migrating to cities to augment their income, with hazardous jobs in the construction industry, poor living conditions and paltry savings.*
- Multiple visits were made to the project area. N.S. Iyer, A.R. Subramaniam and Venkatram Vishwanath visited Jawahar/Mokhada villages along with Naresh Jena, the then Chief Executive Officer. Subsequent to this, a brief report on Khoch village and a study report by IIT Mumbai was sent to HEAD by Ms. Anjali Kanetkar, Founder Member of AROEHAN.

- On the basis of the above Report, an in-principle decision was taken to go for the Jasmine (Mogra) Cultivation Project, with an initial payment of Rs. 2 lakhs to AROEHAN out of an estimated Rs. 4.23 lakhs, inclusive of a more comprehensive report to enable expansion of our activities. The Jasmine (Mogra) Project was kick-started from 1st November 2019 at Khoch Village with an initial 50 beneficiary households.



A Village and Family Detail Survey Form was sent to us for scrutiny and our suggestions. The same was circulated among the Trustees and sent back with suitable amendments which we were told was accepted and included, for the detailed survey of Khoch Village, which will form the basis for further projects which may need to be undertaken.

- On the invitation of Ms. Anjali Kanetkar, Founder Trustee of Aroehan, Chairman N.S. Iyer accompanied by Trustees Seshan Ranganathan and A.R. Subramaniam, along with the former Vice-Chancellor of Mumbai University Dr.A.D.Sawant attended a meeting held on 4-1-2019 at Teachers Credit Society Hall, Mokhada for the release of release of the Joint report of Aroehan and IIT, Bombay on “Bringing Sustainable Transformation to Mokhada: A People’s Report” by Dr. Prashant Karnavare.
- This meeting was extremely useful, as also the visit to several farm plots in the vicinity where mogra saplings had already been planted. Dr. Sawant who has considerable expertise and personal knowledge shared several useful tips with the Agricultural representative of Aroehan.
- It was decided to associate Dr.A.D. Sawant with the project so as to tap the enormous fund of expertise he possesses to ensure the success of the project.

- Subsequent to the this, on 29th January 2019, the formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Ms. Helen Joseph, Chairperson of Aroehan with N.S. Iyer, Chairman of HEAD at the MIG Club at Bandra. Directors Anjali Kanitkar, Ms. Meenal Gandhe and Vivek Patwardhan of Aroehan and Trustees of HEAD, A.R. Subramaniam, C. Ravichandran, Seshan Ranganathan and L.K. Narayan were also present.



- **What lies ahead:**

- The initial outcome from the Jasmine Project should be clear by September/October 2019.
- After receipt of the comprehensive Project Report a further visit is planned to Khoch Village to a) Assess the progress of the Jasmine Project b) To have an on-site understanding of the scope and extent of additional projects which can be undertaken.

Website

- The website of HEAD has been given a new look to make it both appealing and more informative. This is important as it is likely to be the first view on the basis of which an outsider forms an impression of the organisation and an important avenue for future donations and volunteer participation.
- The overhaul was spear-headed by Trustee A.R. Subramaniam with the assistance of Trustees Viswanathan Venkatraman and Seshan

Ranganathan through M/s.Muskmelon Digital, for both Website Development and Maintenance, with valuable inputs from Chairman N.S. Iyer and Trustee L.K. Narayan. The web-site went online in January 2019.

Initiatives where there is progress...

Childreach

- Through the special initiative of Chairman N.S. Iyer and Treasurer C. Ravichandran, HEAD is now becoming increasingly involved in the affairs of Childreach, an NGO in Vile Parle, which is a school which takes care of children with special needs.
- These children are in the classes from VII to XII standard and one area in which we can help is to find avenues of employment for the Std. XII students when they pass out. In fact, one student from Child Reach has already been successfully employed at Fine Arts Society, Chembur as a Data Entry person due to the efforts of our Treasurer C. Ravichandran. This kind of initiative needs to be taken forward, despite issues of geography and distance.



A visit to a Printing Press was arranged for students of Child Reach on 23rd August. Treasurer C. Ravichandran organised and took the children to the same. This visit was part of HEAD's initiative to stimulate curiosity and spark interest in the children to take up different vocations.

It is also important to mention that there were certain initiatives, which despite good intent and effort could not be taken forward for various reasons such as:

- a) Conversational English classes in the Municipal School at Yeeor, Thane for tribal school children
- b) A similar effort to start a centre for Dalit kids at Ramabai Nagar, Ghatkopar
- c) Several exploratory visits and meetings with Balaji Healthcare at Vasind who are doing excellent work in the care of the aged etc.

There are certain learnings from both the successes & the projects which did not take off:

- 1) Not everything which one touches, however worthwhile will get done.*
- 2) For our Trust and our situation, finding the right person/agency to partner us is crucial to successful implementation.*
- 3) The co-operation and motivation of the beneficiary is crucial to the success of any intervention, as its absence can frustrate the implementation of the best designed interventions.*
- 4) We need a SPOC (Single Point of Contact) in all institutions for effective interaction and implementation of our interventions.*

Administration:

The new set of office bearers of HEAD as announced earlier assumed office on 1st April 2019 with all necessary amendments made for the smooth operation of Bank Accounts etc.

Grateful thanks are due to Trustee A.R. Subramaniam who has hosted virtually all the meetings of the Trust at his office, which is, of course, the office of HEAD and to Trustee L.K. Narayan who hosted a couple of meetings at his residence.

It is important to note that the Trustees place no burden whatsoever on HEAD in the form of expenses etc. and all expenses of travelling, meetings etc is footed by the Trustees individually.

What does the future hold?

- Chairman N.S. Iyer has arranged for two half-day sessions on the 20th and 22nd April for school teachers of Modern English School on “How to deal with adolescents”. The sessions will be conducted by Ms. Prarthana Sharma of Atmaprakashan, the total cost of which will be equally shared by MES and HEAD.
- Through Childreach we have already been approached informally to take over and run an institution, a school for Autistic Children, which has around 4 teachers, a Principal and around 30 students. The project is under consideration.

The HEAD-AROEHAN project at Jawahar-Mokhada is in a sense open-ended and the possibilities are wide open as we enter a new financial year.

In the coming year HEAD has its primary focus on widening and deepening our initiatives in existing projects, while keeping our options open for any significant intervention in a project geographically within or adjacent to Mumbai.

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