

2023



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Thematic Areas

Education

Public Health

Child Protection

Women's Empowerment

Water Sanitation Hygiene (WASH)

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK:

The organization was founded in the year 1989 and field operations began from 1993. The little seed sown in the heart of the founders, over 30 years ago has now grown into a mighty tree with its branches spreading over three districts of West Bengal.

Development Action Society fulfils the purpose of its existence through education, child protection, health care, water sanitation hygiene (WASH), livelihood and women empowerment and protection.

It aims at developing the children, women and youth into committed people who would be putting meaning into their lives thus making a difference not only for themselves but also for the community as a whole.

The beginning of the new fiscal year of 2022-23 saw India's gradual recovery from the throes of an unprecedented COVID pandemic. The field based activities resumed and gradually gained momentum. The urban and peri-urban spaces of Kolkata that constitute the targets area of DAS operations became worst affected by this global pandemic as these areas are inhabited by highest number of TB patients along with co-morbidities and daily wagers.

This populace has been the worst affected as they have lost their livelihoods owing to the lockdown imposed by the Administration in wake of the pandemic.

To counter the challenges posed by this new and unprecedented crisis, DAS launched a massive drives related to dry ration and hygiene kit distribution since April 2021 using a contactless delivery mechanism and abiding by all COVID-19 protocols.

Also to mitigate the income loss in a sustainable manner, DAS launched a livelihoods program for 100 women from COVID impacted families in its target areas. The project was a short term that lasted for 15 months and was implemented on a war footing to bring a lasting impact focusing on five trades.

To counter climate change in a small way DAS distributed 10,000 fruit tree saplings in various districts of West Bengal.

While we place on record the outstanding services of the staff, we also acknowledge their unflagging zeal in upholding the ideas and values of our organization.

We appreciate and highly value the constant support rendered during this crisis recovery phase by Mennonite Central Committee, Azad Foundation, Calcutta, Toronto Calcutta Foundation, Samagra Siksha Mission (SSM), Team CAFÉ, SMILE Foundation, Rotary Club, Lions Club, and many others. They helped us immensely to raise funds to support our initiatives during the post pandemic.

I call upon our long standing supporters to further strengthen "Development Action Society", so that the organization can keep itself relevant to the development needs of communities across West Bengal.

Purabi Roy
Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We wish to offer our sincerest gratitude to the following agencies, departments, groups, individuals and staff for their support and continued patronage.

Government Departments:

Samagra Siksha Mission (SSM),
National Child Labour Project
KCLRCWS (Kolkata Child Labour Rehabilitation-cum-Welfare Society)
State Education Department
SUNDARINI

International Agencies:

Azad Foundation
Toronto Calcutta Foundation
SUAS Ireland
SMILE Foundation
TEAM CAFÉ
Mennonite Central Committee

National Agencies:

Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC)
Tech Mahindra Foundation (TMF)
Rotary Clubs
Lions Club
Jagori Rural Trust

Individuals and Groups:

Shri Swapan Samdder, MMIC-Basti Development and Ward-58 Councilor, KMC
Smt Nibedita Sharma, Ward-65 Councilor, KMC
Shri Sushil Sharma, Social Worker, Ward-65
Shri Sushanta Ghosh, Ward-107 Councilor, KMC
Shri Subhas Chakraborty, Ward President & Social Worker, Ward-58, KMC
Mrs. Susila Almal
Mrs. D. Kumar
Mr. Nirmalendu Basu
Ms. Vishaka Dutta
Ms. Sujata Kar
Ms. Aruna Gupta
Mr. Nitish Sapui
Mr. Bablu Mondal
Delhi Public School, Ruby Park
Silver Point School
Ashoka Hall School
Riddhi Beauty Parlor
Bantala Bhatri Sangha
Kalarit Adarsha Shiksha Niketan
Probir Chandra Chatterjee from Toronto, Canada
Tommy Marren from Sligo, Ireland

Our Donors: (LOGOS)
Government Departments



International Agencies



National Agencies:



ORGANISATION PROFILE

Establishment and Legal Registrations:

Founded on 18 August 1989, Development Action Society is a not for profit, non-political, non-government organization registered under the Society's Registration Act XXI of 1961, registered under NITI Aayog, the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and Income Tax Exemption U/s 80C and 12A.

Mission:

Our mission is to empower women, children and youth to realize their rights and access resources, through quality interventions in education, health and livelihood, so that they are enabled to transform their communities.

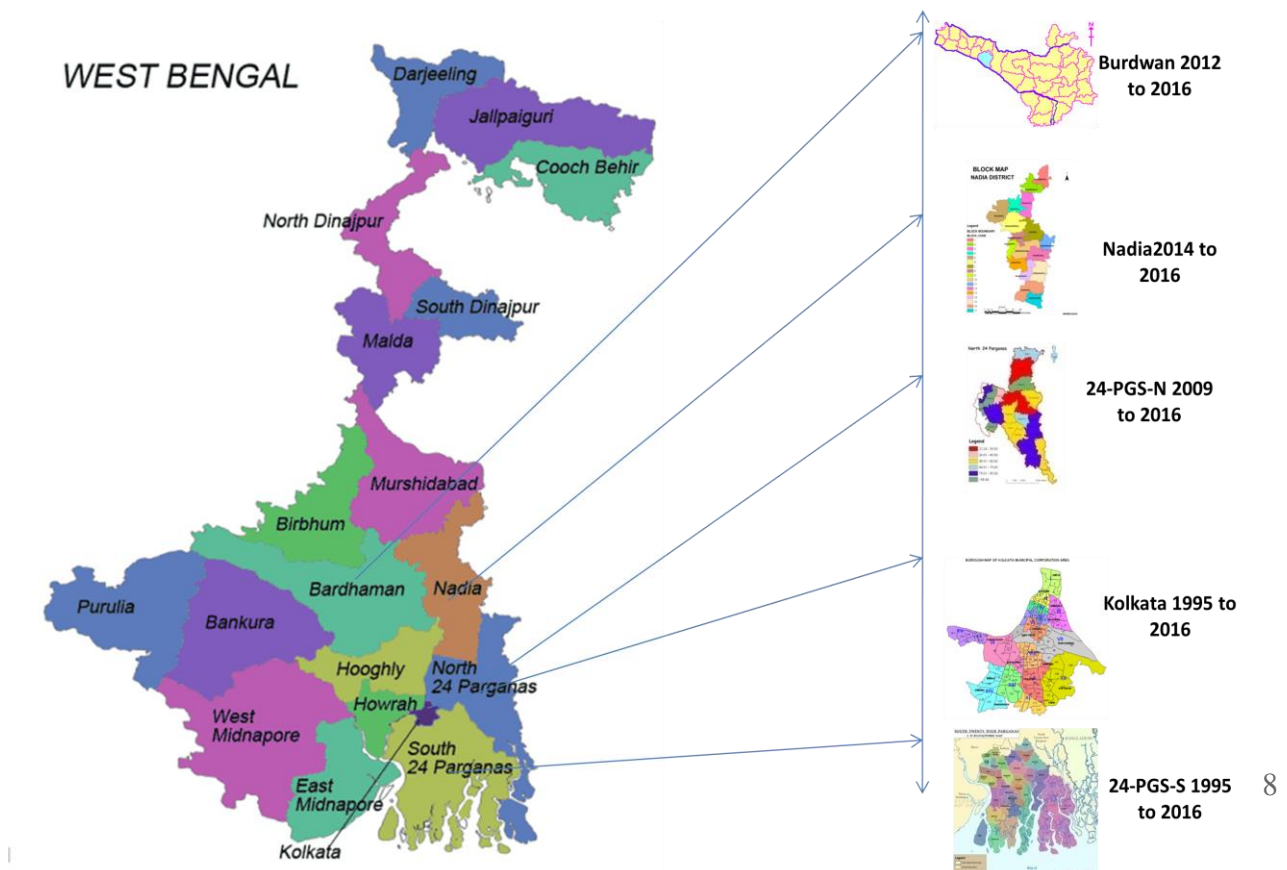
Vision:

We believe in a world where every human being enjoys equal rights and opportunities in order to lead a healthy and creative life with dignity and self-respect.

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS 2022-2023

| SL | NAME | DESIGNATION | OCCUPATION |
|----|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | SOMA BASU MALLIK | PRESIDENT | SOCIAL DEV. CONSULTANT |
| 2 | SUBRATA KAR | VICE PRESIDENT | DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL |
| 3 | PURABI ROY | SECRETARY | SOCIAL WORKER |
| 4 | SATHI DEY | ASST. SECRETARY | HOME MAKER |
| 5 | RINA SUKAI | TREASURER | DEV. CONSULTANT |
| 6 | ADITI DEB | MEMBER | TEACHER |
| 7 | SOUMI GHOSH | MEMBER | DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT |

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION & THEMATIC AREAS



Urban:

- **Kolkata** → 15 Wards - 57, 58, 59, 65, 66, 67, 68, 80, 91, 92, 93, 94, 105, 107 & 108 covering 3 boroughs viz. VII, IX & XII under Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC)
- **24 Parganas North** → 7 Wards – 1, 16, 17, 22, 23, 35, 38 under Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) & South Dum Dum Municipality
- **Burdwan** → Durgapur and Asansol Sub-Division

Rural:

- **Nadia** → Panighata Gram Panchayat, Block: Kaliganj, Sub-Division: Krishnanagar Sadar,
- **24 Parganas South** → 7 Gram Panchayats and 5 Blocks viz. Bhangore – I, Bhangore – I, Sonarpur, Jainagar and Mathurapur-II
 1. Tardaha Gram Panchayat, Block: Bhangore-I, Sub-Division-Sonarpur
 2. Bhubaneshwari Gram Panchayat, Block: Jainagar,
 3. Pratapnagar Gram Panchayat, Block: Bhanagore - II & and Partly in Block- Sonarpur
 4. Benota-II Gram Panchayat, Block: Bhangore-II
 5. Kheadaha-I Panchayat, Block: Sonarpur
 6. Kheadaha-II Panchayat, Block: Sonarpur
 7. Kumrapara Panchayat, Block: Mathurapur-II
- **Burdwan:**
 1. Kaichar I Panchayat, Block: Mangolkote

POPULATION OUTREACH:

DAS Coverage Till 31st March 2023

| DAS Project Coverage from 5 Districts in West Bengal Viz. Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Nadia and Burdwan | Direct Reach in Urban | Direct Reach in Rural | Total Direct Reach |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Parameters | | | |
| No of Households | 22047 | 6481 | 28528 |
| Total Population Person | 94483 | 28436 | 122920 |
| Total Population Male | 48624 | 14541 | 63165 |
| Total Population Female | 45859 | 13896 | 59755 |
| Population in the age group 0-6 Person | 7522 | 3428 | 10950 |
| Population in the age group 0-6 Male | 3883 | 1739 | 5622 |
| Population in the age group 0-6 Female | 3639 | 1688 | 5328 |
| Scheduled Castes population Person | 9643 | 14116 | 23759 |
| Scheduled Castes population Male | 4996 | 7182 | 12178 |
| Scheduled Castes population Female | 4648 | 6934 | 11582 |
| Scheduled Tribes population Person | 706 | 1151 | 1857 |
| Scheduled Tribes population Male | 362 | 586 | 948 |
| Scheduled Tribes population Female | 344 | 565 | 909 |
| Literates Population Person | 65148 | 18357 | 83505 |
| Literates Population Male | 34989 | 10158 | 45147 |
| Literates Population Female | 30159 | 8200 | 38358 |
| Illiterate Persons | 19507 | 10079 | 29586 |
| Illiterate Male | 8716 | 4383 | 13099 |
| Illiterate Female | 10792 | 5696 | 16488 |
| Total Worker Population Person | 32684 | 10224 | 42909 |
| Total Worker Population Male | 25246 | 8406 | 33652 |
| Marginal Worker Population 0 3 Person | 373 | 353 | 726 |
| Marginal Worker Population 0 3 Male | 224 | 204 | 428 |
| Marginal Worker Population 0 3 Female | 149 | 149 | 298 |

[A] EDUCATION & CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

DAS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME AIMS:

- Increased access of below 05 years children from numerous communities to receive pre-school education and be mainstreamed in the formal school.
- Increased number of children accessing mainstream formal education and being retained within that system to Class X.
- Increased access and retention in formal education, improving quality of life by reducing malnourishment and allowing students to become self-reliant, productive members of society.
- Inspiring youth representatives from numerous communities to be capacitated to advocate their issues on a larger platform.
- To inform all the children of their rights, especially their right to education.
- To provide back-up coaching support to marginalized children
- Residential education support to marginalized distressed girls

ACTIVITIES:

All educational centers pre-schools, non-formal centers and remedial coaching centers had to be closed down due to the lockdown imposed by the Administration in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and gradually the education institutions have been opened. Initiation of 2022-23 academic year was challenging. Most of the children have lost their academic practices in their school and their classes have been shifted from online classes to physical classes in their school.

Students become delighted to attend their school after long-term COVID lockdown. Students have to workout more to resume the classroom oriented educational practices.

As a result of the devastation resulting from Cyclone Amphan, along with the Covid-19 pandemic, children have not received education since early April for the target group who mainly attend government schools. Hence, the school children are not able to attend classes and access quality education and/or vocational training.

Owing to the pandemic the privatized education system has shifted to online mode based on the accessibility of the Internet. Despite feeble attempts by the governments the students from marginalized, lower socio-economic strata can hardly afford the requisite gadgets like Smartphones, laptops etc. There has been an alarming rise in the trend of student suicide all over the country which remains unnoticed by large section of the media.

Although it is quite clear that the Corona virus is causing people to be very ill, there are also alarming secondary impacts resulting from this pandemic. These include but are not limited to increased stress in the home, an increase in domestic violence including both physical and sexual assault, lack of income, an uptake in early child marriage and many more. The children have become more vulnerable due to the pandemic and the imposition of prolonged lockdown. Disadvantaged adolescents' girls and boys of the selected target areas are at a higher level of marginalization and social exclusion owing to: (a) the geographical location, poor infrastructure, inadequate knowledge and information, non-accessibility to the provisions and entitlements leads to social exclusion. (b) Migrants coming from remote places find it difficult to establish their identity to receive the Government Services. (c) The adolescent in particular lack basic facilities.

There is no one to give proper guidance to these children. In the absence of proper guidance and due to peer group's influences, the children mostly boys adopt unhealthy practices, such as substance abuse, drug addiction. Among these, adolescent girls are facing domestic violence; physical and mental abuses early marriage, trafficking especially in COVID-19 lockdown environment. The Children and Adolescent are also trafficked within the country and out of the country.

Through community mobilization DAS has been able to address the issues pertaining to child abuses, early marriage prevention, prevention of human trafficking, prevention of common diseases, substance abuse, vigorous counseling to prevent suicidal attempts, protection, livelihood education.

A.1 RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS

Supporting Agency: SAMAGRA SIKSHA MISSION (SSM) GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL

Target Children: 163

BACKGROUND:

This project has been initiated for providing basic education to street, underprivileged children from both urban and rural areas. DAS operated two residential units at Kasba, Kolkata comprising school drop-out children and children who never enrolled in schools. These units serve as full-fledged secondary schools along with residential hostel facilities. These homes for girl students offer education and residential accommodation to 200 children. The parents of these children are satisfied to see their girl's pursuing education without obstacles. Maximum girls from single parents and few children have no parents.



Due to the prevalence of Covid'19 from 15th March'2021 all students of both residential units i.e. Bidyadharpur Residential Unit I and Kasba Modern Residential Unit II were released and given handover to their respective guardians. The hostel was closed down as per government directive. Rinki Mondal, student of Class –X (Bidyadharpur Residential Unit 1) have stayed back from 15th March to till date due to unavailability of proper guardian.

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC REPORT

In the month of February 2021, a total of 6 students appeared in Madhyamik Examination from Bidyadharpur Residential Unit I and 5 appeared from Kasba Modern Institution for Girls Residential Unit II. All 11 students have passed successfully.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

During the Covid-19 lockdown period a Group Whatsapp platform was created to continue with the academics of the students. Regular online classes were taken by the teachers till date. After Covid-19 Lockdown, tutors have given tuition classes to Rinki Mondal in Bidyadharpur Residential Unit I premises.

MID-DAY MEAL:

Mid-day Meal to all students has been distributed in the form of dry ration to the families once a month as per the Government rules. Essential commodities (groceries/clothes/sanitizers etc.) are distributed regularly by Development Action Society to children under poverty.



A.2 MISSION EDUCATION: BACK-UP EDUCATION SUPPORT & PRE-SCHOOLS

Supporting Agency: SMILE FOUNDATION

Development Action Society running the education centers in following areas with the support of Smile Foundation the centers are:

M: 63

F: 94

33 children enrolled in free BYJUs classes organized by SMILE

NABADEEP: Arupota – Ward -58, KMC, West Bengal

NABADOY: Bantala - Ward -108, KMC, West Bengal

BACKGROUND:

DAS has been addressing the issue of education and is yet working for the same target as the beneficiaries are primarily first-generation learners who come with the problems related to it. The areas being underprivileged are highly neglected by the government. The people, who are most in need of the basic facility that the government commits, are all time deprived from it, which brings a constant fight for survival in their lives compelling them to pay less heed for improving their quality of life through proper education, personality development, health facilities and no gender discrimination. The situation naturally brings hindrances in bringing any kind of radical development in their lives.



TARGET POPULATION:

The project aims to provide development through quality education to children of six selected underprivileged community living such as remedial back up support, youth empowerment in the community of southeast Kolkata and South 24 Parganas. In this context the strategy had been taken to involve work at several levels for achieved change within the project, involved expertise for local leadership and working with existing networks.

INTERVENTION:

Multi-grade coaching centers (coaching support offered to students from Classes I to X) conducted in 02 locations among the semi-urban and urban slums of Kolkata. These centers cater to mainstreamed students of formal schools who are mostly First Generation Learners. The coaching helps them to cope up with the academics of the schools and therefore continues largely to the retention of these students in education. The NFE centers promote school-going habit and help the community of understand the significance of education in the progress and development of the community at the micro level.

ACTIVITIES:

- Educational support to school goes through remedial back up support classes helping them to prepare themselves to perform better for formal schools and secondary level support.
- DAS had taken initiative to decrease the percentage of school dropout, education issues and available Govt. services through arranged monthly awareness
- Parents meetings, stakeholders' meetings in community and also taken informal tracking system through door-to-door home visits.
- Skill development of adolescent groups, emphasizing specialization in particular aspects helping them to generate employment opportunities leading to self-reliance in future.
- Capacity building of educators on Teaching Learning Methods, Child psychology, appropriate school curricula.
- DAS had taken initiative on a fundraising approach programme for few corporate persons, community stakeholders and NRI persons who belong to our country due to those marginalized children who are experiencing endemic poverty and can't get any kind of basic survival materials.

A3 PROMOTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION (ECCE) AMONG MARGINALIZED CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION ON RIGHTS IN SOUTH 24 PARGANAS DISTRICT

Supporting Agency: Mennonite Central Committee of India (MCCI)

Target children: 120 preschoolers

Activity Details

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

Capacity building of Staff/teachers on preprimary curriculum:

- Capacity building event for center teachers and staff in two phases which was conducted on **24th to 25th June 2022** and **1st and 2nd July 2022** as continuation. Following topics covered
- Post COVID accelerated learning and monitoring of pre-school education as mentioned in NCERT framework,
- Preparation of contextual TLMs by Center Teachers for enrolled children.
- The techniques of level testing and age-appropriate accelerated learning.



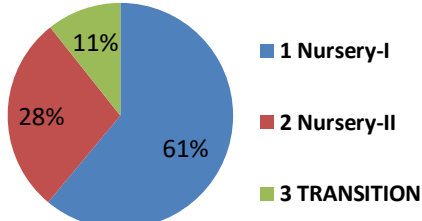
Operating four pre-school centers with 131 children in each year:

131 children enrolled from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. Enrolled children have started to receive pre-school education and nutrition support. Center teacher started home visits for enrolling the marginalized children and share the worksheets to assess during their assessment. Teachers are paying



attention more towards teaching to children on alphabets, numeric, objects and rhymes.

Student Distributions in Class

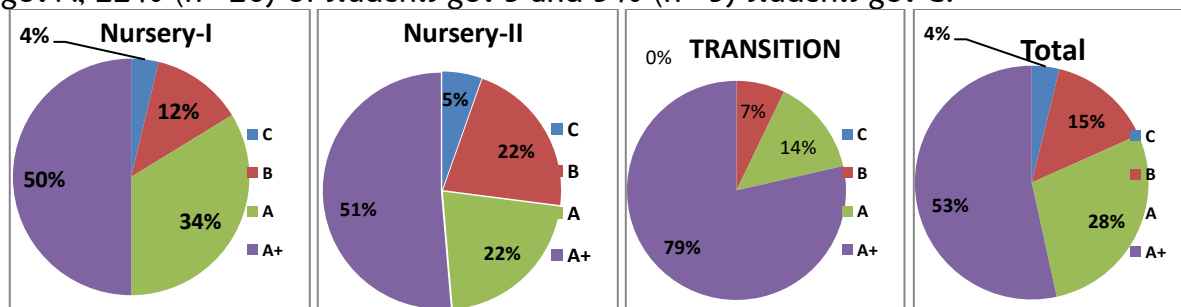


Total Students is 131 (Boys-71 and Girls-60).

Four project locations viz. Bhagwanpur, Uchepota Kalarkhal and Bantala

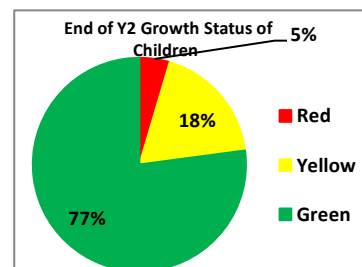
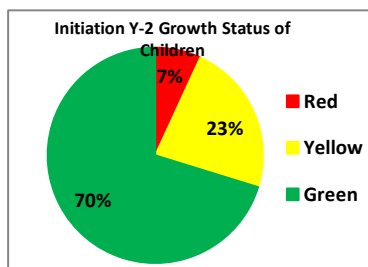
Status of Annual Progress Assessment of Students in 4 Preschool Education Center:

In annual academic year (2022-2023) assessment 16% (n=14) of students got A+, 59% (n=53) of students got A, 22% (n=20) of students got B and 3% (n=3) students got C.



Provision for Nutrition of children for early childhood education center:

Children were provided cooked food regular basis. Accordingly, growth monitoring is done at the initiation of the year-2 and end of year-2, growth monitoring of the children was conducted through measuring body weight. The result is mentioned graphically below. **At the Initiation of the 2nd year** 70% Children are nourished adequately, 23% of children nourished moderate level and 7% of children under nourished. **At the end of the 2nd year** 77% Children are nourished adequately, 18% of children nourished moderate level and 5% of children under nourished.



Home visit and follow-up the hygiene practice status are being monitored by Center Teachers.



Body Wt



Hygiene Practice



Hand Wash



Health Monitoring



Cleaning Pre-School

Bi monthly meeting with mothers on progress of children:

25 Bi-Monthly Meetings have been conducted in four centers' location. All the parents and caregivers have attended the meetings. 155 Females and 21 Males participants (Mothers and Caregivers of Pre-School Children) have participated.



1. In these meetings progress report of students shared with parents and growth status of their children also been shared. Accordingly, parents have been guided by teachers the way to care of their children at home.
2. Discussed health related issues of children and how to take care of them, when they get contagious diseases.
3. Some of our children will have the proper age to be mainstreamed after this year,

Exposure Visit on ECCE:

One exposure visit conducted to Institute of Social Work (ISW) in Santiniketan, Bolpur for 3 days from 22nd March 2023 to 24th March 2023

Aims of the Visit:

Understand the methods teaching to preschool education during their regular class and understanding the back-up coaching support to marginalized children like schedule caste and scheduled tribes



Observing Pre-school Education



Observing Back-up Coaching Support

Child Rights and Protection:

Capacity building of teachers on Child Rights & Entitlements:

Capacity building had been organised on 28th June & 7th July 2022 and refresher training have been conducted on 16th March 2023. Session has been facilitated by Mr. Indusekhar Chatterjee, former Joint Director, Dept. of Child Right and Trafficking, Govt. of West Bengal. 17 Participants (Female – 13 & Male -4), Teachers, Cook-Cum Helper and 4 administrative staffs including resource person participated in this training.



One refresher capacity building has been conducted on “Situation of Child Rights in three intervening communities and the Child Protection Policy of DAS will be rolled-out in intervening communities considering the guidelines of National Child Protection Policy. Following topics were covered in the session -

- Assessment of community risks situation towards child protection mechanism through child protection committees and community stakeholders.
- Role and responsibility of child protection committee members and community key stakeholders to addressing the child protection measures
- Roll-out the DAS child protection policy considering provision in the national child protection policy.



Training Outcome:

- The participants informed about the basic components of Integrated Child Protection Schemes (ICPS) and Child Rights. Also Review the outlines in the UNCRC about 04 main rights of children: 1- Right to Survival, 2- Right to Development, 3- Right to Protection, 4- Right to Participation. Trainers explained all the 04 rights one by one with examples.
- Participants have developed thorough understanding about government entitlements relevant for the local people like birth certificate, ration card, Aadhaar Card, Shikshashree, Kanyashree (K-1,2 & 3), Sabuj Sathi, Swasthya Sathi, RBSK, Passport, etc.

Formation of CPC groups in three centers and awareness meeting on Child Rights:

3 Child Protection Committees' awareness meetings conducted on 6th March 2023 in Kalarkhal, Ucchepota and Bhagwanpur on follow topics –

- Present situation of child protection issues in three communities (Feedback sessions)
- Work accomplish by child protection committees
- Concept of state, district, block, Panchayat and local level child protection mechanisms.



- Roles of different level of stakeholders in child protection mechanisms
- Role of child protection committee members to liaison different level of stakeholders to address the community level child protection issues. 96 child protection committees' participants from three mentioned project locations (Boys – 29 and girls – 67)

Meeting Outcome:

- Children from 3 location Bhagwanpur and Ucchepota has formed the CPC and in Khalarkhal CPC can be formed in 3rd quarter
- Children are interested to know the local child protection service points which will be discussed in next meeting for all three centers

Awareness of school adolescent on Child Rights:

2 awareness events conducted with adolescents on child protections and child rights at with 1) Kanthipota Junior Basic School, 2) Chak Kalarkhal School, 3) Goal Bati Upper Primary School and 4) Ucchepota Vidyasagar Madhyamik Siksha Kendra school on 29th June 2022, 26th September 2022, 9th December 2022 and 27th February 2023. Total 138 (Boy-75 & Girls-63) School adolescents attended the event



Outcome of the Event:

- Children came to know the basic composition, function and role-responsibility of child parliament and its members in school
- Children understand the emerging child rights issues in their schools in post pandemic situation,

Quarterly meetings with the school authorities on Child Rights issues:

11 quarterly meetings have been conducted and issue-based meeting conducted with 4 schools among these 11 schools. The name of the 4 schools are 1) Kanthipota Junior Basic School, 2) Chak Kalarkhal School, 3) Goal Bati Upper Primary School and 4) Ucchepota Vidyasagar Madhyamik Siksha Kendra school on 29th June 2022, 26th September 2022, 9th December 2022 and 27th February 2023 on Child rights issues. Both the schools have their child parliament but the child parliaments were not enough capacities to play their role as child parliament members. We have interacted with 7 Male and 4 female teachers from 11 schools during one-to-one interaction regarding the child protection issues in their schools.



Outcome of the meetings:

According to the discussion 4 schools have their child parliaments and among these 3 are only functional. Rest 1 school has no child parliament. All the Teacher In-Charge from 4 schools approached us to conduct awareness session on child protection and child rights with adolescent in their school premises.

Awareness of mothers and care givers on Child Rights (break up in detail costing sheet):

This event was conducted in 2 phases, one event conducted centrally in Bantala involving the children, parents and the participation of 3 child protection committees of all 4 preschool education centers on 10th January 2023. Another follow-up event conducted in Bantala and Kalarkhal on 28th March 2023 involving the old and new parents of enrolled children. Total 332 Participants (Male-123 and Female-209)

Centrally Conducted event in Bantala on 10th January 2023:

- Basics of child rights shared with the participants
- Understanding local child protection issues at school level and within the intervening communities
- Exploring the local, block level, district level and state level supporting child rights protection mechanisms
- Conducting few sports events through involving the preschool children for supporting and creating the child friendly atmosphere within the intervening communities.

Follow-up meeting in Kalarkhal and Bantala 28th March 2023:

- Situation of community-based child protection mechanisms
- Revision of basic child rights
- Immunization and others health rights
- Different forms of child abuse and its mitigation measures

Create Enabling Environments:

Monthly meetings with mothers/women on issues related to education, health and Govt. services:

35 meetings have been organized with 433 mothers and 2 male parents in year-2

1. Total data of entitlement status of enroll children and parents have been collected, some of the mothers do not have all the entitlements, so we discussed the problem accordingly
2. Due to migration and address change, some of the mothers were having difficulties to change the current address and we guided them how to change that, so we followed up in these meetings about that
3. Through the meeting we got the information that some of the children do not have proper birth certificate and mothers Swasta Sathi medical card. Some of the children have immunization card as a proof of birth place and date, so we discussed and provided the information on how they can make a proper birth certificate
4. Some of them do not have Swasta Sathi card, so through discussion provided them information on how they make that on when Duare Sarkar will be happening in their area



Quarterly meetings with the Panchayat members on the social issues surfaced and the status:

4 meetings have been conducted on 21st June 2022, 12th July 2022 (non-budgeted), 14th March 2023 and 17th March 2023 at Khayadaha-II Gram Panchayat premises in presence of Panchayat Pradhan, Public Health and Education Executives, Sansad – VI & XII representative. Total- 18 Participants (Male – 7, Female-11)



Outcome –

100 days workers for cleaning the toilets is not confirmed from the end of Panchayat, but Pradhan will try to allocate at least 1 worker for the cleaning the same.

The process of running water connection is ongoing and approach will be made from Sansad Pradhan to Gram Panchayat for the proposed water connections to the centers

All the center are agreed to provide the submitter in the name of DAS

Cleaning of bushes will be done in the 2nd week of July 2022.

Interface meeting with stakeholders and women group on Govt. Services:

3 Interface meetings have been conducted in 3 project locations viz. Ucchepota, Kalarkhal and Bhagwanpur on 30th March 2023 with 65 Participants (Male – 36 & Female – 29). Community key stakeholders, Potential Parents, our preschool teachers and concerned Sansad members had attended the meeting. Center-wise following issues have been raised and the issues were –



- Regular cleaning of club premise when club members are using the club premises
- Referral of new children to the preschool run by DAS with the support by MCC
- Quick repairing of toilets for easy accessibility by children
- Maintain the cleanliness of toilet by club members
- Joint Application for New Water Connection in Kalarkhal Center and sharing the same issue in Panchayat level.
- Fencing the newly reconstructed footbridge for child safety.
- Follow-up the activities of Child protection Committees
- Referral linkages of people to DUARE SARKAR Scheme for the entitlement issues
- Panting the education premises wall

Workshop with School authorities, Police, Panchayat & Stakeholders:

This workshop has been done in Panchayat Premises with participation of School Teaches, Panchayat Members, Sansad members, community key stakeholders and mother groups – Following topics have covered in this workshop –



- Sustainability of pre-schools in three project locations
- Basic infrastructure like water connection, electric connections and regular cleaning of school ground / club premises
- Child Friendly atmosphere like playground and regular support to Child Protection Committees through the support of community key stakeholders and local police.
- Linkage in DUARE SARKAR for addressing entitlement issues of parents of enrolled students and other villages

Celebration of Special Days (Teachers Day & Children Days):

Celebration of 75th Independence Day:

75 Independents-day celebrated in all 4 education centers and 1 large event conducted at Function Hall st Bidyadharpur Residential Home for Girls Unit. Total 111 Participants (Boys-41 & Girls – 60)



75th Independence Day in All Centers

Teachers' Day Celebration:

On 5th October 2022 DAS celebrated teachers' day in all three centers and DAS office. Total Participants 43 (Male-11 and Female-32). All 8 center teachers and project staff have participated in teachers' day. Significance of teachers' day has been shared and teachers have shared their personal memorable experiences.



Children's Day celebrated on 14th November 2022:



Celebration of Christmas on 24th December 2022:



Celebration of Netaji Subhas Bose Birth Day on 23rd January 2023 & Republic Day on 26th January 2023:



Celebrated Holi on 6th March 2023:



Celebration of World Water Day on 21st March 2023:



A.4 CHATUA FREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Chatua Free Primary School in the Sunderbans has been in operation for the past 37 years in the Sunderban area. It is a private school without any government aid. The school is run by 05 teachers who are quite qualified, dedicated and skilled in teaching. The school has produced many meritorious students over the years. The government high schools are very keen to admit students from this school as their standard of education is quite high and these students win accolades for the Government High Schools in higher classes and Board exams.

The population of the village Chatua is nearly 2000. The main livelihood of the people is fishing. Some of them have small piece of land to grow paddy and vegetables. Many women from the village come to southern parts of Kolkata to work as domestic maids on a daily basis. They generally leave at 5 am and get back by 4 pm. The children remain in the village without parents for long hours. For this reason, they cannot attend government school situated at a distance of 3 km from their village. The means of communication is also very poor. Hence, the operation of this school assumes great significance for the education of the village children. The parents are also quite happy with the quality of education imparted at the school.

The area is quite socially excluded and very much prone to natural calamities like cyclone and flooding. The school is the only educational centre in the area. It also serves as a relief centre during disasters.

School infrastructures:

The school has its own land and building registered under a charitable Trust. There are 5 rooms with an office room in the building. The rooms can cater to students from Nursery to Class IV. There is a toilet and a large playground. The setting is very scenic.

Present condition:

Usually about 150 children were enrolled and attended classes regularly in the past. However, after this fund debacle, the strength has reduced to about 100 children. The teachers are very motivated to run the school and they are working without any remuneration all this while.

Since end of 2018, DAS is running the school as it had no external source of funding and had reached a moribund state. DAS also arranged repairs of the school building after the Amphan Super Cyclone (20 May 2021) which had damaged the roof of the one storied building. It also provided dry ration to 200 families during the COVID lockdown and post Amphan.

DAS has also mobilized some funds to erect the first floor of the school building by entering into an agreement/Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Trust. DAS and the Trust shall use the space to raise funds to cover the operational costs of the school.

A.5 REPAIR AND RECONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATION CENTRES

Supporting Agency:

- 1) PROBIR CHANDRA CHATTERJEE FROM TORONTO CANADA
- 2) THOMAS MARREN FROM SLIGO, IRELAND
- 3) SNOW WHITE INFRASTRUCTURE PVT. LTD. KOLKATA

DAS undertook repair and reconstruction works of education centers and school at Bantala and Chatua Primary School at Sunderbans which were ravaged by the Amphan Super Cyclone last year.

DAS repaired the roof of the ground floor of Building 1 of Chatua Primary School. Also, another floor admeasuring 1500 sq. ft. is being erected over Building 2 of the school. The building will serve as a storm and flood shelter in the future. It will also serve as a training centre for women engaged in local livelihoods.

A.5 SPOKEN ENGLISH AND COMPUTER CLASS

Location: ISRC Office

Supported by: ISRC, Kolkata

OBJECTIVES:

- Teaching spoken English, including sentence structure, nouns, verbs, and tenses.
- To carry out a drive towards social commitment by providing free basic computer literacy training to women primarily in the rural areas so as to make them able to use computers and related technology efficiently and specially utilize the wide advantage of accessing the Internet.
- For these spoken English and computer skills to translate into real use of English and computers on a day-to-day basis.

The centre resumed successfully after the lockdown was relaxed. **20** adolescent girls and married women were enrolled who took lessons in English for communication and computer skills.

After completion of the course in March 2021, more than 10 students got jobs in different companies.

DISASTER RESPONSE

Super Cyclone Yaas ripped through Kolkata and the coastal areas of West Bengal and Odisha with wind speeds of 130-185 kmph dated on 24th May 2021. Maximum speed recorded in Kolkata was 133 kmph.

According to the Govt. Source more than 12.5 million people have been directly affected and more than 100 million people are suffering indirectly. More than 3 million houses in rural areas, 0.5 million houses in urban and semi urban areas have been smashed down after this devastating storm. The hardest hit districts in West Bengal are South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Kolkata, East and West Midnapur, Howrah and Hooghly.

The storm brought strong winds and heavy rain. It left behind a trail of death and destruction. There have been reports of 80 deaths in the state so far. Trees were uprooted, electricity, telephone lines, cable TV connection and internet connections were brought down and several houses flattened. Major portion of people are disconnected from supply chain. However, these people who worked in the informal economy had lost their livelihoods due to the lockdown imposed in the wake of the dual catastrophes of COVID-19 pandemic and Amphan Cyclone. During the crisis, DAS provided month long dry ration to over 700 families.

The plight of the migrant workers has been the worst. They were left to fend for themselves in other states during the 60-day lock down. They walked for hundreds of miles to reach home. Many died due to starvation on the way, many met with fatal accidents. Once they reached home with great difficulty, all of a sudden, the cyclone Amphan has snatched away their shelters.

Kolkata as capital of West Bengal is also the direct victim of Cyclone Amphan; it has been devastated beyond recognition. Many of Kolkata's roads were flooded and remained without electricity and water for more than 140 hours. Old age people, children, single parents, ailing are being subjected to acute suffering due to non-availability of essential service.

It is a formidable challenge. Yaas was the second "super cyclone" to form over the Bay of Bengal since 1999 and Bengal faced this kind of Cyclone in 17th Century.

STRATEGY FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF:

Development Action Society (DAS) works in the urban slums and peri-urban areas in Kolkata and North 24 Parganas. In hard-to-reach rural areas, DAS intervenes in South 24 Parganas Bhangore-I & II, Sonerpur and part of Sunderbans: Chatua village); In Nadia in Panighata GP and in Burdwan Kaichar Village. We were informed that many of the students of our educational centres and women of livelihood groups have lost their homes due to the ravages of the storm. Fortunately, there were no fatalities in our communities as the club buildings provided effective shelter during the storm.

DAS immediately launched an emergency fund for providing the essential support for repairs and reconstruction and daily subsistence to these cyclone victims through food, medicine, hygiene kits, health check-up, temporary roofing in this short time being. We have also strategized health, education and livelihood supports as long-term basis for ensuring their development. In this regard we sought for donations to help local people get back on their feet following this calamity.

DAS strategized to raise fund for immediate support to the Cyclone Amphan and COVID-19 Lockdown affected families:

- Food Support through Dry Ration,
- Drinking Water,
- Health Check-up and Medicine,
- Temporary shed/roofing

With support from MCC, DAS organized a flood shelter at Chatua Primary school. More than 170 people stayed in this shelter for over a month. They were provided with morning Breakfast and evening snacks with this support. Milk for children and lactating and pregnant women were provided along with hygiene kits to the stranded villagers at the flood shelter. Lunch and Dinner were provided by the local Gram Panchayat.

C. LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMES

Supporting Agency: 1) Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
 Beneficiaries: 100 women impacted by COVID pandemic
 Areas: South 24 Parganas: Bhagabanpur, Kalarkhal, Kharki-Ucchepota under Kheyadaha Gram Panchayat, Block Sonerpur
 Kolkata Municipal Corporation: Bantala under Ward-57, 107, 108,
 Trades: Tailoring, Jute craft, Poultry, Puffed Rice, Spice Grinding

Background: Livelihoods is one of the core thematic areas of DAS. It strives to empower youths, especially women to break glass ceilings to eke alternative and non-traditional livelihoods through proper skill building training and orientation. It is common knowledge that earning among women increases social investments within the family and enhances their decision making.



DAS began to implement a project entitled *Building Resilience among COVID-19 Pandemic and Natural Disaster affected Community Women through Direct Relief and Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods in Urban and Rural Spaces of Kolkata and South 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal* since Jan. 2022.

The main goals will be:

A) Direct emergency response/relief during COVID pandemic:

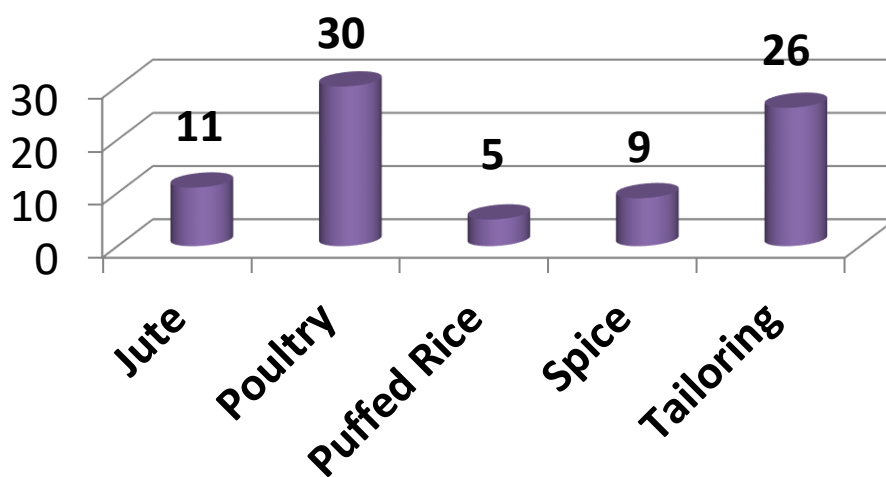
i) To provide dry ration support (to

last a month) to 400 most distressed marginalised families who are suffering from food crisis due to loss of home and income owing to Yaas Super Cyclone across the target areas of DAS as part of direct relief and emergency response and thereby alleviate their hunger and suffering and stabilise food consumption.

B) Sustainable livelihoods for women of those families where earners have lost jobs during COVID pandemic:

- ii) To provide sustainable income generation opportunities for women in the target areas and thereby help the families to be resilient after being adversely impacted by the pandemic and natural calamities.
- iii) To provide adequate training for skill development, production monitoring and marketing liaison support to enable women to become entrepreneurs in the long run and thereby increase decision making power of the women in the community.
- iv) To enhance earners in the family and secure financial stability through sustained household income to offset financial losses caused by the pandemic and natural disasters and impending risks.

Trades vs. Enrollment



C.1 POULTRY FARMING



C.1 JUTE CRAFTS AND PRODUCTS:



40 women trained under the Livelihood programme supported by GOAL India continued their activities in the work shed at Khanaberia. This has become a self-sustaining enterprise of the women who were trained over the years.



DAS procured orders from ONGC, Sundarini (Govt. of West Bengal) to support this initiative of the women who work under SHGs.

These women have been successful in staying away from hazardous activities like rag-picking and remained engaged in dignified yet productive activities which were the objectives of the project.

During the pandemic, over 10,000 masks were manufactured by the women's group and distributed as part of the hygiene kits containing COVID essentials like hand soap and hand sanitizers. These products were marketed by teachers of Ashoka Hall School, Kolkata.

C.3 TAILORING TRAINING

Development Action Society has taken the initiative of providing the training of sewing and tailoring to those women who want to pursue this training to be financially independent and those who have the aspiration to make tailoring as their profession. This project is being supported by ISRC and implemented by DAS. Three days classes in every week have been scheduled for this program. 18 candidates (3 trainees are from old batch and 15 trainees from new batch) have registered their name for the 2nd batch.

Aim of the project:

The centre has been organized with an aim to create an opportunity for alternative livelihoods for marginalized women living in the urban fringes like slums and squatters of Ward 107. With great enthusiasm 18 women have enrolled themselves at the centre till date. This began from 25 August 2021 after prolonged lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The women are attending regularly, learning fast and maintains the social distance and proper sanitization due to COVID-19. They aspire to have a skill which will fetch them additional income for the family. This will enhance their position in the family as well.



The syllabus has been designed for ONE year. An Aspiration Mapping for the aforementioned candidates will be done shortly to ascertain their aptitudes.

Examination:

In this session, there are 10 numbers of students appearing in the internal exam. The students have worked mainly on four items. All the

students have learnt theoretically and practically. The items are 1.Kameez, 2.Petticoat, 3.A-line frock, 4.Panty. By dint of hard labour and perseverance all the students have successfully completed their curriculum and they prepared all the above-mentioned items independently.



CIP Achievements:

- **Tailoring and embroidery**
 - Participants: 30
 - Material issued: 667.8 Meters
 - Total sales : Rs. 80,617/-
 - Wages earned: Rs. 2,996/- per trainee
 - Stipend disbursed: Rs. 31,500/-
- **Jute craft:**
 - Jute materials issued : 81.25 Meters
 - Total sales : Rs. 23,760/-
 - Wages earned : Rs. 1,461/- per trainee
 - Stipend disbursed: Rs. 14,000/-
- **Puffed rice:**
 - Participants: 07
 - Rice procured 1370 kg- Rs. 48,202/-
 - LPG cylinders (4) consumed – Rs. 4,130/-
 - Packaging – Rs. 27,300/-
 - Rice used for production: 1250 kg
 - Sales:
 - DAS sale 815.5 kg @ Rs. 54.10 = Rs. 44198/-
 - Mother sale 136.5 kg @ Rs. 46.50 = Rs. 6352/-
 - Wages earned (performance based): Rs. 16,000/-
- **Spice Grinding:**
 - Participants: 05
 - Raw Material Procurement: 120 kg
 - Material issued: 120 kg
 - Production: 50.200 kg
 - Sales: 38.450 kg
 - Total Sales: Rs. 12287/-
 - Profit Sharing (performance based= 7000/-
- **Poultry Farming:**
 - Participants: 30
 - Total Procurement of Chicks :1326
 - Total income of participants: Rs. 2,21,582
 - Stipend disbursed: Rs. 9,990/-

C.4 SAKHA: WOMEN ON WHEELS

Supported By: CRY America



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Development Action Society (DAS) has been working with the rights of children and women and empowerment since its inception in 1989. Engaging women into proper and dignified livelihoods from their hazardous work had been a great challenge for DAS over the years. However, a large number of women have responded positively to the alternative livelihood opportunities that were offered to them. Eventually many of them have refused to work at dumping grounds as daily wagers.

One of the primary focus areas of the DAS's intervention matrix is gender and inequality.

DAS always felt that Women on Wheels (WOW) Programme is a great initiative whereby it places women on equal footing with men breaking *stereotypes* and *glass ceilings*.

Since 2018 our implementation of **Women on Wheel** programme was an opportunity to work for gender equality and towards more inclusive gender orientation within the community through an approach of integration of women in the mainstream of livelihood participation. It also explores and attempts to overcome gender discrimination by engaging women in so-called “Non-traditional trades” like driving, plumbing, house painting, bakeries, home delivery etc.

IDEOLOGY:

The programme is ideologically driven by the following non-negotiables:

1. Commitment to working with Resource Poor Women, whereas the term ‘resource poor’ is not merely a state of financial impoverishment, but recognizes the intersectionality of the experiences of those who are marginalized and thus the term (Resource Poor) refers to (someone) disadvantaged by one or several of the following axis of inequality: Social exclusion (based on caste, religion, ethnicity, race); Gender; Economic; Physical disability; Sexual orientation and choices; Habitat; Political exclusion (based on religion, language).
2. Understanding of empowerment as economic and social empowerment. Thus, Women on Wheels as not just a training programme, but a programme that develops skills that lead to

“Livelihoods with dignity”. Empowerment, in relation to the programme, is also understood as a process of building solidarity.

3. Linked to that, the programme’s principal aim is not only to impart technical skills; training on women’s rights and self-development is an **integral part** of the programme.

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVENTION:

- Mobilizing resource-poor women from urban slum or adjacent suburbs as per agreed criteria.
- Delivery of holistic capacity development programmes to trainees, incorporating technical-driving as well as self-development and self-empowerment aspects.
- Support for trainees throughout programme, specifically to secure all documents required to obtain driving license; to acquire driving licenses; and to negotiate with families of Trainees if required.
- Provide job opportunity to the trainees who successfully complete the programme.
- Opportunities to participate in collective events and activities and other opportunities to trainees to enable them to build social capital.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- 40 women youths will be identified from the targeted areas within a period of twelve months.
- Mapping of vehicle operators, training institutes and its associated cost within Kolkata for a period of two months.
- Training 40 potential women youths for public vehicle (taxi) driving and operations.
- Link them with Azad Foundation to operationalize the profession.
- Educate the youths of the targeted areas on hazardous occupation in the unorganized job sectors.
- Provide life skill support to the identified women youths of the locality.

LEARNING:

It was expected that women of lower economic strata who were in search of income opportunities will be enthusiastic by this scope of work and will be ready to work as professional drivers. But the enrolments were less than we had expected. In the first year, it was noticed even those women who were actively participating in community development initiatives were reluctant to accept this offer and were unable to break the vicious chains of patriarchy.

It was learnt from many community sensitization sessions like community meetings, focused group discussions and door to door visits, women in the urban communities of Kolkata were more comfortable to work as maid servant, domestic workers or working in beauty parlours rather than challenging jobs like vehicle driving. But the community mobilization efforts of DAS motivated many women, particularly youths to take up this challenge and emerge as role models in their communities. It was also felt that women participating in this scope of job would be right catalysts (community champions for peer advocacy) to motivate more and more women.

Interestingly, many women from slum pockets of Park Circus, Tangra and Topsia and adjacent areas, despite being Muslim Pre-dominated and therefore considered to be more conservative, are showing greater interest to take up driving as their profession.

STATUS AT A GLANCE

| Enrolment | Pass outs | On Job | Pink cab |
|-----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 55 | 35 | 12 | 05 |

E. DRY RATION AND HYGIENE KIT DISTRIBUTION

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

India is in the throes of an unprecedented pandemic called Novel Corona Virus, nCOVID-19 in other words.

The urban spaces of Kolkata are worst affected by this global pandemic, especially Tangra Urban Health District (UHD) covering 08 KMC Wards (viz. 57, 58, 59, 65, 66, 67, 68, 108) and adjacent catchment areas like Behala KMC Wards, Kheyadaha GP, Rajpur Sonarpur Municipality Wards 34, 35 etc. as these areas are inhabited by highest number of TB patients along with co-morbidities and daily wagers.

This populace has been the worst affected as they have lost their livelihoods owing to the lockdown imposed by the Administration in wake of the pandemic. They are remaining HUNGRY in the prevalent conditions which can assume dangerous proportions and has the potential to worsen the overall situation.

Hence, DAS mobilized funds from all quarters for dry ration distribution to these families, as much as possible.

DAS made an APPEAL to all donors and well-wishers and friends and associates for provision of similar support to the deserving yet uncovered families in its target areas.

E.3 MCC-CIP RATIONING

Detailed list of COVID affected beneficiaries' through survey and home visits and interpersonal communications with secondary stakeholders through using survey formats.

Survey format was designed with keeping in mind the contextual criteria of food insecurity during the COVID pandemic period for identifying the FA recipient.

Survey was conducted involving staff / community volunteers for listing of COVID affected beneficiaries with pre-set survey formats through home visits and interpersonal communications with primary and secondary stakeholders.

200 most marginalised vulnerable and COVID impacted families participated covering **661 heads: Males-318 and Females-343**. The Selection criteria:

- The families who are presently without jobs / income
- and/or with decreased income
- Families without ration cards
- Women headed families / Single parent families
- Families with differently abled members
- The family's earning and other (s) members suffering
- From chronic / severe diseases for long time
- Families without earning members
- Family members infected with COVID
- Families with COVID-19 deaths
- Collected data was tabulated, collated and analyzed to identify most vulnerable FA recipients.

| Sl | Particulars | Qty | Unit |
|----|----------------------------|-----|---------|
| 1 | Rice | 3 | kg |
| 2 | Masoor Daal (red lentil) | 1 | kg |
| 3 | Moong Daal (yellow lentil) | 500 | gm |
| 4 | Mustard Oil | 1 | kg |
| 5 | Chidwa (chapped rice) | 1 | kg |
| 6 | Suji | 500 | gm |
| 7 | Soyabean (Nutrella) | 1 | kg |
| 8 | Puffed rice | 1 | kg |
| 9 | Salt | 1 | kg |
| 10 | Biscuits | 300 | gm |
| 11 | Amulya (milk powder) | 5 | sachets |
| 12 | Potato | 2 | kg |
| 13 | Onions | 1 | kg |
| 14 | Soap | 2 | pcs |
| 15 | Mask | 2 | pcs |

E.4 TECH MAHINDRA FOUNDATION RATIONING

DAS with support from Tech Mahindra Foundation organized dry ration distribution to the marginalized families in the target areas of DAS. TMF supported dry ration provision to **500 families**.

LIST OF ITEMS:

| Sl | Particulars | Qty | Unit |
|----|---------------------------|-----|------|
| 1 | Rice | 5 | kg |
| 2 | Atta | 1 | kg |
| 3 | Masoor Daal (pulses) | 1 | Kg |
| 4 | Salt | 1 | kg |
| 5 | Ricebran Oil | 1 | kg |
| 6 | Sugar | 500 | gm |
| 7 | Loose Soyabean (Nutrella) | 500 | gm |
| 8 | Suji | 250 | gm |
| 9 | Dry Chire (Chapped rice) | 250 | gm |
| 10 | Soap | 1 | pc |
| 11 | Cloth Mask | 2 | pc |

D. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:

Issues with gender inequality and domestic violence have become an ever-pressing concern in marginalized areas of India. In recent times the Coronavirus pandemic has spread drastically and has consequently resulted in staggered lockdowns across India.

Many men have lost their employment and migrant labourers have been forced to return home. These men face the lack of activity and distraction due to



unemployment. These men also experience the fear of contracting COVID-19 as well as the lack of certainty around their future employment.

Adding to the stress these families are struggling to cope with, houses are over capacitated and therefore tensions have begun to arise. Domestic violence has therefore become increasingly prevalent and action must be taken to combat its devastating effects.

DAS aims to improve the situation by providing women with opportunities to engage in the production of affordable masks and sanitizers from home. With mentoring and support DAS believes that these women can earn an income and engage in saving to empower them. It is hoped this will also alleviate some of the pressure on men to solely support their families' livelihood at such a difficult time.

OBJECTIVES:

- DAS seeks to foster and promote a more equal and sustainable environment for men, women and children; this is compounded by the fact that any serious shift towards creating a more sustainable society must include gender equality.
- Women in this area are victims of male dominance and thus face numerous issues. DAS seeks to promote the advancement of women in society by engaging in numerous projects which aim to provide women with the skills to realize their rights. The main strategies DAS have established revolve around advocacy, alternative livelihoods supports, counseling supports, legal services and gender research and development.
- Men too struggle with poverty, illiteracy, patriarchal norms, domestic violence, lack of access to Government schemes. A study published by Sanjay Deshpande in 2019 showed how the Indian family structure and society are changing. It provides startling insights into how men are also physically and mentally harassed by their spouses and in-laws. Domestic violence and gender imbalances are clearly not female exclusive, men face similar issues.
- DAS wish to take a balanced approach, aiming to balance the rights and opportunities of all genders. By focusing on empowering both men and women, DAS hopes to reduce the stigma around domestic violence and develop a more objective and open-minded outlook amongst local communities. DAS employs a skill focused approach, providing opportunities for men and women to develop their abilities. This seeks to augment their income and improve the quality of their lives and their children's lives.

E. ENVIRONMENT

Project Title: *Project Oxygen: Plantation to Save Sunderbans*

Introduction and background:

The Sunderbans located in the south-west of Bangladesh and on the south-east of Kolkata and borders the Bay of Bengal. It is the largest single tract contiguous mangrove forest and the UNESCO natural world heritage site. Extraordinarily rich in biodiversity, this beautiful forest is intersected by a network of tidal canals, creeks, and rivers. More than 4 million people depend on the Sunderbans for their livelihoods. This has also been a huge natural safeguard against frequent cyclones, storms, and other natural disasters in the country. This is the strongest shield for the people to fight against climate change. This shield has endured severe damages caused by the super cyclones Amphan and Yaas in two consecutive



years of May 2020 and May 2021.

Lives and properties of almost 50 million people will be threatened if there is no Sunderban. The Sunderbans is home to hundreds of animal and plant species, including the endangered Bengal tiger.

Project Goal:

The project will work and contribute to arrest climate change by large scale plantation drive and work towards ensuring climate justice through community based livelihoods and nutritional support.

Project Objectives:

- To arrest climate change through large scale plantation
- To ensure climate justice through community based livelihoods
- To ensure supply chain for nutritional needs particular among school children
- To sensitize school children on environment protection and hazards of climate change



Why Trees?

Mangroves form the most important and unique feature of this area with their ability to thrive both in dry as well as flood-like conditions. Due to the presence of both saltwater and freshwater, both types of plants are present and support the habitat in their own unique way. The trees provide habitat continuation and form links in the area to prevent habitat isolation for the Tigers, apart from providing shelter and enabling them to camouflage.

Studies have found that land loss due to rising sea levels and erosion is causing the displacement of rural communities (entire villages in some cases) and exacerbating poverty. The loss of mangrove cover in the region is alarming, especially in the Gosaba block. Climate change, sea level rise, sediment starvation all have contributed to land loss and thus loss of forest cover. Ecologists and environmentalists have indicated that Sunderbans have been steadily losing its famed mangroves and the role of trees and mangroves in food security, containing the effect of storm surges and tsunamis, creating livelihood opportunities, CO₂ sequestration, sediment trapping, nutrient recycling etc.



Thus, the large-scale plantation drives around villages at the select blocks directly impacts rural livelihoods by creating jobs in nursery and planting activities, improve fisheries catch, provide flowers, fruit, fodder and fuel to rural communities and wildlife, generate oxygen, reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, fight climate change, and benefit endemic wildlife including the endangered Tiger.

Reforestation thus provides ample livelihood opportunities for the people in the buffer area, preventing them from venturing into the forest and minimizing chances of conflict and empowerment of the dwellers as a result.

Project rationale:

- The Sunderbans are threatened by various challenges, namely, population pressure, spatial transformation, excessive resource extraction, salination, sea-level rise, and climate change, thus, making it difficult for it to survive even till 2100 (WWF Report, 2017). The project aims to address some of these issues.



- There is an imperative need to restore the natural bio-diversity of the Sunderbans alarmingly destroyed by the two consecutive super cyclones viz. Amphan and Yaas.
- The deltaic soil is very fertile and conducive for horticulture
- The project will lead to creation of alternative livelihoods and job creation based on pastoral economy which is indigenous to the region
- The project will help build a supply chain toward maintaining nutritional equilibrium especially among school children
- Upon maturity, each tree can absorb approximately 20kg of carbon dioxide per year which is considered globally as a conservative estimate
- A strong demand has been generated by the beneficiary communities based on the experience of last year's plantation drive supported by TCF.
- This need for up scaling the plantation drive to at least 20,000 saplings of cash fruit trees like jack fruit, guava and mango has been voiced by the honorable members of the nodal authorities of the GoWB like Sunderbans Development Board and State Animal Welfare Board

Why DAS?

- DAS has been working for development of the marginalised since 1989 mainly in the urban spaces. But after the natural calamities of Amphan and Yaas it has made sincere efforts to concentrate on Sunderbans which was ravaged by the cyclones.
- Over the years, it has successfully created strong networks of SHGs in the 04 Blocks of Sunderbans viz. Mathurapur II (Kumrapara GP), Patharpratima, Sagar (Gram Panchayats like Sagar, Dhoblat, DS II, Rudrapur) and Namkhana (Mousuni GP).
- DAS has been supporting a free primary school in Chatua village under Kumrapara GP and PS Raidighi, Mathurapur II Block since 2017. DAS helped in some minor repairs right after the Amphan Cyclone. Since autumn of 2020, DAS mobilized funds to overhaul the school building and has built another floor atop the ground floor of the main building. This building served as a storm shelter for 170 families during the Yaas super cyclone. DAS arranged breakfast, evening snack and milk (for babies and children and pregnant and lactating mothers) for the inmates who took shelter for over a month.
- It has built a strong network with the government schools in these Blocks. DAS has organized many workshops on environment awareness and climate change in these schools. DAS has encouraged children to believe on the motto of One Tree One Life.

Project Activities:

- Identification of geographical areas for plantation based on need and other determining criteria like land availability, poverty assessment, willingness etc.
- Exploring and strengthening local networks of stakeholders and duty bearers like Panchayati Raj Institutions, SHGs, schools, community based organizations etc.
- Identification and short listing of beneficiaries.
- Distribution of saplings and oath taking
- Monitoring of trees by school students by training and organizing them into *paribesh bandhus* or friends of the environment.
- Naming of trees with the names of children to enhance ownership and belongingness.
- Branding and visibility activities on each tree
- Organize environment and climate change awareness sessions in government schools.
- Fencing of each sapling through community contribution (from the beneficiaries) using indigenous materials

Project Strategy:

- Ensure community engagement at all levels from beneficiary to PRIs and Govt. officials to generate ownership of the project.
- Ensure quality control by 98% survival rate of trees

- Forge linkage with nurseries for ensuring replacement warranty within certain period.
- Establish linkages with agrarian activities for value addition.
- Naming of trees against names of children
- Formation of expert committee comprising of academicians, ecologist and environmentalists and social development professionals.

Project Duration:

04 months with inauguration on 5th June 2022 commemorating World Environment Day.

Project Activity:

DAS distributed 10,000 fruit tree saplings like Jackfruit, Mango, Guava and Coconut as per the table below:

| Sl | District | Block | Villages | No. of families | No. of Saplings |
|----|----------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 24 Prgs (S) | Sagar | Bankimnagar | 98 | 392 |
| 2 | | | Chemaguri | 140 | 560 |
| 3 | | | Dakshin | 27 | 108 |
| 4 | | | Haradhanpur | | |
| 5 | | | Dhablat | 102 | 408 |
| 6 | | | Gangasagar | 55 | 220 |
| 7 | | | Kamalpur | 84 | 336 |
| 8 | | | Kirtankhali | 55 | 220 |
| 9 | | | Manasadwip | 132 | 528 |
| 10 | | | Mritunjay Nagar | 64 | 256 |
| 11 | | | Purushottampur | 72 | 288 |
| 12 | | | Radhakrishnapur | 72 | 288 |
| 13 | | | Rudranagar | 72 | 288 |
| 14 | | | Shibpur | 136 | 544 |
| 15 | | | South haradhanpur | 14 | 56 |
| 16 | | | Sumati Nagar | 56 | 224 |
| 17 | | | Uttar Haradhanpur | 71 | 284 |
| 18 | | Raidighi | | | |
| 19 | | | Chatua | 75 | 375 |
| 20 | | | Baikunthapur | 75 | 375 |
| 21 | West Midnapore | Salboni | Dherua | 140 | 560 |
| 22 | | | Belpahari | 25 | 100 |
| 23 | | Belda | 25 villages | 900 | 3600 |
| | | | GT | 2465 | 10010 |