

DHEERYA FOUNDATION

Weekend Volunteering

PROJECT REPORT



Location: Bangalore

Years: 2017-present

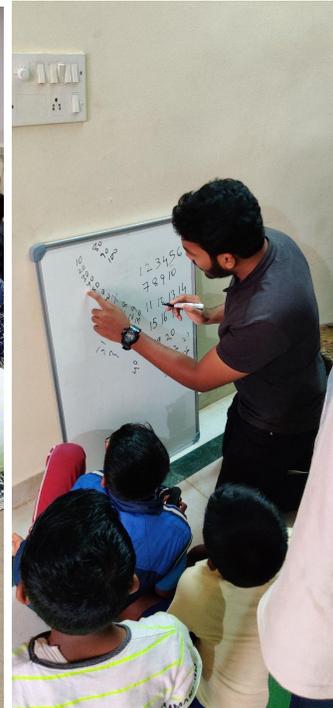
Abstract

Weekend volunteering is a project that is closest to us. For the past 3 to 4 years, we have been helping out at a few orphanages. We spent time with the children, talked to them and ultimately became a family.

Here are a few snippets from our journey with the orphanages:

Phase 1 2017 - 2018

It started in 2017 when 3 of our volunteers paid a small visit to an orphanage in Bangalore. 3 became 5 and soon, we made this a regular activity we did on the weekends. We started spending time with them, played games with them and helped out the orphanage in whatever way possible. We soon had the stark realisation of how lonely these kids were. Their interactions with the outside world were limited and they were deprived of humanity. The orphanage was understaffed and under-funded. Most of the children had never been in a caring, affectionate environment where they felt important. They had no one to look up to and were lacking the feeling of being a part of a bigger community.



We started celebrating birthdays and festivals like Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi and Holi with them. We did all the things that these kids would've normally done with their families. This introduced them to the feeling of belonging

somewhere and being looked after, something that they had rarely felt before. As humans, when we start feeling like we belong, we start realising that we are worth so much more; the soaring confidence of these children was proof to back this theory.







Phase 2

2018 - 2019

By 2018, our team grew to 25-30 volunteers. We started noticing that their education wasn't quite up to the mark. Most orphanages use in-house education i.e., their caregivers at the orphanages will teach them. This doesn't always ensure that their curriculum will be similar to what is taught in schools and hence, they are left behind. The orphanages we were visiting were poor and didn't have the right infrastructure or even a faculty. We decided to start administering their education. We started with the basics - alphabets, numbers, basic mathematics, etc.





Eventually, we found the framework that worked for us and the children. The children were separated into different groups according to their grasping capacities and ages. One group consisted of 4-5 kids. A volunteer was assigned to each group and that volunteer was in charge of teaching the kids, clearing doubts and keeping a check on the children's overall growth. We set monthly and yearly goals for them and tried to adopt a syllabus that is followed by most Indian schools. Maintaining uniformity was important because we did not want them to feel underprepared for college.



That year, we took them on their first excursion. They rarely got to venture out of the four walls of their orphanage so they were quite excited, maybe a little nervous. We took them to Visvesvaraya Museum and explained the historical meaning behind it. This resulted in them getting exposed to a social setting. We later took them to lunch and ended our day at Cubbon park where they got to play games with the volunteers.



Phase 3

2019 - 2020

We soon expanded to 3 orphanages. We kept up the same method; teaching, tracking the progress and making sure the kids reach the set goals. We started tailoring the lessons more according to the children's needs and polished the syllabus. To simulate their brains, we also conducted a mandala workshop.



In Jan of 2020, we took a few kids to the dairy day ice cream factory. They got to observe the process. Some of the kids were so fascinated by the inner workings of the factories that it inspired them to think about their future career options. It prompted them to ask questions about future education, job prospects, etc.



One day, we took a field trip to the Art of Living Ashram where they meditated and took a stroll through the gardens. The intent behind this visit was to introduce them to humility, spirituality and the power of religion. Peace, happiness and contentment are the most valuable treasures of life. You don't need much to live a successful life and spirituality teaches you that.





Phase 4 2020 - Present

The pandemic has restricted us but we didn't let it limit us. Other than spreading awareness and distribution of sanitisers and masks through Project Suraksha, we are coming up with a plan to make education for students in remote areas easier. We have a team of volunteers working towards a new and improved syllabus.



We hope to expand our family and keep impacting many orphans in the years to come.