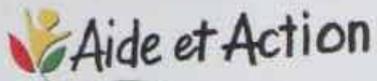


AIDE ET ACTION INTERNATIONAL SOUTH ASIA


Changing the world through Education



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Special focus

**COVID-19:
AEA ENSURES EDUCATION AND
ENTITLEMENTS TO 'RETURNEE'
MIGRANT CHILDREN**

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COVID-19: AEA ENSURES EDUCATION AND ENTITLEMENTS TO 'RETURNEE' MIGRANT CHILDREN

In an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19, all the educational institutions across India remained closed since mid-March 2020. The closure of schools not only affected the education of children but also the nutritional and food security of migrant children who were forced to leave their destinations due to widespread fear of COVID-19 and hunger. Back home, their condition became even worse. Read how Aide et Action is ensuring entitlements and continuous learning for these children at their native places.



Migrant children regularly encounter obstacles in accessing education. Over the years, Aide et Action has been associated with children of migrant communities working in brick kilns and construction sites in 5 states of India including Bihar, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana. Alongside providing early childcare and education, our projects have been ensuring continued learning for older children through enrolment in the nearest government schools where volunteers are engaged to teach the children in their mother-tongue. Due to the advocacy efforts with the government, children have been receiving mid-day meals and other educational entitlements on par with the local children. *"When we arrived at SVI worksite in Thivallur district, the Odia volunteers from Aide et Action came to the worksite, surveyed us and upon convincing our parents, they enrolled us at a nearby Government school. It was beyond my imagination that finally, I got a school near worksite at Tamil Nadu where I got an education in my mother tongue. We got uniform, textbooks, and daily lunch as well,"* says 12 years old Indumati Majhi who migrated with her family from Odisha.

Once the migration period ended, these children are assessed and based on their academic scores, transfer certificates are issued enabling them to re-enroll in the schools in their native villages. This process continued until the unintended consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of schools. The sudden closure of schools left the children in a lurch. The children were forced to leave their destinations along with their families due to widespread fear of Coronavirus. *"Without adequate food and money to purchase daily needs, we had to suffer a lot. Without work, our family was forced to return to our village on a train. Once I reached home, I realized that the village school was closed as well due to pandemic,"* says Indumati. Once back home, their future became uncertain. The extended lockdown deprived them of mid-day meals, further pushing them to hunger and poverty.



Ensuring mid-day meals and other entitlements

In May, when the lockdown restrictions were lifted, the AEA's volunteers enrolled the details of the returnee migrant children at the government schools enabling them to receive dry ration in place of cooked food. Education material including books, stationery, and uniform were also delivered at the doorsteps of all the children.

Continuation of Education at Child-friendly spaces at source

Due to the closure of schools, the volunteers interacted with the parents and community to select a convenient place to run remedial classes by maintaining social distancing norm. With the support of the local community, they started remedial classes at convenient places like the school veranda, the Anganwadi building, the community center, under the tree, and open spaces of the villages. *"We all migrant parents decided to arrange the school veranda as the learning space for the remedial class after consultation with the teacher. I am the president of the school management committee and visit the centre regularly to help the education volunteer."*

The volunteer also teaches innovatively and our children show interest to attend the remedial classes," says Tapaswini Bariha, a parent from Katapali village, Balangir.

AEA also provided facemasks to all children along with soaps for hand wash and other essentials required for the effective running of the learning centers. The education volunteers are managing the classes based on their skill in handling mixed-age group children. They are trying to bridge the learning gap of children who were out of school for an extended period due to the COVID lockdown. The creative teaching-learning methodology with fun activities is generating interest among children and motivating them to attend the classes regularly. 263 children, in the age group of 6 to 14 years, are attending these learning spaces run across 10 villages of Naupada and Balangir districts of Odisha.

ON WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY, 'ENLIGHT' TEEN MADE 'HONORARY CHAIRPERSON' FOR CHILD PROTECTION BODY IN WEST BENGAL



On World Children's Day, 17-year-old Priya, who is part of the AEA's ENLIGHT project implemented by South Kolkata Hamari Muskan, got a unique opportunity to work as an 'honorary' Chairperson of the West Bengal Child Protection and Child Rights Commission for a day. As the "Honorary Chairperson" of the Commission, Priya Mondal appreciated the move of the Bengal government in introducing 'Kanyashree Prakalpa' that made dreams of higher education of lakhs of girls come true. Kanyashree Prakalpa was introduced by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that not only checked the school dropout rate but also paved a way for girls to undertake higher studies.

Priya has been part of the ENLIGHT project since its inception in 2014. She receives tutoring support, counseling, extracurricular activities, and a safe place to study and relax during

the evening hours when the red light area where she lives turns chaotic and dangerous. Despite the fact that schools have been closed since March, Priya managed to pass the competitive Class 10 Board exams with a high score. Priya is an excellent photographer and dreams of becoming a wildlife photographer after finishing her college.

Priya Mondal was one of the 19 girl children who took part in the 'Dreams Meeting Wisdom' program and interacted with the AEA & Capgemini leadership. The incredible young woman, Priya also had the opportunity to interview Malala Yousafzai and Michelle Obama for International Day of the Girl!

AEA PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN BUFFER ZONE OF KANHA TIGER RESERVE



The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted agriculture and its allied supply chains. The farmers had to bear the brunt of the losses incurred due to lack of labor and transport to sell their yield during the unintentional lockdown. Post lockdown, to help the farmers who incurred losses and promote sustainable farming, Aide et Action is extensively promoting "System of Rice Intensification (SRI)", a farming methodology aimed at increasing the paddy yield. This low water, labor-intensive method is an indigenous farming method where one acre of land can yield up to 15 to 25 quintals of paddy in place of 8-10 quintals under regular farming methods. The method can also be adapted to grow horse gram, ragi, wheat, and other crops.

AEA conducted a series of trainings to demonstrate the process to 100 farmers in the buffer zone of Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh. These trainings will help the farmers adopt the methodology during the upcoming Kharif season. Aide et Action will be experimenting with the SRI methodology of indigenous farming in a leased agricultural land.

In addition to promoting organic farming, this innovative approach will also encourage collective entrepreneurship among farmers for better market linkages and profits.

AEA'S CHILD VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TO STRENGTHEN CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES IN ODISHA



Aide et Action in collaboration with the Dept. of Women & Child Development, Odisha, and UNICEF-Odisha is piloting a Child Vulnerabilities Assessment & Planning in 200 Anganwadis under 20 most migration prone panchayats of 3 western Odisha districts. The participatory process is spearheaded by the Local Anganwadi workers, ASHAs, Panchayat ward members, Women SHG members, adolescents, and child leaders along with the Panchayat facilitator. The plan will be shared with local Panchayat and line departments for implementation leading to strengthening the child protection committees at Panchayat, Block, District, and State levels in Odisha.



MIGRANT WOMEN RECEIVE SUPPORT TO STAND ON THEIR FEET



Parimla receiving the kit from Dr Aishwarya Mahajan, Director - Livelihood Education, AEA SA as Dr Payal Kanodia, Trustee - M3M Foundation looks on.

Once the COVID19 lockdown was announced, Parmila's husband who worked as a construction worker residing at 65th Avenue labor camp in Gurgaon lost his job. In those difficult times, Parmila's tailoring skills came to the rescue of the family of seven who had migrated to the India's capital for a better life.

With the support of iMpower project, a joint initiative of Aide et Action & M3M Foundation, Parmila along with 110 other women migrants from 37 locations of Gurgaon received 'iMask ready to stitch fabric facemask kits'. These aspiring women entrepreneurs are utilizing this unexpected opportunity to stand on their feet and support their families financially by stitching and selling the iMasks.

A two day training program on application of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) tools was organized for teachers in Sarlahi & Rautahat, Nepal. 50 teachers from project implemented schools participated in the training which focused on the government assessment systems, importance & methods of assessment, early grade reading program implemented by government of Nepal and Early grade reading assessment.





The efforts of the Sashakt Gram project resulted in the establishment of 'Mahatma Gandhi Grameen Seva Kendra' at Napakhedi, Dewas district by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The pilot Seva Kendra, rolled out by the government in select panchayats that are working efficiently, will provide government & non-government services to the citizens through a single window.

The Sashakt Gram, a Community Empowerment through Education project is a joint initiative of Aide et Action & Eicher Group Foundation, has been actively promoting & mentoring community collectives in 14 select villages of Dewas, Indore, and Dhar districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Help us reach out to the needy. Contribute now @ www.aea-southasia.org/donate/

To know more about us, drop a mail to communication-southasia@aide-et-action.org
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