

Healthcare & Nutrition



Problem Statement

Healthcare facilities in India are difficult to access; they have a perpetual shortage of essential medicines and are simply unable to perform essential diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge, awareness and initiative about the importance of health.

The Importance of Healthcare in Community Rehabilitation

Armed with information and support, they can make the right healthcare choices and play a positive, active role in their own health.

Our Approach to Healthcare

Health education is critical. Teaching children and adults alike about the importance of basic hygiene and sanitation is critical to combating common infectious diseases. Health education is the cornerstone to our approach in underdeveloped communities. It is the least expensive and the most effective way to avert disease and debility. Bringing healthcare to the community involves running health camps and bringing qualified medical professionals to help the residents deal with their medical complaints.

Our Work So Far

We have organized several education programs on hand washing and other aspects of basic hygiene. We have taught women the importance of breast examination, regular gynecological checkups, and contraception. Over the last year, we ran several medical camps for children, women, and adults in general, including specialty camps in audiology and ophthalmology. During crises such as flooding, we were able to go to the slums and distribute clean and hygienic food to the residents to stave off starvation and food poisoning. Finally, for a number of individuals, we were able to completely sponsor their medical treatment - ranging from an obstetrics case to a dangerous complicated middle ear infection.

Future Plans

We plan on expanding our healthcare setup to hold more medical camps and on sponsoring more treatments. Improvements in sanitation will undoubtedly lead to improvements in human health. Enforcing hygiene principles by repeated and interesting lessons will instill these values in children. We plan on finding alcoholic residents and subsequently sponsoring - and convincing them - to go for rehabilitation programmes. With regards to women's care, we wish to give more and more individualized care regarding sexually transmitted diseases, the importance of contraception and family planning, and helping to get them obstetric aid.

Education & Mentoring



Problem Statement

Research has shown that strong literacy rates are linked to economic growth. "Literacy has been considered one of the most important attributes for social development," writes Rajnish Kumar, Senior Research Analyst for the Institute of Economic Growth. The literacy statistics noted above are testament to the government's efforts to promote basic reading skills, as these literacy rates have increased by leaps and bounds over the last few decades. Unfortunately, the basic ability to read simple sentences does not guarantee success in life. Although literacy skills do form the foundation for academic success, these skills alone are not enough preparation for higher education.

Our Approach to Education

Our approach to education is focused on a number of core elements. These are health education, teamwork and trust, values, etiquette, citizenship and creativity. Health education is of critical importance to any community, especially one in which the spread of communicable diseases is high. We plan to promote education through volunteer educational programs, through partnerships with other non-governmental organizations, and through the promotion of merit-based scholarships to give students and parents an incentive to focus on higher education.

Our Work So Far

In our work with the children of Ramavaram, we carefully chalked out weekly lesson plans that included a group activity, a "When-I-grow-up-I-want-to-be..." session, a hygiene lesson, and with each we made efforts to incorporate feedback from the children. Each of these three components carried equal importance. The idea is to make learning as much fun as possible, so we began a mentoring system. Every week, four or five mentors would interact with groups of children, fostering learning in a collaborative and informal environment.

Plans for the Future

Our main goal is to empower these children to excel in their studies and thereby change the path of their future. One of our initiatives is to have the children take part in role-playing and skits that demonstrate the practical aspects of the skills and values that we discuss with them. We are also developing an Educational Committee, made up of members from around the world, in order to plan and develop programs for future projects. Our teaching program is always evolving, so if you would like to help in development, please check the Join the Movement page.

Hygiene & Sanitation (Environmental Education)



**Sangam
India**

Problem Statement

Slums in urban areas are often defined as having low quality drinking water, poor sanitation systems, and little to no household hygiene, all of which are conditions that threaten public health. The semi-permanent and condensed nature of living conditions magnifies the adverse health effects.

One of the largest challenges to public health in these slum areas is access to potable water. The lack of latrines leads to open-air defecation, cultivating disease and malnutrition due to parasitic and bacterial infections. Efforts to improve hygiene and sanitation must aim to reduce transmission of infectious agents. The primary goal is to investigate the effects of hygiene and health education in these slum areas on human health by carrying out surveys in the communities we adopt. Using this data along with our own observations, we will be able to develop more effective methods of solving sanitation and hygiene problems.

Importance of Sanitation on Community Development

Those suffering from diarrheal disease are also likely to suffer from malnutrition, impaired physical growth, and reduced immune response. Improving hygiene and sanitation will not only improve health, it may also lead to other social benefits such as improved school attendance, less time gathering drinking water, and less time caring for the sick.

Our Approach

Our approach will focus on hygiene education in the home. It is our hope that as people become more aware of the dangers associated with poor hygiene, a shift in behavior will result in improved health. We will also work with the community to promote a clean environment. It is our goal to help the community acquire the means to improve their water supply and garbage removal. There will also be targeted interventions aimed at promoting sanitation infrastructure.

Our Work So Far

Through the course of our educational program, various lessons on health and hygiene were taught, emphasizing the importance of simple activities such as hand washing and personal cleanliness as a first line measure to reduce the transmission of disease. A camp on women's health and dental health were also held.

Plans for the Future

Future work will largely be dictated by the community; we seek to help and their specific needs. Hygiene education will always be a main focus of our efforts, regardless of the location and condition of our next project. Striving for a clean environment will simultaneously improve health.

Women's Issues



Problem Statement

In developing countries like India, underprivileged women are frequently uneducated, which leaves them disadvantaged and financially dependent on their husbands, brothers, and other male members of the family. Women's health, emotional well-being, and ability to fend for themselves reflect a great deal on the socioeconomic indicators of a particular community.

There are several factors at play, the most important of which is the cultural barrier, which prevents women from reaching a state of independence and self-sufficiency. Education levels of women are usually much lower than those of their male counterparts. Women need to be taught and encouraged, especially by other women, to protect themselves and their children from injustice, and to give voice to their concerns and apprehensions, demanding equal consideration.

Importance of Women's Empowerment in Community Rehabilitation

It is vital to give women the confidence, tools, resources and support system that they need in order to take financial and political responsibility upon themselves. Communities in which women are given equal governing and economic roles have proven to be more successful in achieving stability and self-sufficiency. Empowerment of an entire community has to begin with the empowerment of its women. It is only when the women have the confidence and social mandate to play a part in community policy and financial decision-making that the community can truly move forward.

Our Approach

We feel that the ideal way to empower women is to help women form focus groups. These self-help groups will provide women with a sense of community and a support system to bolster their confidence. The self-help group model then opens doors across the board for better health practices for women, microfinance and microloans, community funds, and perhaps even a voice in policy-making and establishing rights.

Our Future Plans

So far our focus has remained on women's health. We held a women's camp in Ramavaram during which we discussed reproductive health and hygiene with each woman in addition to screening for cervical cancer. We feel that it is very important to encourage women to place some level of importance on their health. We have not yet had the opportunity to put our ideas and plans regarding self-help and empowerment initiatives into place, but we hope to begin very soon.