

Feedback on the utilization of your donation, as received from Seva Mandir

Transaction number : TRN-0001737051/TD-0001811762
Transaction date : 22-Jun-2011
Name of the donor :
Purpose of donation : Ensuring day care/preschool access for 25 tribal children for one month
Units : 1
Amount : INR 5000

Beneficiary Details:

25 children of Umaria Balwadi & the Sanchalika.

Brief Description :

Given Below:

Dear Mr. Rathi,

Greetings from Seva Mandir!

I am Deepti and I am responsible for Resource Mobilization Program of Seva Mandir. In this program we aim to build relationship with all our partners and friends and generate support for communities we work with in Udaipur Rajasthan.

Thank you very much for your generous support. Your donation of Rs. 5,000 was used for Balwadi of Umaria village in Jhadol Block for July 2011. The Sanchalika Santosh Devi is a nice, warm and dedicated person. She also has a very good relationship with the mothers of the children who come to her preschool center.

About Balwadi program:

Young children in Seva Mandir's work area face a high level of malnourishment (62.8% underweight) and are anemic (75% in the age group of 6 months to 3 years). Balwadis (rural preschools) are full-day child-care centres providing disadvantaged tribal children (1-5 years old) with a safe and secure environment that ensures their overall cognitive and social development and prepares them for school. Simultaneously the Balwadis attempt to reduce

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malnutrition among these children and enable mothers of the little children to engage in household/agriculture work along with freeing the elder siblings so that they could continue with their education. The sanchalika (trained and supported by Seva Mandir) who runs the centre is a local woman from the village. Parents trust her and children feel safe and comfortable with her all day. With support from donors like you Seva Mandir runs 200 Balwadis reaching to 4500 children every year.

I am also enclosing a story that was written by one of our volunteers who spoke to many women and leaders in villages and created a story book. When she published her book – she gave her royalty as donations to Seva Mandir. We hope you would enjoy reading the story. Rachel Acheson from UK a volunteer at Seva Mandir did a short study in early 2010 to understand what impact Balwadis are making on the lives of women. She spoke to many mothers during a course of couple of months.

The Balwadi bring about significant transformative changes in people's lives. Some of which are accounted below:

- 1) It helps the overall development of young children (physical, cognitive, social and emotional) by allowing them to engage in numerous playful activities with other children.
- 2) The nutritious meals, supplements and medicines provided at the Balwadi result in better health and reduced levels of malnutrition and instances of ailments in young children.
- 3) The structure of the Balwadi helps stimulate a desire within children to learn and to explore. It also prepares them for further schooling. As a result children are more likely to perform better in school.
- 4) The community experiences the quality services at these preschools. The centres help them understand that if their children are provided with the right care, they can also show improved learning abilities.
- 5) The parents are encouraged to send their children to school after graduating from Balwadis. The centre does so by providing a platform of trust and interaction between the parents and the Sanchalika.
- 6) The Balwadi allows the mother to work freely in farms or do household work without thinking of safety and nutrition for their little ones. Older siblings, especially school-aged girls, have the opportunity to continue with their education, who would otherwise look after their younger siblings.

These significant impacts would have not been possible if friends like you were not with us. The children supported by these Balwadis are mostly from impoverished backgrounds. Their parents are either work at their own agriculture fields or as labours. The older siblings tend to goats or do household chores including looking after their younger siblings. In such circumstances, many young children lack significant inputs for their physical, mental and emotional growth. Balwadis provide these children with a safe and secure environment where

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these young children can learn, eat, play and interact with other kids while their care-givers are at work.

A couple of the quotes recorded by Rachel are given below:

- 1) "Since going to the Balwadi, my child has been doing artistic building out of stones" Radha, 35.
- 2) "Learning poems gives strength to their mind as well as a moral message" Kamli, 32.
- 3) "Here they get nutritious food" Shante, 30.
- 4) "I feel less tired and can concentrate on my work" Vasni, 30.

Thank you again for supporting this program. We hope you will consider telling about this project to your friends too.

We would be very happy to meet you some day. With warm regards,

Deepti Ameta,
In Charge Resource Mobilization Program
Seva Mandir, Udaipur.

www.sevamandir.org.

About Seva Mandir:

Seva Mandir operates in the southern part of Rajasthan. The work area encompasses 626 villages and 56 Urban Settlements.

Our mission is to make real the idea of society consisting of free and equal citizens who are able to come together and solve the problems that affect them in their particular contexts.

Seva Mandir focuses on:

- 1) Enhancing people's capabilities for self-development by working for improved literacy levels, better health status, and sensitization against oppressive gender relations.
- 2) Creating sustainable improvements in the livelihoods base by revitalizing natural resources base of communities and.
- 3) Strengthening village institutions by creating an alternative paradigm of power structures and community interactions that reinforces the positive forces of cooperation, transparency, equity, justice and responsible citizenship.

My Story - My Life....

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This feedback report was processed in Thirukuvalai village of Tamil Nadu, for GiveIndia, by a young professional employed by DesiCrew Solutions, a Rural BPO initiative.

A story of a Baalwari Sanchalika.

Santosh is the kind of woman that is helping change India's perception of women. She is independent, opinionated, strong-willed, and earns her family's income. When you hear her story, it is hard to believe that women are considered second-class citizens. But her hard work has met only resistance.

Unlike the other women we've interviewed, Santosh tells us that she had a good childhood and appreciates her nine years of education. She was married off at age seventeen to an educated man with a post-graduate degree and felt very lucky to be his housewife. Except that he beat her. And he would stuff cloth in her mouth so that no one would hear. Santosh endured domestic abuse for five years. She found refuge in her SHG.

When she was offered to head a balwadi a few hours from her village, Santosh immediately accepted the position and moved out of her husband's home. The villagers were suspicious that a woman should seek work away from home, especially with such a stable husband. Rumors spread of adultery and infidelity. And only a few weeks after arriving in her new home, her in-laws found and beat her, accusing her of cheating on their son. While they were screaming at her and kicking her, she tells us that they were also pleading her to come back, that she belonged back at home, as a good housewife. Talk about a mixed message.

But Santosh continues to work as a sanchalika. Because of Seva Mandir's salary, she is financially independent and earns enough to live comfortably and send her two children to school without having to depend on her husband.

Indeed, she was even able to pay for her husband's second degree, a Bachelor's of Education. I was surprised by how content she appeared at being able to support the man, who moments earlier, she seemed to fear and loathe. She explained that his studies bring him away from home and leave her at peace. She does not have to worry that he will show up and beat her.

This story is a part of volume written by Rachel Nalebuff from USA. She wrote it in 2008-09.

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Santosh and her baalwari children outside the Umaria Balwadi

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