



This season at Sahaitha, we have begun to build new relationships with women and children in both Saidulajab and Shanti Colony. We are grateful for this, given we started interacting with many of them only in the last eight months.



Saidulajab

We have been helping our women enrolled under the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) prepare for their examinations in April and May. They have all been preparing diligently and we hope they do well and get over their fear of writing exams, as many have dropped out of regular schooling earlier. Around 20 women come for lessons to the Saidulajab centre every day. This academic year, five more will be enrolled for formal education through distance learning in NIOS.

We recently redid our furniture in the centre space, adding tables and chairs for the women to sit and study. The women helped us as we set up the space and have begun to take ownership of the centre. When the weather was favourable in Delhi, we took the women for a picnic at a nearby park, sharing each other's cooking, and playing games together. This was one of our first outings of this year.

We have hoped that our centres are safe spaces, where the women feel protected, free and are able to build peer relationships. With the present batch, they have begun to feel that they can be themselves with us at the centre. We are very glad to be able to meet with them regularly and encourage some to persevere on with their studies amidst difficult family situations.

Shanti Colony

It's been seven months since we opened a centre at Shanti colony. In recent months, as the schools were on a break, we began to have 40 children regularly coming for tuitions every day. Some of them were relatives, siblings and friends of our students and we were able to support them with their regular studies. With schools reopening last month, these children returned to regular schooling, but every time we have a national holiday they join our sessions, given the relationship we have with them. We will reach out to their parents for them to join us in the afternoon for tutoring support. At Shanti colony, we also provide education to around five women in spoken English and computer skills, preparing them to enrol into the formal education system. In our efforts to encourage students to enrol formally, we are glad to have built trust with families to enrol 5 women and young girls into formal distance learning programmes. We hope we can help enrol others too. We are helping some to apply for national ID cards so that they can get admitted into the next academic session. We recently organized a sports day program where the children participated in a variety of races and activities.



New Beginnings! Viru Camp and Bhim Basti

In the last few months of being present in a new area, we have begun to find favour and trust in the community at Shanti Colony.

In March, while on outreach, we met a group of women from Rajasthan at an urban-poor colony called Viru Camp, opposite Shanti colony. When we shared what we do, they expressed their interest to pursue basic literacy lessons with us. So, we started teaching eight of them at a verandah in the area. Their children have started coming to our centre in Shanti colony as well. With the weather growing hot, it's no longer possible to teach the women at the space, and we are hoping we can build trust with their families over time, so that the women are allowed to come over to the Shanti Colony centre. Mobility for women is a challenge in urban communities, and we hope that we are able to empower the women to overcome this in coming months.



Activities at Shanti Colony



The women learning at Viru camp

The women here are artisans, known for their beautiful embroidery skills. Some are given fabric by companies to do embroideries for which they get paid a meagre sum. We want to explore possibilities of better jobs for them, so they can earn more for the skills they have.

In addition to the current communities we serve, we are locating more underserved communities whom we can help and support

with educational and health needs. In March 2023, Jesiah, a sister project of NGT, organized a Medical Camp in Bhim Basti and we helped here with outreach and medical follow-ups. This urban-poor neighbourhood is half a kilometre from Shanti Colony with a similar population. We have started meeting with people here to discuss opportunities to serve them through education. Those we met with have expressed their desire to study and have requested us to open a center in the area.

PLANS FOR FUTURE

In the near future, we want to:

1. Continue to help students enroll with formal & NIOS school systems.
2. Start support groups and counselling activities, for the women and girls at Shanti colony.
3. Build relationships with new communities and hire new staff for our upcoming community centres in the new areas.
4. Finding new employment opportunities for women in our communities to work from home and earn a living.

Rama's Story*

(*name changed)

Rama enrolled with us last year. A mother of two, separated from her husband, she came from a difficult background, wanting to pick up her lost dream of continuing her education. As a child, she lived in a very abusive environment and was not allowed to study. She was forced to work as a domestic help at the age of 15.

Last month she took an exam for the first time in 25 years. She was very worried if she would pass. We encouraged her to just attempt the exam and not worry about the outcome. We are so glad to report that she passed her exams and is now enrolled for class 10. She is a hardworking woman. Every time we teach her a new concept, she is filled with awe. She has a hunger for learning, and it is really encouraging to see her grow in confidence.

Thank you for your loving support!

Sahaitha is a project of the New Generation Trust, a charitable trust Reg. No 1859/2005, at New Delhi, India. We use pseudonyms to protect the identity of our women and children. To know more about us, please visit

www.newgenerationtrust.org

