



We are entering the festive season now in North India, and the city is buzzing in many ways! Our children and women are excited to come and meet us every day, and these last few months have presented many opportunities for interactions and conversations in Sahaitha. We continue to build their foundational skills, breaking them up into smaller groups to teach them as per their level.

Saidulajab

In our centre in Saidulajab, we have been preparing the enrolled women for their ongoing theory and practical examinations under the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). We have 20 women and 26 children

enrolled with us at Saidulajab. With a local government school moving their time to the afternoon in the last quarter, there has been a decrease in the number of school-going children coming for tutoring. Of the ones with us now, six have never been to school before. Fourteen are currently in government schools and we are tutoring them. We will continue to find more children who are out of school and those in need of non-formal education (NFE) and enroll them with us.

We help all our children and women build their basic reading, math, and analytical skills as well as phonics. They are also eager to learn basic computers and typing.

Three women who are in their final years of graduation needed to be motivated to finish their course. We are glad they take our advice and do not give up on their studies despite their situation back home. Some of them live in larger families and depend on their in-laws for financial support. They are constantly reminded of their lack of worth, taunted as lesser and are emotionally abused. Only those who can earn are suddenly seen as a good source of income. Getting a degree and a job later is the only way they can get out of such environments. Many feel judged and neglected by their family. Coming to our centre gives them an outlet to be themselves.

We had a cultural programme at Saidulajab in mid-August wherein the students showcased their talents through dance, skits, and other activities. The students' families were invited, making it a special get-together.

Shanti Colony

In Shanti colony, we continue to build relationships with children and women in the community. To cater to children joining us from the area after their regular school, two social workers from NGT sister projects join us part time in the afternoon's, in addition to the morning classes. So the number of children has grown to 46, with 22 of them joining in the afternoon. Of the total number, eleven join us during their school holidays. We follow the same lesson plans as Saidulajab, teaching them reading and math. Some of the children who come in the morning have shown improvements in learning, and we are in conversation with their parents to enrol them under NIOS.

Currently, six young women are enrolled with us here. Both children and women learn basic computers and typing at the centre. The women are at a different learning level. On computers, they learn to make their resumes. We help those looking for jobs with interview skills.



Cultural programme at Saidulajab Centre

In the last quarter, from the areas we serve (Saidulajab and Shanti colony), we were able to help two children (from Shanti) and three women (from Saidulajab) enrol for NIOS, and a woman from Saidulajab at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and helped five people obtain identification documents needed to access government provisions for education and health.

In recent months, we have grown in our medical outreach in the community, especially with Alon, a nurse joining us in August. We travel on foot around the community, attending to those sick with chronic illnesses and monitor blood pressure and diabetic conditions for older people. The outreach also helps us significantly in connecting with the families in the community.

We also started sessions on preventive care for pregnant women and young mothers. We felt the women were receptive and are opening up slowly with us. They have also started bringing other patients. The sessions help us to also address some of the psychological issues that the women go through, including serious trauma from child birth. The time also helps us to provide emotional support to the young women.

Since the medical work began in the communities at Mandi Pahadi (Shanti Colony and Viru Camp), we have attended to 60 general cases, 20 antenatal and postnatal cases and helped 12 children with their vaccinations. Of the 20 antenatal patients, 5 women have given birth this month. We are working closely with them. Some of the newborns have a very low birth weight. We are counseling the mothers to continue breast feeding and to keep the infants safe from catching any infection. It is quite possible for them to catch infections in the kind of living conditions they are in.

Viru Camp and Bhim Basti

We continue to look for a place to teach at Viru Camp, as an earlier confirmed space at a woman's home there became unavailable due to personal issues in her family.

Meanwhile, we are helping a few women here to apply for their basic government IDs and documentation. We also help young mothers with medical assistance for their infants. Our community nurse visits them twice a week. We connect them with our community doctor to help them get medical prescriptions. The women from Bhim Basti are unable to come to learn at Shanti Colony due to the distance. We are looking for ways to engage with and support them.

On Teacher's Day (Sept 5), the women and children at Saidulajab took time to express how they felt in relating with us and in receiving an education. It was good to hear them, and we are grateful to be able to be part of each one of their journeys.

In recent months, we have seen ourselves being able to reach out in different ways to the communities we serve. In coming months, we will continue our reach to women and children at Bhim Basti as well through the medical work.



A group session with young girls on menstruation



Group session with pregnant women and young mothers

Kavita's and Lata's Story*

*(*name changed)*

Kavita and Lata are two sisters from Shanti Colony, aged 16 and 17, who love to study. We have known their family for a year now. During the pandemic, they dropped out of school. Being the eldest of four siblings, and with both parents working full time, the responsibilities of house chores and caring for younger siblings has fallen on them both. Their coming to our center each morning is helping them pursue their dream of receiving an education.

Recently, we heard that their parents had them both engaged to prospective men for marriage. It's a usual custom in their culture to marry off two sisters to two brothers. The girls were disappointed that they wouldn't be able to pursue their studies. After much counselling, we convinced the family to get their official documents sorted to have them enrolled through open schooling. Last month, we helped them secure admission into NIOS class 8th. They are not married yet and are learning at Shanti Colony.

While we don't know what future holds for them, we hope to see them continue to learn and help them pass their 8th grade certificate, so that they are qualified to apply for class 10.

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*

