



Apne Aap Women's Collective

the right to a better life for women and children in red light areas

Newsletter April-June, 2018

Dear Associates,

Greetings from Apne Aap Women's Collective!

I present you with the newsletter from April- June 2018 specifically designed to update you with our Programmes on going activities, developments and challenges faced in the last quarter.

The outreach team with its rigorous home visit was able to enroll 30 new Umeed beneficiaries under the adult literacy programme by making them realize the importance of being able to write their name, recognize documents and provide their signature on official documents.

They have been explained the value of basic literacy so that they are further not exploited or misguided by their community.

The team was successful in opening bank account for 9 Umeed beneficiaries, which is a small victory for us as it is an imprint that our financial literacy classes have a positive impact on our Umeed beneficiaries. The small step to open a bank account lead us to help them break the cycle of debt and enable them to avoid high interest rates that are often imposed on them due to their lack of literacy.

As the section we are dealing with have physically weak immune system due to their exposure to unhygienic living conditions and lack of nutritional food they are more susceptible to varied kind of diseases and infections hence considering that health is important for overall development we conduct regular medical referrals and medical camps for our beneficiaries.

Previous month the issue detected was of skin rashes due to the rise in temperature. The issue was tackled with constant medical supervision and care. They were regularly provided with nutritional food and multi vitamin supplements on time.

This quarter for our Udaan beneficiaries focus was given on life skill sessions. These sessions help our Udaan beneficiaries deal with many issues and gives them a positive perspective of life. This boosts their confidence and self-esteem. Which in turn leads to positive changes in their behavior and increase in the sense of responsibility.

The major challenge faced during this quarter was obtaining passport for the girls participating in the "Brave Kids Project". Firstly in order to make a passport the address of the girls did not match with their mother's hence steps were taken in order to rectify the address in the identity cards. Secondly the police verification took a really long time so the the team had to intervene and follow up with the higher authorities in order for the process to move forward smoothly. Lastly the attitude of the mother's partner was also an issue due to which a talented girl missed the opportunity of participating due to his own hidden agenda the partner refused to make girls passport due to which her process could not be initiated.

On behalf of AAWC, I would like to thank all of you for your perpetual support and encouragement as none of these developments would have been possible without you.

Manju Vyas
CEO, AAWC.

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Umeed

"Didi, I eat Banana with Moringa seeds every day, that doesn't only give me strength but also hope that my health will get better" – Umeed beneficiary.

"I have seen beneficiaries crying and sharing their problems with Outreach Workers'(ORW) team. They feel like sharing with ORW team because beneficiaries know that they will understand their hardship and help them to get a way out of it" – Program Manager.



When she first enrolled in the adult literacy program, she could not even hold a pen. Initially in the beginning of the program, she was not very keen to learn how to write her own name. Whenever our ORW (outreach worker) team visited her, she used to make faces and random excuses for avoiding sessions. However, our ORW team did not let her behavior deter them and they continued to visit her and try to teach her how to write her name.

Seeing the consistency and commitment of the ORW team, she recalled, “these teachers are so interested to teach me then why can't I just show little interest to learn how to write my name, after all it's for my own benefit.” Afterwards she began to show significant improvement she started to learn every day and even started to call the ORW team whenever she spotted them in the area and started asking them for homework.

Today she knows how to write her whole name including her surname and the names of her children. Since the first steps to learn has grown even stronger, and accordingly, our ORW team has begun teaching her English alphabets.

Program Update

Education

Under the program, we conduct adult literacy programs/sessions. Sometimes other women in the area look at our teachers teaching and begin to express an interest to learn how to read and write.

Because of which, under adult literacy a total of 30 new beneficiaries were enrolled in the Adult Literacy Program, demonstrating an increased interest among beneficiaries. Almost 9 more of our Umeed beneficiaries have been able to open their own bank accounts, thus demonstrating the positive impact of our financial literacy drives.

This is a small victory on our end, as it further breaks the cycle of debt that beneficiaries often get caught up in, allowing them to avoid the heavy interest rates charged by local moneylenders.



In- center adult Literacy sessions for Umeed beneficiaries



Awareness regarding financial literacy



Adult literacy session at home.

Health

We believe that creating awareness about health, nutrition and sanitation, improves overall physical and mental health. In addition, we support maintenance of personal hygiene by providing hygiene products and nutritious supplements to beneficiaries suffering from HIV /TB.

As a result, our daily nutrition program has reached a peak of 92 beneficiaries (9 new beneficiaries were added and none beneficiary was dropped out). The majority of the beneficiaries received skin cream and ORS powder due to skin infections and weakness issues.

In order to ensure the health of PLHA beneficiaries we undertake weight measurements, issue Medical Referrals, conduct medical checkups and medical camps, as well as provide them regular counseling sessions.



Health Camp for Umeed beneficiaries

Counseling

AAWC understands that women in the red-light district go through both mental and physical traumas, and hence deems it imperative to support them through its mental-health assistance.

We conduct regular counseling and therapy sessions with all of our women, along with conducting specific discussions on topics, which may have adverse effect on the mental well-being of our beneficiaries, such as sexual and menstrual health, substance abuse, personal relationships, effective parenting, healthcare for chronic illnesses, etc.

Through counseling, we install in our beneficiaries the importance of ART (antiretroviral therapy) and of daily care and health awareness issues.



Art therapy for counseling Umeed beneficiaries

Empowerment

Considering that women are trapped in prostitution at a young age, and thus remain unskilled, uneducated throughout their adult lives, we find it imperative to conduct meetings to educate them regarding important aspects of their lives.

Therefore, within this quarter we have conducted educational activities and provided information in respect to topics such as adult literacy, ration cards and identification documents, the importance of cancer checkups and school admissions, vocational training like beautician training and mehendi classes.

Along with empowering the women with the skills, we also aid them in maneuvering everyday challenges such as receiving birth certificates for their children, health awareness, uses and benefits of key government identification documents (such as Ration and Aadhaar cards) and other governmental schemes, as well as the process of opening a bank account, etc.

As a result of which, Aadhaar cards were issued for 6 beneficiaries, voting cards were issued for 5 beneficiaries and pan cards were issued for 7 beneficiaries. Birth affidavits were issued for 5 Umang/ Udaan beneficiaries.

As a result of increased interest, 9 skill development classes were held in the month of April 2018. Beneficiaries were taught different hairstyles and bridal makeup.



Beautician training for the beneficiaries



Mehandi classes for Umeed beneficiaries

Recreational activities

Recreational activities often lead to bonding between staff members and beneficiaries. Apart from creating rapport, such activities help us establish trust and encourage positive behavior from authoritative figures like- brothel owners and pimps.

This quarter, a ration distribution program was conducted in collaboration with Women's Care and Support Organization. Our close well-wisher, distributed rice, lentils, sugar, oil, Soya bean etc., to almost 90 beneficiaries suffering from HIV/AIDS/TB etc.



Ration distribution by one of our close well-wisher.

UDAAN

“I would like to learn more songs and sing for bigger audience”

“I do not want to leave the center as i am happy to be here”

“I like my teacher, she taught me this craft today, i want to go to school”
-Udaan Beneficiary



PROGRAM UPDATE

Education

Along with formal education through schools, we provide in-house tuition to our beneficiaries and additional support to those who have been diagnosed with various forms of learning disabilities like slow learning, hyperactivity, attention deficiency, etc. Because of which, 3 new school admissions and 2 re-admissions have taken place in this quarter. We conduct mother's meeting in which discussion concerning girl's overall progress and performance at school are shared.

A new development this quarter is that two children have been shifted to a new boarding home hence we would be working towards their admission in new school by completing all the transfer formalities.



Udaan Mothers' meeting

Health

Along with regular health camps, this quarter, we addressed the issue of skin diseases and skin conditions due to severe rising of temperature during the summer season. Apart from that, minerals and B12 vitamin were provided to the beneficiaries and a diet chart was made and followed. In addition, eye irritation and infection were one of the major issues that was handled.

As a result of proper intake of iron, calcium and multivitamins, 5 girls in the night shelter had their monthly periods regularly, which is a small victory on our side. Although there has been a decrease in the medical referrals, there were 15 medical referrals from the night shelter this quarter. The majority of them were for skin irritations and eye infections.



Health checkup of a Udaan beneficiary



Menstruation awareness session with the Udaan beneficiaries

Empowerment

We also work on empowerment in terms of vocational activities, identity-based documentation aid, life skills sessions and development of leadership skills through various extra-curricular activities. We aim to impart our beneficiaries with knowledge regarding important aspects of life, such as their bodies, relationships, “good touch” and “bad touch” etc.

Vocational activities were conducted, alongside with a macro life skills session. The life skills session was aimed at developing beneficiaries' confidence and self-esteem.



English classes for Udaan beneficiaries



Self-defense classes for the beneficiaries



Fashion designing classes

Extra-curricular and Recreational Activities

This quarter, 6 girls from Udaan are selected for the “Brave kids project” it is an opportunity for our girls to showcase their talent by traveling to Poland and performing various clowning shows it is indeed an immensely proud moment for us.

To provide you with a little bit of background, this project aims to bring together children from all over the world in an atmosphere of friendship and respect for each other's cultures. They do so by joining children in artistic experiences aimed to inspire them to imagine a better future for themselves and their communities, and provide them with tools to help realize their aspirations.

Udaan Felicitation Day was celebrated in the month of June with great pomp and show. Girls planned and performed various activities. 6 graduating Umang girls were welcomed to Udaan and were provided with school bags. As of June 2018, the girls began attending school in Sr.kg class.

We held many extracurricular activities like theater classes, computer classes, English speaking sessions, and music classes.



Computer Classes for Udaan beneficiaries

UMANG

“My daughter said, ‘Mummy, don’t let the man hold your hand, let’s go to our village back, I don’t want to live here’. I am so shocked that my daughter understands what is bad for us. I want to leave this area and want to give my daughter a good life.” - Umang beneficiary’s mother.

“Children have become very obedient; they actively participate in the activities. I am very happy and satisfied with the session. I am touched and overwhelmed with the creative gifts that beneficiaries gave me” – observation shared by our consistent volunteer Ms. Marina Dutta.



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“AAWC beneficiaries' are very talented, for the age of 3 and 4 years, they know so many poems and songs, they also understand colors and shapes. AAWC has done excellent work with the upbringing of these children. It was indeed a greatful and memorable experience for all of us of spending time with these little kids.” - Hexaware volunteer.



Garden Visits



Birthday celebrations

PROGRAM UPDATE

Education

This quarter, our Umang beneficiaries continued to learn alphabets, numbers, colors, shapes, basic English and Hindi poetry and other fundamental literature of kindergarten.

An oral & written assessment were conducted, in which it was found that they participate more actively in oral activities rather than written ones.

In Marina Dutta's session, children showed tremendous improvement. They participated in the activities with enthusiasm. As a result, Ms. Dutta mentioned she would be willing to conduct the educational sessions even if there are less teachers in future.



In-house activities



Educational activities in a creative way



Educational sessions



Activity based learning for Umang beneficiaries

Health

The health program for our Umang toddlers includes monthly health checkups, routine medical referrals, nutritional aid according to a well-designed diet chart, multivitamin and protein supplements, following up with hospitals and doctor's checkups etc. Because of which, three of the children were given immunization during the course of the medical camp, and all children were given ORS as a precaution for the summer months. In addition, a few children were given medicine for Cold and cough.

Along with this, we conducted awareness programs for the girl's mothers (eg. neonatal care, medical treatments for contagious diseases, seasonal healthcare, etc.). We have also included some new seasonal items in the diet chart such as, Aam Panna (Green Mango Drink), Raaqi (Millets) and buttermilk. A new diet chart was created and implemented as of this quarter.



Healthy meals to Umang beneficiaries



Monthly medical camp for Umang beneficiaries



Health checkup of a Umang beneficiary

Celebration

We celebrated Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti on April 16th, 2018. The celebration began with the story of Gautam Buddha followed by an explanation about who was Ambedkar and what his contribution to the nation was.

In addition, on April 7th, 2018, we celebrated birthday of all Umang night shelter children. Wearing celebration hats and dancing to Bollywood tunes, which made the children very happy. They also enjoyed the snacks thoroughly.



Birthday celebration of Umang children

Recreational Activities

Origami house: Using origami folds, children made beautiful houses, which we attached to the Thank you letter given to our devoted volunteer, Marina Dutta.

Bubble painting: Using straw and watercolor, children made a creative painting.

Matchstick activity: Children wrote AAWC and UMANG using matchsticks, an activity they very much enjoyed.

Paper spider: Children made big paper spiders with smiley faces. They cut out craft paper and made limbs etc., with the help of teachers.



Puppet fish making activity

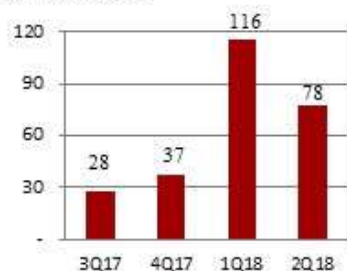


Tree making activity

April to June 2018

Membership

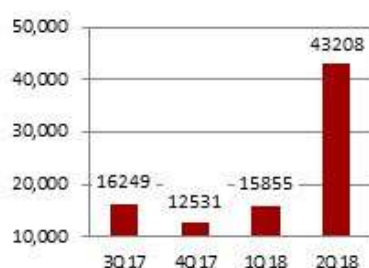
new members



Includes new Umeed, Udaan, and Umang members. Excludes indirect beneficiaries who receive services provided by AAWC.

Outreach

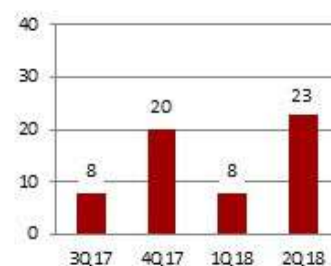
number of home visits



Includes visits by field team to members' homes.

Finance

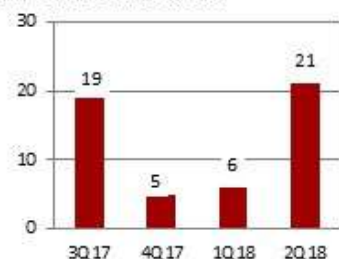
new savings accounts



Includes micro-saving accounts held at Indian Post Office, and formal bank accounts held at Bank of Maharashtra, also includes other service provided.

Education

new school enrollments



Includes new school enrollments of Udaan and Umang members as well as non-members. Note: school year begins in June (second quarter).

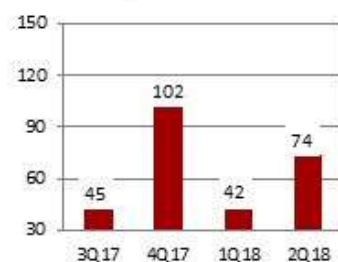
Empowerment

number of activities



Includes all workshops and excursions (legal, health, social schemes, creativity, careers, life skills, professional skills, fitness, human rights, recreation, etc.)

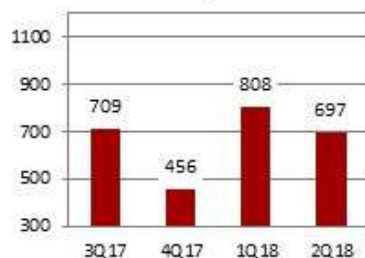
new registration documents



Includes ration cards, PAN card, Aadhar cards, voting cards, birth certificates, birth affidavits, general affidavits, gazette and health card.

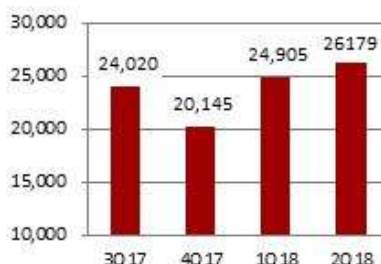
Health

new medical / hospital referrals



Provided to ensure members and non-members are properly treated at hospitals, where they are often denied service due to discrimination. Also include health camp and immunization beneficiaries.

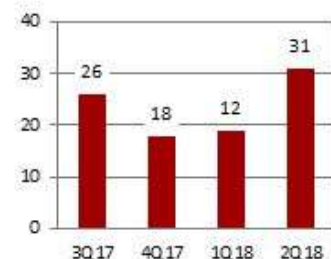
nutritional meals and snacks



Includes snacks distributed to all HIV/AIDS/TB patients in Umeed and full meals distributed to all members of Udaan and Umang.

Shelter

new enrollments



AAWC shelter is located in Kamathipura, while external shelters are located throughout Greater Mumbai. Boarding Placement service is provided to non-members as well.

***To keep supporting us
donate at:***



* Names changed and faces blurred to protect identity