

Roshni

Reaching Out to Serve Humanity with New Initiative

About Prabhat

The Prabhat Education Foundation reflects a journey that began in 2003 through the identification and nurturing of children with learning difficulties struggling in mainstream schools. In time, Realizing the need for education and learning of this group and particularly of children, Prabhat conceptualized an institutional facility to provide systematic learning and rehabilitation services that could be accessible for those challenged by poverty and mobility. Working with and through local communities is Prabhat's hallmark.

What started as a modest beginning, with one child in 2007, has now reached to 3000 persons with special needs in Ahmedabad as well as to their families, neighbours and communities.

An experience

There are several challenges parents of a child with special needs from marginalized communities have to go through, **but having a child who is always smiling and pleasant makes that journey a little easier.** Fariyad has an infectious smile, he came to Prabhat two years back with the right side completely paralysed. Through all the difficulty Fariyad's parents still tried to get him the required treatment, but due to financial constraints they could not continue it. Prabhat came as a pleasant surprise for them as it was close to their home and timings were flexible. Fariyad's parents were dedicated and brought the child regularly for physiotherapy. He also took part in various other activities at the Prabhat Centre, he enjoyed socialising with children his age and was always keen to learn, but as he could not walk or stand on his own he needed constant support from someone, so his interaction at the Centre was limited, as his parents could not leave him behind. Fariyad's determination to progress was so immense that he took it up as a challenge and within 2 years can now feed himself, dress himself, stand by himself just with a light support. The moment he could stand his first question was, when can he join a school. After a careful assessment of his physical progress along with mental capabilities, Prabhat started preparing him for admission in a mainstream school. Today Fariyad is a proud student of junior kindergarten in a mainstream school near his home. He enjoys doing his homework with his elder siblings and talks about all the activities done at school. His positivity has encouraged school authorities as well, who said they would do everything in their capacity to provide this child with a congenial learning environment. Fariyad all of 5 years old with his presence in that school among so many people from different walks of life **has demonstrated the capabilities that a child with special needs can achieve when provided with the right environment to thrive in.** Kudos to his parents as well who have helped him achieve this and have also grown with him in this process. For Prabhat the progress of one child is the progress of the entire organization!

Manish Mistry
Physiotherapist

The number of children, youth and adults not attending schools or educational institutions because of Covid-19, has been on the rise across the world. In India alone, it is estimated that more than 300 million learners across all age groups are out of school right now. (<https://www.pratham.org/2020/04/01/connecting-to-children-communities-in-a-time-of-crisis-pratham-initiative-for-fun-learning/>). '*Karona, thodi masti, thodi padhai*' is an attempt by Pratham to tackle this situation. It involves circulation of learning material via various social media platforms popularly whatsapp (based on a survey conducted). The materials include audio-video content focusing on hands-on learning activities. The *masti* videos engage the children in arts like craft, dance, music and theatre while the *padhai* ones focus on Math, English and Science learning. Prabhat collaborated with Pratham during the lockdown period and has been able to reach out to almost 2000 children from mainstream schools from Prabhat's community this is apart from Prabhat's students. These materials are also being circulated to Prabhat's students some materials are customised as per the needs of a Prabhat's child. The response has been very encouraging, children submit their work in the form of videos and photos. Parents are provided guidance through it all. The attempt here is to keep children engaged in learning through well rounded material. Some of the topics discussed: what is a solar eclipse, making craft out of recycled materials, simplifying Archimedes physics principles, etc. Prabhat is working through school authorities to provide these materials to the students.

Some of the material are available on the link provided:

<https://prathamopenschool.org/catalog/ResourceView/7652>; <https://prathamopenschool.org/catalog/ResourceView/7618>

Impact survey: As we grapple and take in stride the enormity of the current situation and adapt to the 'new-normal' there are a lot of revelations that came to fore through a survey bring conducted with Prabhat's community. A community Covid-19 Impact survey is underway, 503 people/households have been interviewed. The final report will provide helpful insight and will facilitate in planning opportunities on varied topics related to families' struggle with the Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions. To offer one example, there were questions in the survey to assess families' mental health during the lockdown and also "What support will be most helpful over the next one to three months?". Specific need-based questions will help Prabhat creatively plan how to focus efforts to overcome challenges by multiplying successes and meeting needs. The analysis of this survey will also help local government to reach out to communities with focussed interventions.

Networking: The physical distancing norm is helping Prabhat network with people across the country. There are very interesting and new partnerships being formed. One such collaboration includes Udaan club, a student network from Amity College, Gurugram, who provide curriculum-based teaching to children from the nearby urban slums in Gurugram, Haryana. They are making children from these urban slums produce learning material for Prabhat's children. These unique initiatives help build awareness and empathy in young minds.


Building Knowledge: The pandemic has brought with it an opportunity to build team capacities which is helping them build their knowledge on varied topics especially child rights, one such webinar organized by Catalyst for Social Action, Mumbai provided very interesting information on Emerging issues of child protection and care, a very essential aspect while working with children. Being a part of webinars organized by prestigious institutions is giving the team an in-depth understanding and a more holistic view point. Prabhat's Keshav Chatterjee also conducted a webinar for school teachers from Ahmedabad on understanding the Prabhat model. The key focus areas was - how it is essential to be perceptive about the urgent need of the community (you are working with) and deal with that first before tackling any other issue. Like in the case of Prabhat just when the lockdown hit the most urgent requirement was for food, if at that time Prabhat would have extended teaching and learning opportunities nobody would have bothered. Thus being attuned to the needs of the community you are serving is very essential. These opportunities also double up as a platform for advocacy and sensitizations.

The pandemic has not been easy on anyone especially for families with special needs children. In this section today we share with you some on ground realities faced by the child and families of Prabhat:

- The lockdown has meant isolation of these children, being confined at home has led to frustration, anger and sadness. This has been evident through the regular video calls made by the teachers. Some parents have been unable to handle their children, giving frantic calls to the teacher or counsellor.
- Prabhat serves people in marginalized communities, where most of them are daily wage workers. The child, at the Centre was use to variety of learning materials, but at home due to limited resources, the child exhibits reduced learning interest. Thus, collaborations with organizations like Pratham, helps Prabhat bring to its learning fun learning sessions and as these sessions are for all the children, siblings do them together.
- A child with special needs thrives having fixed schedule, not having that during these times has also affected them drastically. Though Prabhat's team regularly counsels parents on having a fixed time schedule for the child but being aware of the parent's limitation there is not much that can be achieved.
- There are several elements which lead to holistic development of a child. At Prabhat each aspect is looked into and provided for the child. Peer learning and social interactions have been an important part of it. The lack of it is making the child depressed and introverted. Physical activity is another very essential part of growing up for any child, space constraint and due to the covid-19 protocols the child is not able to have that physical activity which for a child with special needs deters several other development.
- Being out of work meant very limited finances, prioritizing needs has been essential for everyone. In that phones and phone recharges have sometimes taken a back seat, which made it difficult for Prabhat to reach out to the child or the family.
- Another issue that came to fore was the limited knowledge of using smart phones, which sometimes makes it difficult for them to access the learning sessions posted.

Challenges persist, thus Prabhat at this time is taking steps to understand the needs of the child-family-community and connect with like minded organization to attend to them.

You can see more of our stories at:

 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe1oxuBWMDvyCRk2EPzjIA>

 <https://www.facebook.com/Prabhateducationfoundation/>

 https://www.instagram.com/prabhat_education_foundation/



Gattu is Prabhat's little mascot. Sometimes he comes with fun stories and sometimes with very useful information, be sure you follow him to know more.

हैलो मित्रों,

मैं आप लोगों से मिलने के लिए फिर से आ गया हूँ। आपका गट्टू आपसे कुछ कोरोना से लगती बातें बताएगा, जिसका आप लोगोको ख्याल रखना है।



भीड़-भाड़वाली जगहों पर जाने से बचें।



सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर तंबाकू, गुटखा न चबाएं और न थूकें।



खांसते और छींकते समय नाक और मुंह ढँके। हमें जिम्मेदार बनकर और नियमों का पालन करके COVID-19 से बचकर सुरक्षित रहना है।



साबुन और पानी से बार-बार और अच्छी तरह से हाथ धोएं या अल्कोहल-आधारित हैंड सेनिटाइज़र का उपयोग करें।

मित्रो ये बारिश के मौसम में चाये और पकोड़े खाते है और बारिश के मजे लेते है। बाय-बाय मित्रो, फिर मिलेंगे.....



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