

Prabhat's Centre Model

Om Bhagia

The renowned Centre Model of the Prabhat Education Foundation is the culmination of years of preparatory work before its inaugural location's opening in 2006. Between the years of 2003 and 2006, Prabhat had four pillars that it used to raise awareness about special needs as well as the promotion of sustainability and ecological stewardship.

These pillars were the *Jeevan Taleem* program, the *Prabhat for Kids* program, the *Prabhat for Environment* program, and the *Prabhat for Teachers* program. *Jeevan Taleem* was the foundation of their first centre, as it was the advocacy and care they promoted for special needs children. It also became the name of their first centre when it opened in March 2006. The *Prabhat for Kids* program was an activity centre for younger children to work on their overall skills while receiving education. This was not a fully equipped centre and was a preliminary space to their eventual expansion.

Ecologically, Prabhat also made its mark with its *Prabhat for Environment* initiative in which it worked closely alongside mainstream public schools to raise awareness amongst both students and staff about the benefits of environmental stewardship, as well as the downfalls of pollution and other various ecological hazards. Their final program, *Prabhat for Teachers*, was focused on preparing staff to help deal with special needs children, to be able to effectively care for and educate them, and to raise their

overall abilities in working with children.

Throughout these four pillars, Prabhat was able to create an ecosystem throughout the educational and economical sectors, eventually gaining their trust deed to establish the Prabhat Education Foundation as a valuable resource for special needs children and their families. The *Jeevan Taleem* Centre was opened in March 2006 in the Maninagar region of Ahmedabad after a detailed analysis of where the centre would be able to have the highest value and meet the needs of



the most people. With the opening of this centre, Prabhat embarked on a journey that has allowed them to provide outstanding care and treatment to children and adults in the 15 years they have been serving the communities of Ahmedabad.

The Centre is home to a variety of valuable activities for physical and mental development. There are physical therapists who aid children and adults with special needs with their fine motor skills and to recover from injuries. Qualified teachers, psychologists, and therapists keep track of the learning of students. They are taught language and problem solving skills, and the social environment pre-COVID allowed the students to become better at interaction and reduce anxiety. Many attendees to Prabhat's Centre have been able to integrate into the normal schooling system because the activities conducted allowed their development to increase substantially. This amelioration is due to the fact that Prabhat specifically teaches the students with the hope of bringing their mental and physical capacity to the same level as one without special needs, a process that has proved successful thus far. Experts in children's mental health and development create lesson plans specific to each student that will



best encompass their needs and goals. This helps the child steadily progress towards the end goal of integration and overcoming the challenges that have prevented them from attending a mainstream school. For adults, the procedure varies. Many come to Prabhat because they were never able to receive an education and are now inspired to begin that learning process; for these attendees a similar lesson plan process applies. For other situations, adults have passed through the entire schooling system with their special needs but are now facing career difficulties. Employment experts help them create a well-rounded resume. As well, the students are given training in

public speaking and interviewing so that they are prepared in practice as well. Prabhat's connections with various institutions and employment centres in Ahmedabad allows them to best create a path for their adult attendees and aid them in achieving the most success. Each staff member carefully designs lesson plans to tailor to the specific requirements of their students, no matter the age, and this is a strategy that has proved beneficial for both the attendees and their families.

While Prabhat's four initial pillars were focused on the relationship between the staff and the students, parents and other family members are essential to the development of the attendees as well. Before COVID-19 regulations, parents came to the Centre with the

students and actively participated in the activities, learning new techniques that they can use at home for better development. These included physical exercises, academically-oriented activities, and therapy techniques that can be used for advancing social skills. Since parents and family members often know their children best, it is critical that they play a role in the educational process as it allows the student to practice their exercises and skills both at home and in the Centre. Since the oncoming of the pandemic and the subsequent transition to online learning, parents have an even more key part in the learning process. All activities are done online, which means that the parents must talk to the staff member and perform guided lessons at home.



Through this, the organization has almost developed a relationship with parents that increases awareness and promotes active participation in education. The Prabhat Education Foundation has come a long way since its initial planning in 2003, having evolved from four pillars into having their very own Centre Model. This process has influenced the lives of children and adults with special needs who might have otherwise been unable to receive the specific care they needed. Throughout all the confusion of the pandemic it is still certain that Prabhat will continue to provide advocacy and learning opportunities to the best of its ability, a much needed relief for families during this time.