

Roshni

A monthly newsletter by Prabhat Education Foundation

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

Today I share with you the story of a hardworking young boy, who has not let his disability limit him in any way. Shlok, lives with his parents & two brothers at a slum in Shahwadi area of Ahmedabad. 11 year old Shlok has low vision because of a progressive disability, which usually develops after a few years from birth. For Shlok, the issue was identified when he started going to school and was unable to read the board or his books, his parents as per the advice of the ophthalmologist got him spectacles, but they were also told about his progressive condition which was occurring due to dryness in the veins of his eyes otherwise called as retinal artery occlusion. His father is visually impaired as well, so in all probability this was a genetic condition that Shlok has. His mother is a tailor and earns a meagre amount of money to keep the family afloat and with Shlok's diagnosis and expensive doctor visits, he sadly had to drop out of school as they could not afford it anymore. We received information about Shlok while conducting a survey. We visited his residence and asked his mother to bring him to the Centre. A complete health assessment was conducted. Apart from his vision, Shlok has no other problems. We at Prabhat knew how much he wanted to go back to school, so we provided him with remedial classes to help him cover up the academic gap and simultaneously started his admission process in a school close by to his residence. Sun English School where Shlok was admitted were more than accommodating to his needs and open to learn about classroom management to enable children with special needs be efficiently included into regular schooling model. He joined the school in grade 6, but he was soon finding subjects like Hindi & English difficult to write. But with additional support from his schools teachers along with the remedial support being provided by Prabhat at the school, Shlok soon caught up and was able to read and write in Hindi and English easily. One day as per routine I was checking everyone's homework at the remedial class, as soon as Shlok's turn came, I realized he was unwell and had cold and fever, I assumed he would not have been able to do his homework, so didn't trouble him by asking. Shlok patiently waited and then finally asked me 'sir are you not going to check my homework' I was pleasantly surprised and realized this child's zeal to study! Shlok really values this educational opportunity that he has and puts in all the effort to do well. He also diligently helps out at home. He accompanies his father whenever he goes out. We are very proud and happy with the way Shlok has been consistent with his studies even during the lockdown. Prabhat takes pride in being of service to children like Shlok! He is the epitome of not limiting oneself due to any challenges.

By: Hardik Chavda
Special Educator



"Maula maula maula, aisa bolna aur fir chhup jaana. Dekhona mummy ye chhup jaati hai, kaha ho tum, bahar aa jao" This is the conversation between Alina and her 2 sisters. Alina lives at a slum near Chandola (an urban slum). Alina is one of the twin and 8 years old, they have another sister who is 6 and the youngest brother who is 2 years old. The conversation amongst these three sisters is filled with affection & care and is worth observing. One would also be amused to see their maturity and understanding at this age. Alina uses few words & signs to communicate, whereas the other two sisters can speak fluently. They have a way to understand each other in every which way. When Alina's younger sister gets ready to go to school, Alina will immediately start saying "a-a-a" with a few hand signs saying she also wants to go. As soon as she does these gestures the other two sisters, sit beside her and calm her down lovingly by saying "Dekh abhi to meri behna kasrat karti hai na? dekh, thode din me tu chalne lagegi tab hum teeno saath school chalenge. Tab tak tujhe padhane teacher aati hai unke paas padhna, thik hai" (See, you have just started with your exercises, soon you would be able to walk and then you can come along with us, until then you study with the teacher who comes home to teach and play with you). On listening to this, Alina instantly shakes her head saying 'yes'. After that 'yes' is when the sisters wave goodbye and trot off to school. Alina, sits by the door and keeps waving until the sisters appear like a dot! On occasions when Alina is not in a mood to listen to her teacher from Prabhat and throws a tantrum, her sisters convince her by saying "Dekh Alina, tu meri acchi wali behen hai na? tu kaam karle baad me hum teeno milke khelenge, tujhe khelna hai na?" (Alina, aren't you our good and lovely sister? Right now you listen to the teacher and after that all three of us will play. You want to play right?) and that's how the sisters make Alina and her teacher have a wonderful peaceful session, being involved and engaged the entire time. Every day when the sisters leave for school and their mother gives them money, the first thing they ask would be, what to bring for Alina. **We can see that the little girls understand and believe that as much rights and privileges they are having, Alina should equally have that.** Their father runs a store nearby and whenever Alina starts crying a lot, the sisters would run to the shop and ask their father to take Alina for an outing while they look after the store! 'These are 8 and 6 years old' that we are talking about. Many times when the two girls would go out to play, Alina would get upset and starts crying. The sisters on hearing Alina cry would run back home and Alina would try to explain with some words and actions on how she also wants to play with them. The sisters would then invite their army of friends to their home and all of them would play together. They would make sure Alina gets involved in all the games!

There is a saying "Bacche mann k sachhe, koi kapat nahi dwesh nahi.. naahi koi nafrat"

"Children smile at anything and everything; that's due to how beautiful they perceive life to be. Isn't that, in itself, a beautiful thing?" We are amazed with this sibling relationship and salute the little girls for displaying the true sense of inclusion!

By: Jagruti Desai
Special Educator



Identification of new children with special needs: As Prabhat ventures into new geographical locations and gets back to some old ones, the work always starts with a survey. It is conducted by the field team to identify children and adults with special needs. This month with limited time, the team was able to identify 17 children with varied levels of disabilities, out of which 3 have joined a *dehlu* running near their residence. The process of admission at Prabhat begins with regular counselling and guidance sessions for parents along with thorough assessment of the child by experts. The child is invited with her parents to the Centre/*dehlu* and detailed observation is conducted for a week. After which an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is prepared, customised as per the needs and abilities of each child. Prabhat also invites volunteers for these surveys to help reach out to more people.

Other interesting sessions: This month the learning highlight, was with and about colours. Identification of different colours, textures of paints, crayons, etc. Children were made to paint using different objects like toys, vegetables and finger. The younger children thoroughly enjoyed the painting sessions. Other learning sessions were done using tactile materials like beads, writing tools, coins, pebbles, etc. Therapy continued in all the *dehlus* with focus on speech therapy.

Parent participation: Prabhat has always adopted and believed in participatory processes because of which majority of the activities at Prabhat are sustainable and replicable. From the past few months' parents and siblings have been encouraged to spend time at the *dehlus* with the child, and also share and learn from other parents, these engagements help form support groups which further helps in addressing various challenges faced as parents of a child with special needs. With the situation the world faced last year with the lockdown the need for these informal support groups was reiterated. These groups were responsible for sustaining mental health in several communities that Prabhat serves, especially for mothers. By increased participation of family members in the activities, the child feels loved and appreciated, parents have also been instrumental in introducing various new activities, like yoga, dance sessions, etc at the *dehlus*.

Teacher training: A teacher training workshop with 40 mainstream school teachers from Shiv Ashish School, Ahmedabad was conducted. The training focussed on understanding disabilities, especially those which are not visible, along with creative teaching and learning methods. Prabhat over the years has developed unique pedagogies which makes learning fun and something to look forward to by the children.

New partnerships: Prabhat is very happy to announce that it has joined hands with Wipro Foundation and Dasra, who are supporting in programme strengthening and advancement at Prabhat. The organization is looking forward to an exciting journey of mutual learning with them.

Distribution: with the support from Muthoot finance, this month Prabhat was able to distribute ration kits and Teaching and learning kits to 77 families.

Ek din Prabhat ke naam: The celebrations under *ek din Prabhat ke naam* (one day dedicated to Prabhat) have begun. We had a young friend celebrating his 7th birthday with the children of Prabhat. It is heartening to see such display of love of friendship. If you would like to spend a day with Prabhat's children and go back with a truck full of beautiful memories, please write to us at:

prabhat@prabhatedu.org



Josiah, Janala, Denise and Robert Davis have been a part of Prabhat's family for over two years, we have grown together, learning and re-learning. We are sad to bid adieu to them, but we know there are great adventures awaiting them, Prabhat wishes the Davis family the very best!

Snap-shot of the month



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