

D. Foundation Update - December 27 2007

This month our main activities have been to provide blankets and warm clothes to the homeless and destitute and to continue with the preparations for the opening of the Vocational training Academy in January 2008.

The weather in Sarnath and Varanasi is quite fresh, especially in the evenings and over night. This cold weather greatly affects the homeless - those sleeping on the streets and also the destitute women in the destitute home, some of whom have to sleep outside because of lack of space in the five bedrooms provided for the 96 inmates in the home presently. The cold can be a life threatening issue in some cases, especially when people are also facing starvation.

Jaitpura destitute home



D. Foundation distributed blankets to each of the inmates and also provided warm clothes, jumpers and suits (Indian dress and trousers).

We have also brought two new teachers to the home to teach vocational training including leather bag making, sewing and other handicraft skills. The teachers are paid by D. Foundation

D. Foundation is renovating and furnishing a further two rooms - one for vocational training and one to be available especially for the mentally and physically challenged women and girls.



This month we supported one of the women to have her baby in hospital (bright green head scarf). We are planning to rehabilitate and release the woman and her baby. We have published advertisements/articles in newspapers in order to raise awareness about the situation of the woman and of the others in the destitute home and also to trace her family in order to mediate with them and get them to ask for her release. The woman is dumb and has another child for whom D. Foundation organised transferral to the SOS children's school. Till now we have rehabilitated 6 children from the destitute homes with the help of SOS schools.

Homeless Street people

After successful distribution of blankets in the women's destitute home we then asked for further support in order to provide warm blankets and clothes to the homeless who sleep on the side of the roads. We also conducted an awareness program in newspapers with an article asking for support for destitute people through donations of clothes.

100 blankets were provided to street people. D. Foundation accompanied by the Varanasi District Magistrate went at night, when people are sleeping along the road, to hand out the blankets to those who needed them most. 50 blankets were kindly donated by the Opal Hospital, the other 50 were donated by Mr. Sisirsa.

D. Foundation Vocational Training Academy



The renovation, construction, painting work and furnishing is 95% complete. We are now selecting the girls and women who will study at the Academy. Selections will be completed by the 20th January and classes will start on the 26th January – which is an auspicious day as it is Indian Independence day. We will hold an opening ceremony which we hope HH Karmapa will bless with his presence.

Photo taken three weeks ago showing academy front and nursery on right.

When it opens, the academy will have a capacity of 250 seats for girls and women. There will also be a nursery for their children with a capacity of 300. Each student will attend the academy for a minimum of two years. Each diploma course is 6 months. They will attend four courses. All will attend education and the Yoga and Meditation diploma. They will then receive counselling to help the girls decide which other two professional diploma courses are best suited to them. There will be the possibility to remain in the Academy to complete further diploma courses after the two years.

Many girls and woman have come to apply for the courses. We are now conducting interviews and visiting the applicant's families to select those most in need. Places will be provided first to destitutes, then orphans, then handicapped families, then children and women of families affected by suicide, and finally to labour families. 82% of the seats are reserved for these categories of people. The remaining 18% of the seats will be for normal class people. The government requested us to keep 18% for normal class people; the government may then provide some support for the academy in future.

D. Foundation has organised for 4 destitute girls to be brought there to work. As only a family member can ask for their release, we have mediated with the girls' relatives who have agreed to take them out through the legal procedure. We will then take full responsibility for the girls – their families do not wish/ are unable to have them back. Once they are brought to the Academy they will be provided with work, accommodation and all that is necessary for establishing a life. In future many more girls and women can be brought to the academy in this way.

Detail of the training program at the Academy

All girls and women will attend:

- Yoga and Meditation Diploma – the course will be run at the academy by the Iswaray University (Bram Kumare) who will also provide the diploma certificate.
- Education

They will choose two from the following professional diploma courses. All the courses will be run at the Academy. Officially recognised diploma certificates will be provided with the help of Jan Shikshan Sasthan and other universities.

- Nursery teacher's training course for those who have finished high school
- Computer hardware and software – with the help of the government, there will be the possibility for people to complete their high school curriculum at the same time.
- Still and video photography and mass media
- Personality Development –how to present yourself, how to face problems in society, how to talk, training in how to train. Professional counsellors will assist. This course will give people good job opportunities.
- Beautician, tailoring, weaving and painting – choice
- Typing, secretarial work and administration
- Cooking and catering professional course
- Career counselling and professional spoken and written English
- Health and hygiene diploma course – they will become trainers in health and hygiene. Many NGOs are currently looking for such trainers.
- Diploma in handicraft work

For those women who are illiterate we will provide the following training:

- Making silk thread
- Gandhi weaving machine
- Tailoring