

India Impact Reports

India: Madhya Pradesh--349503--Enhance Life Standard of Rural Women and Children: Congregation of Samaritan Sisters

The Sisters designed a project that partners with Manav Vikas Seva Sangh, the Social Apostolate of Sagar Diocese and the Sagar Diocesan Service Society. Women and children from the landless and the “poorest of the poor” classes in the neighboring villages are the target group. These people have no source of income except daily wages, when work is available. Most of the families have only one member who is earning. They have little money for educating and preparing their children for a better future. As a result, around 60% of the youth in the villages and slums have not been able to study above the 8th or 10th grade level.

This project proposes to benefit the poor, marginalized and underprivileged of the society who are unable to pursue further studies. The Sisters linked the people with government and NGO programs in which they are able to learn skills and enhance their livelihood. These programs, as well as the workshops and programs offered by the Sisters, cover many areas including empowerment of women, health and hygiene, sustainable agricultural, child rights, and natural resources management. The project also supports them with small income generating programs, which will raise the standard of the women in the group and the village.

IMPACT: The project affected 1,100 women and children.

The Sisters report: “While working in the rural areas with the women, we realized that the solution to end poverty is not by providing money but rather by extending social services. In 12 months, we formed ten groups of women, allowing women from various castes, class and religions to come together several times in a month and discuss issues and action plans. The women have come to address the problems of the villages and work together in solving them by themselves. There are also three centers where drop-out girls are taught elementary math, Hindi and moral studies. This helped **137** students to become interested in education and mainstream into schools.”

The Sisters believe that they also experienced transformation. “When we stay with them, look like them, dress like them and dine with them, it provides us as well as them to see the truth from a different angle. They start serving others and work for others.”



February 2018

India: West Bengal--398567--HIV/AIDS Awareness, treatment & Support for People Living with AIDS Program--Congregation of Theresian Carmelites

In 2008, the Asansol Diocese in North India began the Chetana Community Care Centre. The center is in a poor part of the diocese where many become infected through drug addiction and/or engaging in prostitution. In 2011, the sisters started a home within the center for the orphaned children affected by HIV/AIDS. The sisters

provide the children with accommodations, education, nutrition, clothing, treatment, medication and antiretroviral therapy (ART) as well as spiritual and psychological support. Collaborating with the National AIDS Control Program and the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, the sisters are also providing care and awareness programs for the children and people of the area.

IMPACT: 1,828 children and adults through various programs:

- 25 HIV infected children were given accommodations, food, daily medication, checkups and ART adherence. The children were also given skill training in tailoring, crafts, computers and music.
- HIV/AIDS awareness programs given in:
 - six villages for 960 individuals
 - two slums for 43 children and 62 elders
 - three schools for 420 children, 110 regular college students and 52 MSW college students (social work institution)
- 70 HIV infected people participated in a special program increasing self-confidence for a secure life.
- 28 outpatients received short-term shelter at an ART checkup center.
- 52 HIV infected children participated in a camp.
- Six children were sponsored for treatment through ART center.



September 2018

Asia/Oceania: India—587095 and 607246—COVID-19 Relief Activities—National Domestic Workers Movement (\$45,000)

The National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM) has been at the forefront of championing women's domestic workers' rights for over three decades. Today the NDWM network functions across 16 states of India, engaging 200,000 domestic workers.

The nationwide lockdown confronted the domestic workers with increased hardships and financial challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic made evident the precarious nature of their marginalization and the urgent need to address the situation. Unable to travel and due to the stigma attached to the virus's potential carriers, many domestic workers lost their jobs without adequate payment and have lost their livelihood. Since these workers have limited or no savings or financial backing, their families' lives were severely affected by the crisis. Sister Christin Mary, a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM), proposed using the NDWM network to get funding to key sisters' congregations in various states. These congregations would participate in the distribution of food kits and sanitation materials to the affected families. Food kits could provide the families meals for 15 days.

Impact: 7 congregations in 8 states; 9000 people served

During the initial phases of the lockdown, the government announced aid for the people. The reality was that the poor domestic workers were not among those receiving the ration cards. The sisters set up a procedure to transfer the money to a local grocer, who distributed the food to those who had the sisters' coupons. This procedure became challenging during the lockdown since the government frequently changed the protocols for public gatherings and travel from one region to another. Often, the sisters walked great distances to get the money to the store owners and

the families' coupons.



June 2021

India: 585635 - Holy Cross Olive Hill Girls' Boarding (Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod \$20,000)

Holy Cross Olive Hill Girls' Boarding school is located in a poor, land-locked state in Northeast India with borders on three sides with Bangladesh. The area has high unemployment and extreme poverty. Its industrial base is small with low investment from outside. The school and hostel provide a valuable option to the low-education standards that the government-run schools offer and the difficulties of commuting in the rainy season. The municipal water supply is not clean, is only available at certain times, and cannot be used for drinking or cooking. The request included funding for clean water and beds and mattresses for the hostel dormitory.

Impact: 1,658 students, sisters, parents, neighbors, and farmers benefited

Within two weeks, the company completed the work, making safe drinking water available. One could see the joy and happiness of students and the neighboring families of the local community, who are the immediate beneficiaries. The manufacturers advised the sisters not to make the bunk beds because of the poor ventilation afforded by the low galvanized tin roofing of the mud house. The girls enjoy single steel beds with mosquito nets and new mattresses. The monitor reports, "I addressed them (the students) once, and while interacting with them, they expressed their joy & gratitude, of having a good drinking water source which they cherish in this new academic session. They also expressed their joy in having a comfortable bed, making their nights safer and more comfortable. As they wake up fresh, they can concentrate and focus better on their studies."



June 2022

India – 611189 – Salesian Sisters Society (Daughters of Mary Help of Christians \$16,700)

For 75 years, the Salesian Sisters Society has been ministering in a rural area in south Tamil, a region with more than ten slum areas, where women, young girls, and children are prone to child labor and

trafficking and are easily exploited. The sisters focused on giving dignity to the children and young women on the streets and preventing them from becoming dropouts by providing them with evening coaching, enrolling them back into Government schools, and providing follow-up.

Impact: 200 women and 400 youth and children benefitted from the activities.

The sisters provided skill training, entrepreneurial programs, and evening coaching classes to prevent the children from becoming dropouts. The women working as domestic servants are given courses on awareness of women's rights and how they might exercise them. The women gained confidence, learned how to access resources, and gradually became self-reliant.



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