



VAROSHA 2022

Hope and Empowerment through Education and Opportunity

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As the world slowly recovers from the global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent waves of new variants, 2022 has been another challenging year for our projects. With the help of generous donors last year, we were able to fully fund a COVID clinic in a severely underserved community in Krishnachandrapur, 24 South Parganas. As the severity of cases fell, the clinic continued running successfully providing medical checkups and treatment for the people in the surrounding villages. Now the oxygen concentrators and cylinders are being used less for COVID patients and more for elderly people who need oxygen support.

Government schools were closed for months at a time severely impacting education. For our students without computers and reliable internet services, online classes became a great hurdle. Varosha supported centers remained open providing tuition classes and at times, even food assistance to 230 families who had no work due to lockdowns.

Our highly valued partners faced long delays to routine government required filings and approvals as offices were closed or understaffed but still kept our programs running.

It has been a challenging road back to the new "normal". We are not fully there but we can see brighter days ahead. With your support and good wishes we will surely get there. We remain sincerely grateful to you.

Santi Banerjee, Krishna Chakrabarty, Shompita Chatterjee, Neela Dasgupta,
Bikram Dewanjee, Chandrima Roy, and Shuvani Sanyal



**ALL FUNDS FROM
DONORS ARE USED
FOR DIRECT PROJECT
COSTS.**

Electrician Skills Training



We are very pleased to see the enthusiasm for our new program among the tribal communities of Huchuckpara, Palashbuni, Nimpahari, and Chackraipur of Birbhum. Our ten students in the pilot program have learned how to do concealed wiring for a house, maintain it and do simple repairs of household appliances. Under the guidance of our trainer, a teacher at the Industrial Training Institute in Bolpur, they have completed three wiring contracts for

new construction homes. Our trainer reports that the students will benefit from further practical and theoretical training to be able to work independently and has requested nominal equipment that will help the students. We would like to provide them and continue to refine and expand this project in the future.



Drivers' Education & Licensing



Varosha's Drivers' Education and Licensing Program continues to be a fast track to a reliable income for many young unemployed people in Kolkata and Birbhum. Our students in Kolkata were able to get jobs as drivers.

One of our students in Birbhum, Ujjal L, recently purchased a second hand tractor and is earning Rs 10k/month. Nearly all our students were able to pass their driving tests on their first try and the very few who did not are ready to try again. They can see a positive and hopeful future with this valuable skill.



Drivers' Education students in Birbhum



New drivers in our Kolkata class hold their driver's licenses

Ginger & Turmeric Cultivation



Varosha donors will remember that during the initial severe COVID lockdowns many young men returned from work as laborers in major cities like Mumbai to face unemployment in their homes in rural West Bengal. With the help of teachers in the agriculture field, we implemented a program to teach unemployed men farming techniques to grow turmeric and ginger locally. After a couple of cycles the farming techniques are proving successful and are being accepted by the farmers. We have 20 trained farmers and are training 10 new farmers. Their crops were evaluated to be

healthy and growing well. To further assist our trainees and farmers we invested in equipment that helped them process the crop and also package it for marketing/sale.

Mushroom Cultivation



Since 2018 this successful project has trained 67 growers in Birbhum, 15 growers in Burdwan and 30 growers in the Sundarbans who are generating an income.



Congratulations to Jagannath G., 1st in the district for successful mushroom cultivation. His income before training was Rs 1,700/month. He is currently earning Rs.12,000/month as a mushroom grower.



Congratulations to Rajesh P., 2nd in the district for successful mushroom cultivation. He worked as a private tutor before training, earning Rs 800/month. He is currently earning Rs.15,000/month as a mushroom grower.

Food Assistance



The Breakfast Program has continued this year with the generous sponsorship of *Nikhilesh and Dolly Mukhopadhyay*. We thank them for funding this program every year. Our three Kolkata centers continue to serve a breakfast of: bread, eggs, milk, bananas or seasonal fruits like guavas, to 130 children. We are particularly grateful to be able to continue this program in the tribal area of Huchuckpara. The children who take part in this program are children of agricultural workers or workers in the stone cutting industry who work for low wages. The parents leave very early in the morning for work. Tragically five of the children in this program lost their mothers this year and stay with grandparents who are often in a more dire financial state. The morning healthy breakfast is simply critical for their nutrition and well-being.



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Beautician Training



Classes in our beautician program in the Kolkata center continued with 45 new students. The newer program in Birbhum is proving very popular with the young ladies. They are still learning skills and perfecting techniques but we are hopeful that on completion they will be able to work in parlors or independently from home.



*We are grateful for the dedication of our partners:
Shampa Roy and the team at Trinita Shelter
Shimanti Bose and the team at Anandan
Swarup Saha and the team at Matribhumi
Sankar Halder and the team at Mukti*

Support for Students



Student: *Sukhlal K*

Sponsor: ***Dibya Ghosh, & Biswaroop Bhattacharya***

LCG Institute, Birbhum

Auto Mechanic

COVID restrictions have severely impacted education throughout the world and our students as well. Technical and skills based education is particularly difficult to complete online. There have been delays but we are very pleased that progress is being made now. We can update sponsors on the students Varosha donors sponsored. Sukhlal K is in his final semester and has passed all the classes with very good grades (85%). Soumen H & Shibdas T, have completed both theory and practical classes and received their ITI certificate. They are currently doing an apprenticeship with a local workshop and earning a stipend. They are ambitious and want to open their own business but will need some financial support to do that.



Student: *Soumen H*

Sponsor: ***Sourav & Suparna Banerjee***

Industrial Training Institute,
Bolpur

Program: Welding



Student: *Shibdas T*

Sponsor: ***Soumojyoti (Jojo) & Natasha Duttaroy***

Industrial Training Institute,
Bolpur

Program: Welding

Tuition Centers for Students

Since 2019 Varosha has fully funded education centers in squatter settlements in Kolkata with the focus to reduce school dropout rates and discourage marriages at very early ages which leave girls uneducated and disempowered. Our target group is students from Class VI to XII. Although the program was initially set up as a safe place for girls after school, several boys have also joined.

Number of student already benefited through this program: 231

Current number of enrolled students: 162

The Centers are in the following areas:

1. Park Circus railway track basti area
2. 47 no Christopher Road basti area
3. Shibtala basti area
4. Kilkhana, Tangra basti area
5. Dhapa basti area



The project provides:

- ◆ Tuition support with quarterly exams and additional support in English and Science
- ◆ Recreational support like dance therapy, movement therapy, meditation
- ◆ Counseling and stress relief program
- ◆ Reproductive health awareness
- ◆ Hygiene kits for girls
- ◆ Nutritious snacks/meals after school
- ◆ Educational kits including: school bag, water bottles, umbrella, textbooks and stationary items
- ◆ School admission sponsorship after secondary education and higher secondary exam
- ◆ Emergency ration kits during Covid-19 amongst 230 families

It is rewarding to see the families are regularly sending their children to our centers and the school dropout and early marriage rate has dramatically fallen. The student are gaining confidence and an interest for their studies because they get support for homework and are doing better in exams. Parents, who are economically challenged, no longer have to struggle to afford private tutors so can encourage their children to stay in school. The students, who live in one small open room with other family members, get a few hours of space to study. During COVID, all schools were closed for almost 2 years but our students received continuous tuition support at our centers.

We are deeply grateful to **Rajat Bhadra** for funding this valuable project.



Number of Students Graduating in the Project

Year	Madhyamik	HS	College
2020	12	4	0
2021	15	4	0
2022	13	4	1

Director Chandrima Roy visited 3 Centers this year. She was welcomed with their enthusiasm, dedication, and high spirits.



Scholarships for Students in this Project

Year	Class XI (School)	College
2020	4	0
2021	2	2
2022	9	4

Health Checks for our Students

A few years ago, on a visit to a tuition center, we were grateful to meet the girls and boys participating in academic support programs, recreational activities, and computer and tailoring lessons. As we were getting ready to leave, our center's host approached us and asked if I could speak to a young lady – she had a health question for me. While I took her aside and spoke with her, a few more girls (aged 12 – 18) walked over and lined up to ask their own questions about aches & pains, irregular cycles and how to eat healthy. Most of these girls had never been to a doctor before, and in meeting one that looked like themselves, they found the voice to ask about their own health.

This inspired our hopes to facilitate health visits for the children at our educational programs. In March 2022, we visited Matri Sangha Janakalyan Asram, a volunteer free clinic, to discuss a possible partnership to provide healthcare visits and health education appropriate to the age of the children. We recognize poor health and health literacy continues to disempower women around the world. We are working to facilitate a partnership to address the ongoing health inequities experienced by children of low-income families, particularly, the young girls who live in these communities.

-Shuvani Sanyal



Directors Shuvani Sanyal and Neela Dasgupta had a very productive meeting with Prashanta Ghosh of Matri Sangha Janakalyan Asram about a pilot program to provide medical checks for our students and collaboration in the future.

Jewelry Making



The teachers conducted a market survey of handcrafted jewelry stores in Kolkata and found the growing popularity of fabric jewelry. This year the trainees decided to make 50% of their pre-Durga Pujo items fabric jewelry. Five of our previously trained girls worked with their teacher to design 42 designs of earrings and necklaces. They created a brand and named it Trinity Handcrafted Jewelry and launched an Instagram account on September 15, 2021. Since then they have conducted three live sessions on Facebook and posted products for sale in five Facebook groups. They have also taken part in exhibitions and their handcrafted products will be displayed in the Art Craft Design Exhibition in Madhyamgram. They will do more Facebook live shows and will display products at Durga Puja pandal shops from September 30 to October 5, 2022. The center now has a marketing coordinator to help in the design, packaging and obtaining bulk retail orders. Workshops on how to aesthetically package the jewelry are also being conducted.



The goal of this project is to change the typical work these girls were destined to do like domestic helper or daily laborer and make life brighter and meaningful. The girls have started selling online and have involved their family in their businesses, increasing their family income.

◀ *Successfully completing and delivering an order for sale.*



September 23- 25 Exhibition

Mani Square, Salt Lake