

RURAL CHILDREN DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, VEDAPATTY, DINDIGUL DIOCESE

1. Title of the Project

Adaption of a Children Development Centre in Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu, India.

2. Context of the Project

Dindigul is one of the most resource poor districts of Tamil Nadu, with limited industrial and technical / professional educational facilities. The livelihood of rural poor who mostly depend on agriculture remains so pathetic that they experience acute poverty and deprivation. Agriculture remained almost a total failure due to lack of monsoon, increased cost of inputs, loss of soil fertility, and dependency on multi-national companies for seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Hence migration of labour force within and outside the state has increased. Some are working as casual labourers.

So the children of these families particularly from rural and remote areas of the district are affected severely. Some become dropouts and are forced to remain in the home to look after their younger brothers and sisters in the absence of their parents. Some grown up children especially girls are forcefully sent by their parents to the spinning mills where they are demanded severe labour with less salary. Many of the girls are physically abused in the mills and their future is spoiled. Child marriage is one of the worst social problems that has been fully shattering the childhood happiness of these young girls.

Being a drop outs, the boys are laboring in the construction units, loading and unloading workers in the Lorries/ trucks as an unskilled laborers are easily prone to be scapegoat in the hands of antisocial elements. They become addicted to alcohol and other unhealthy events. Their life is vanished. Many are living a short span of their life.

As most of the families cannot afford to spend money for healthy food and good education of their children, they consider the earnings of their children as a supplementary source of income. Often the parents also do not have sufficient awareness on the negative impacts of children losing their childhood.

Hence it becomes one of the top priorities of the diocese of Dindigul to support such poor boys and girls from the rural and remote areas of Dindigul diocese to have access to good habitat, healthy food and standard education. Keeping these in mind the proposal is developed as a policy paper to support the integrated development of children.

3. Goal and Objectives

The goal of the project is **“Improved quality of life of the rural, poor, vulnerable children through care, standard education and pre-vocational skills”**.

The specific objectives are:

1. To adapt a Children Development Centre for orphans, semi-orphans and poor children from the Dindigul region with a capacity up to 100 children;
2. To run the Centre and take care of the welfare of the inhabitant children;
3. To create the conditions for the inhabitant children to reintegrate in Indian society.

4. Proposed Activities

- Partition of the existing building at Vedapatty
- Repair and renovation with Painting works
- Erection of a generator
- Purchase of Cots, Bed Sheets, Steel Cupboards, Tables and Chairs for children
- Establishment of a library with the required facilities
- Upgrading the kitchen and dining facilities
- Provision of water purifier facilities
- Audio-visual and recreation materials
- Vocational skill development facilities and equipment
- Computer, printer and scanner for official use
- Regular education in Punitha Valanar Primary and Higher Secondary School

5. Targeted Children

It is proposed that the children hostel would accommodate about 100 children approximately 50 boys and 50 girls from 6 years to 18 years. In other words children undergoing formal school education.

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| Primary school | 20 |
| Middle school | 50 |
| High and Higher Secondary school | 30 |

Preference will be given to children who fall within the following eligibility criteria for admission:

- ❖ Orphans / Semi-orphans
- ❖ Differently abled children
- ❖ Children from migrant families
- ❖ Children from broken or disturbed families
- ❖ Neglected children
- ❖ School drop outs
- ❖ Children of alcoholic parents or chronically ill parents
- ❖ Children from rural and remote areas lacking basic facilities

6. Organisation of the Hostel

The existing building will be partitioned into two divisions. One for boys and one for girls with separate facilities for staying, dining, food, recreation, bathing and toilets.

Both boys and girls will be further sub-divided into two groups each such a way about 25 children of four homogeneous groups exist.

Each group will be mentored by a residential warden, who is responsible for the integrated development of those 25 children under his / her care.

Individual attention will be paid for the growth and development of each child with an underlining plan for their future, once they leave the hostel.

The family or relatives will also be consulted and their long term plan will be worked out and preparatory work would begin as early as possible.

Out of the existing four halls in the second building, the project will effectively use one hall for the Life skill education and pre-vocational skill development.

Two sewing machines and two computers will be placed in the hall for the use of the students.

Music and folk arts will be taught in the hall.

7. Skill Development for Children

Skill development is viewed as an integral part of development and essential at every stage of life. Skill development embraces different avenues of life including personality, education, vocational and practical skills. Hence age appropriate skill development programmes will be designed and implemented from the beginning of their life in the hostel.

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| Primary School Children | Academic | Reading skills, Handwriting and drawing and painting |
| | Extra-curricular | Play and recreational activities including singing, dancing and talents shows |
| | Practical skills | Cycling, exposure to inland water bodies, seas and mountain |
| Middle School Children | Academic | Supplementary education particularly Maths and English, which rural students are generally weak. A major reason for drop out related to these subjects. |
| | Extra-curricular | Martial skills, Active sports and games both indoor and outdoor. Music and arts |
| | Practical skills | Swimming, basic wiring, plumbing, painting |
| High / Higher Secondary School Children | Academic | Career guidance training and exposure. Students completing 10 th standard will be prepared to choose subject of their interest and future relevance in the 11 th standard. Common Entrance Exams and Competitive Exams |
| | Extra-curricular | Tailoring, basic computer skills |
| | Practical skills | Regular Life Skill Education sessions will be conducted by specialists concentrating on adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They are basic psycho-social skills including: Self-awareness, Assertiveness, Decision making, Problem solving, Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationships, Empathy, Equanimity, Coping with stress, and Resilience. |

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| | In addition they will be counselled and guided to face adolescent issues related to health, personal hygiene, sex and sexuality. | |
| Pre-vocational skill development | When the children reach 9 th and 10 th standard, a five days intensive orientation training on Pre-vocational skills will be organised. It will consist of 2 days of theoretical inputs on different employment opportunities and the required knowledge and skills and another three days exposure visit to technical institutions such as: Industrial Training Institutes to understand catering technology, carpentry, welding, wiring, A/C mechanic, automobile etc., to Polytechnic colleges to understand Civil, mechanical, electric and electronic engineering works. By the end of the five days exposure training the children will be in a position to decide their future career and plan their education in 11 th standard, where they have to choose a particular stream of subjects. | |
| Vocational skill development | Once they decide their future career, the children completed 10 th and 11 th standard will be trained on at least two vocational skills in linkage with other resources | |
| | Gandhigarm University | Animal Husbandry, dairying, food processing |
| | Nehru Yuva Kendra | Agriculture, handloom, handicraft, sericulture, poultry and waste land management |
| | Dindigul Multi-purpose Development Social Service Society | Beautician course and Computer Science |
| | National Skill development Corporation and NABARD | Honey bee keeping and poultry |

Thus the management will ensure that a boy or girl leaving the hostel after his / her education would have:

- Decided higher education of their interest
- Exposed to various options and alternatives available for future career
- Developed at least two vocational skills, which will help them to get a job soon
- Gained behavioural and social skills to re-integrate in the society and lead a meaningful human life.

8. Management of the Hostel

The Bishop of Dindigul and primarily and ultimately responsible for effective implementation of the project. Nevertheless to ensure efficiency, the responsibilities are shared and delegated at different levels.

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| Management committee | <p>Headed by Most Rev. P. Thomas Paulsamy.D.D., Bishop of Dindigul. The other members are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fr. A. Melkie Lawrence, Procurator of the diocese• Fr. A. Samson Arockiadass, Director of the hostel• Sr. Arockia Selvi, Headmistress, Punitha Valanar Higher Secondary School, Dindigul.• Ms. S. Rosalin Joyce, Headmistress, St. Joseph Primary School, Dindigul. <p>Fr. Patrick Xavier will be the special advisor and will be invited for all the meetings.</p> <p>The committee will meet once in three months, evolve policies, and review the process and plan for the future.</p> <p>The committee is responsible for appointment of staff</p> <p>It will also plan for financial sustainability and allot or mobilise resources</p> |
| Director | <p>Fr. A. Samson Arockiadass, who is the Director cum Secretary of DMSSS.</p> <p>He is responsible for day today management, establishing linkages with other resource systems, depute children to different skill development trainings, follow up of children completed their studies</p> <p>He also responsible for documentation and reporting.</p> |
| Wardens – 4 | <p>Two males and two females.</p> <p>One each is responsible for each small group.</p> <p>Creating a homely atmosphere with concern, guide their education and support a healthy personality development.</p> <p>Emphasis is more functional grouping rather than structural partition.</p> |
| Senior cook – 1 and Assistant cooks – 2 | <p>Responsible to prepare and distribute healthy, hygienic, nutritious and delicious food to the children</p> |
| Sanitary worker - 1 | <p>Maintain the campus including bathing rooms and toilets neat and tidy</p> |

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| Watchman – 1 | Responsible for the safety and security of the inmates and infrastructure |
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9. Financial Sources

It is foreseen that implementation of the project over the three years would cost about Euros 87,550 (INR 61,28,500) as per the details given below:

| LINE ITEM | GRANT | CONTRIBUTION |
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| Building adoption | 17,568 | 1,500 |
| Interior decorating | 18,553 | 1,929 |
| Exploitation cost | 30,000 | 18,000 |
| TOTAL | 66,121 | 21,429 |

The grant money will be used only for establishing the facilities and direct expenditure to the children.

Whereas the salary of the workers will be met by the Diocese of Dindigul with the resources mobilised by them.

The initial expenses of Euro 3,429 will be met by the Diocese of Dindigul in cash and kind towards establishing the facilities.

Each year Euros 6,000 approximately INR 4, 20,000 is required from the side of the Diocese, which will be mobilised as per the following plan.

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| Bishop's contribution from educational fund | 1,00,000 |
| From teachers' contribution for education of poor children | 1,20,000 |
| From philanthropists – both in cash and kind | 1,00,000 to 2,00,000 |
| Parent contribution INR 100 per child per month for 10 months per year. 100 x 100 x 10 | 1,00,000 |

Thus a minimum of INR 4, 20,000 per year is ensured, which is sufficient to manage the project. However, even at this stage, we plan to mobilise at least another 1, 00,000 per year, which will be kept aside as reserve fund and will be used even beyond the support of the donors after three years.

10. Conclusion

Under the guidance of the Bishop of Dindigul, there were several rounds of discussions at different levels and this policy paper is developed and approved by the Bishop and we assure to the donors that we will ensure not only effective implementation during the project phase, but also sustain it beyond the project phase as to continue supporting the development of marginalised and disadvantaged children from rural and remote areas of Dindigul diocese.