

# GRAM CHETNA KENDRA KHEDI MILAK

## FAMILY HELPER PROJECT

### NEWS LETTER

Dear Friend,

#### ***Greetings from the Gram Chetna Kendra!***

Although we are exceptionally dedicated to our cause, the success of these programs does not belong solely to us. We are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors for assisting us in providing these children with all the materials needed to grow and develop appropriately. We truly appreciate your assistance and would like to ensure you that your continued support and contributions will allow us to help these children and accomplish the change that we so desperately need.

#### **COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATION'S DESCRIPTION**

Gram Chetna Kendra's intent is to initiate a people based development intervention to ensure just and equal opportunities, minimum basic essentials and a dignified quality of life for the rural masses. The initial developmental welfare work of the organization was gradually converted into strengthening the capacity building of the people. Currently the organization is functioning as a Service and Awareness Center. Training, advocacy and research are being developed as tools for gathering and disseminating information, services and awareness. GCK's work spans numerous poverty perpetuating issues, such as poor health, segregated communities, low income, women's suppression and minimal education.

Our **Family Helper Project** is the result of a close partnership established in 1995 with the ChildFund India. The number of children enrolled in this Sponsorship Program through the years is a great reflection of the strength and dimension of the project. At present 944 are enrolled out of which 870 children are sponsored, which means that these children are receiving the adequate support in education and health. In addition, their families are also benefiting from this help through improvements in their living conditions and fulfillment of their nutritional needs. Apart from the above mentioned children there 5000 other children which are ensuring program participation through various program activities of the CPO's such as health, Education, livelihood etc.



#### **CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

##### **A. HEALTH:**

Counseling for pregnant women and their families, regular home visits, medical support through regular health check-ups, health camps, and trainings are important components of our strategy to provide preventive and curative health activities to the under privileged section of the society. As a result, we have assisted in achieving a 90.56% increase in institution delivery and we have reached 83.19% of complete child immunization. Since malnutrition severely compromises children's development, we have been promoting age appropriate feeding practices and thereby reducing the current malnutrition rate and the prevalence of micronutrient deficiency diseases. As a result, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree malnutrition decreased from 51% to 11.11%. Furthermore, due to the problem of high fluoride content in the community's water, inadequate sanitation and hygiene practices, the contamination of the drinking water and water borne and infectious diseases are extremely prevalent. In order to provide the beneficiaries access to potable water and ensure sanitation it is necessary that we continue promoting healthy hygiene behavior. This year Ten new families were supported in the construction of toilets and five new families were supported in the construction of roof water harvesting structures.



## **B. EDUCATION**

GCK has implemented several programs to improve the educational status of the project area. The organization aims to guarantee that children receive quality education through providing improvement plans, supplying education materials, running co-curricular activities to enrich students' social values, providing provisions for PARA-teachers, RIP teachers and SQIP teachers, sensitizing the community and networking with education partners. Currently GCK runs twelve Balwari Centers already raised by the project and provides educational and physical resources to fifteen schools. Of these fifteen, two schools are being developed through the "School Quality Improvement Program" (SQIP). As a result, we have increased access to quality education by 95% and the rate of dropout has decreased from 3.22% to 0.48% in the 5-15 age groups.

## **C. LIVELIHOOD & MICROFINANCE**

GCK's key strategy for securing the livelihood for the affected people is to provide economic support for the rural poor and provide rural women with an opportunity for social integration. This is accomplished through: the provision of loans and capacity building inputs, the provision of technical services like marketing and production support and the operational training and capacity building for the establishment of micro-finance organizations. Within micro-finance organizations, dairy is the most common means of income-generation within this area and in order to maintain its effectiveness GCK conducts regular workshops regarding animal care and dairy marketing. In addition, Self Help Groups are working to give women a degree of economic independence through providing cheap and timely credit and by empowering them to address personal and community related issues and partake in joint decisions. At present, 69 SHGs throughout 10 villages have been set up, 40 SHGs have their accounts in banks and 68 SHGs have started the internal loaning process within the groups.

## **D. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

By organizing Village Development Committees, Self Help Groups and Mahila Mandals (Women's Forums) in the villages, GCK hopes to promote women's awareness and community organization. The members have been trained regarding community organization, leadership skills, and income generating activities, financial responsibility and rights protection. In addition, Balwari Management Committees (BMC) and Child Well Being Committees (CWBC) have been established and their members are active in motivating parents to send their children regularly to Balwari Centers. They have also been proactive about increasing birth registration, immunizations and growth-monitoring



## **ACHIEVEMENTS & DEVELOPMENT**

By looking through another year's activities, we are able to find new opportunities to understand the impact of our work. We recognize the difficulties we experience but face them as a challenge and a chance to adapt and improve. And when all is said and done, the improvements we see in the lives of our people allow us to appreciate the importance of our work. Through our hardship efforts, we have increased awareness of health, nutrition, hygiene, women's rights, children's rights and education. We have encouraged women's and children's participation in the decision making process and we have helped to deconstruct misconceptions that previously inhibited the potential of the villagers. In addition, we've worked to give these families the ability to improve their incomes through self sufficient means. Due to the inefficient government system, the villagers have relied on us to provide them with these services. Through establishing a base of trust with the villagers, they have become our strongest allies in the fight against poverty.

## **FESTIVAL / CUSTOMS/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Religion and tradition tend to play a large role in the lives of these rural people. The majority of people worships at home or in Temple regularly and holds tightly to old traditions and beliefs. The participation in fairs and celebration of festivals such as Holi (The Festival of Colors), Deepawali festival (The Festival of Lights), Raksha Bandhan and Dusherra are additional sources of expression and entertainment for the villagers. Due to our proximity to the villagers, GCK keeps an active presence in all events. Furthermore, we have created social events with the purpose of spreading awareness. The Kala Jatha Team was our partner on the Cultural Programme. GCK used other activities such as the Breastfeeding Week Celebration, the Child Rights Week, and the Global Action Week to further spread awareness in the communities. It is GCK's goal to give the children of these communities entertainment that will further improve their development. We encourage community participation and personally participate in fairs and festivals in order to provide children with a healthy, affectionate social environment. It is due to your generosity and the unwavering efforts of CF that we are able to successfully improve these children's lives.