

Sarva Seva Sangh (SSS) - Annual Report 2022-23

Building Resilience and Rights for Vulnerable Communities in Pune

1. Introduction

The year 2022-23 marked a period of significant recovery and renewed effort for Sarva Seva Sangh (SSS). As Pune emerged from the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed both the return of normalcy and the deepening of pre-existing vulnerabilities. This report highlights our comprehensive work across two core projects, demonstrating our commitment to protecting children, empowering youth, and strengthening families in the face of evolving challenges.

Our Projects:

1. Empowering Children in Street Situations: Focused on protection, education, and preventing child labor and begging.
2. Supporting HIV-Affected Children and Families: Focused on education, healthcare, livelihood, and advocacy to reduce stigma.

2. Project 1: Empowering Children in Street Situations

This project works with highly vulnerable children living on streets, at traffic signals, and in informal settlements across Pune.

2.1 The Challenge & Our Response

The post-pandemic period saw families constantly on the move, searching for livelihood opportunities. This transient nature made consistent intervention difficult. Children were often out of school, exposed to risks like substance abuse, trafficking, and exploitation through begging and labor.

Despite these hurdles, our team persisted, building trust and adapting our strategies to provide stability and support.

2.2 Key Achievements & Impact (2022-23)

A. Ensuring Safety and Protection

- **Counseling & Awareness:** Conducted child protection counseling for 273 children and 152 parents. Held 27 awareness sessions on rights and safety, benefiting 319 children.
- **Breaking Addictions:** Provided de-addiction counseling for 92 parents and 121 children. 29 parents and 79 children underwent therapy, with 12 children and 4 parents significantly recovering.
- **Community Mobilization:** Children from two communities performed 18 street plays during festivals to sensitize the public on child protection, reaching thousands.
- **Training Duty Bearers:** Built the capacity of 117 teachers, 35 police personnel, and 37 municipal workers on child protection laws and procedures.

B. Preventing Child Labor & Begging

- **Direct Intervention:** Counseled 263 children engaged in begging/selling and their parents. 25 children stopped these activities after counseling.
- **Public Sensitization:** Sensitized over 5,130 students in 12 schools to not give money to child beggars. Organized a 5.2 km awareness marathon attended by 500+ citizens.
- **Advocacy:** Conducted surveys on child beggary and submitted findings to government authorities, pushing the issue onto the civic agenda.

C. Enabling Education and Holistic Development

- **Formal Schooling:** Enrolled 56 children in formal schools, with 29 continuing their education.
- **Mobile School:** Ran a mobile school that served 263 children, with 116 attending regularly. 12 children were motivated to enroll in formal school.
- **Safe Hostels:** Provided safe hostel facilities for 14 girls and 8 boys, enabling them to study. Five of these children completed their 10th-grade exams.
- **After-School Support:** Ran additional tuition classes at 4 centers for 97 children, resulting in marked academic improvement.
- **Life Skills:** Conducted life skill education sessions for 259 children and camps for 30 children, fostering confidence, discipline, and leadership.

D. Special COVID-19 Recovery Project (Learning Hubs & Labs)

- To address pandemic-induced learning loss, we operated:
- Learning Hubs in street communities, supporting 259 children.
- Learning Labs in backward slums, supporting 311 children.
- These centers provided educational support, nutrition, and counseling, helping children reintegrate into formal schooling and recover lost ground.

3. Project 2: Supporting HIV-Affected Children and Families

This project provides holistic support to children, adolescents, and families affected by HIV/AIDS, ensuring their health, education, and dignity.

3.1 Key Achievements & Impact (2022-23)

A. Outreach & Demographics

- Reached 197 Families, including 182 Children and 100 Adolescents/Youth.
- Supported 21 Orphans and 135 Semi-orphans.

B. Empowerment Through Education & Life Skills

- Provided educational support and materials to 83 children.
- Conducted 2 residential life skill camps for 94 children on leadership, critical thinking, and stress management.
- Established 5 Children's Parliaments (Balsansad), empowering 64 children to advocate for their communities on issues like water and sanitation.

C. Building Futures for Youth

- Formed 4 youth groups (106 members). 68 youth received skill training, leading to placements at companies like Tech Mahindra, Lighthouse, and in the banking and nursing sectors.
- Youth successfully advocated with transport authorities for free bus passes for PLHIV in PMC area.
- A Youth Federation was formed, organized events like Youth Jallos, and managed volunteer activities, building strong leadership.

D. Economic Empowerment of Families

- Transformed parent groups into 13 formal Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with 171 women.
- SHGs were trained, bank-linked, and are now accessing government schemes (widow pension, health cards) and providing internal loans to members.

E. Health & Stigma Reduction

- Conducted dedicated counseling for Children Living with HIV (CLHIV), improving their understanding and adherence to treatment.
- Successfully observed World AIDS Day 2023 with a powerful rally and role-play, advocating for the rights of PLHIV with the District Collector.
- Provided nutritional support to 182 children and 48 adolescents to bolster their health.

4. Cross-Cutting Themes: Our Approach

- **Child Participation:** Children are not beneficiaries but agents of change. Through Bal Sansads and youth groups, they plan activities, advocate for their rights, and monitor projects.
- **Sustainability:** We focus on capacity building and creating self-reliant community structures (SHGs, youth federations) that continue to thrive.
- **Collaboration & Advocacy:** We actively network with government departments, police, other NGOs, and city-level forums to advocate for systemic change and better policies for vulnerable children.

5. Conclusion

The year 2022-23 was a testament to the resilience of the communities we serve and the dedication of our team. Despite the complexities of a post-pandemic world and the deep-rooted challenges of poverty and stigma, significant progress was made.

Children are safer, back in school, and dreaming of a better future. Youth are becoming employed leaders. Families are more stable and economically empowered. While the path ahead remains long, the foundations built this year are strong.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, partners, the KNH teams in Germany and India, and our incredibly dedicated staff for making this transformation possible.