

Together Foundation

Annual Report 2020-2021



Our effort to keep people smiling!

The highlight of this year has been **Gift a Smile!** -a project that we took up during the lockdown period. People were requested to gift a smile which could help everyone to retain a happy frame of mind in the face of the global challenge that had descended on us. The result was amazing! Happy pictures of people in all age groups started pouring in from friends, well wishers and even strangers. Organisations too came forward: many of whom represent special needs, animal rescue, senior citizens, plant lovers, mothers and babies and corporates.

Refer to www.togetherfoundationtrust.org for a full video on this.

Together Foundation thanks Kiran Khalap, brand consultant and founder, chlorophyll brand & communications consultancy private limited, for his involvement with the work we do.

Team Together began online training in lockdown.

May 2020 onward.

Suddenly deprived of our work environment, Together Foundation began work on an online training programme that would be meaningful, interactive and engaging for our adults. This was fully supported by parents who sat by their adults and helped them become comfortable with online training. Events to felicitate our adults for both online training as well as vocational work were held. We are immensely grateful to our donors: H T Parekh Foundation and TATA Investment Corporation Limited for gracing the events and presenting certificates of competence to all the adults for the year 2020-2021.

Level 1: Building Rapport:

Teachers began with video calls to our adults and went on to conduct online classes. Language and communication being an integral part of training in all areas, teachers and students began 'Talktime': discussions about relevant topics like their families, festivals, seasons and birthdays. Such experience based programs ensured that our students were not deprived of the joy of celebrating festivals.

Level 2: Art & Craft:

Introduction of learning art online through enjoyable activities: greeting cards, finger painting, earbud painting and making things out of paper – bags, envelopes, collages.

Level 3: Online Celebrations:

Celebration of Independence Day online for which guests were invited and practice went on for an entire month.

Level 4: Drawing Classes:

Drawing classes with a specially designed curriculum followed by creative skill classes with the material used during drawing classes were begun. Students thoroughly enjoyed making bookmarks, torans and chandeliers, paper flowers and fabric painting on napkins and handkerchiefs.

Level 5: Cooking Online:

This mainly involved simple snack preparation and baking. Some of the items students learnt to prepare were plain cakes, sandwiches, sweets and milk shakes.

Level 6: Vocational Work:

We reintroduced vocational work by delivering and picking up job work and raw material for paper bags, to and from the homes of our adults. Online computer classes were begun to help them stay in touch with data entry.

Level 7: Fun and Games:

The boredom caused by lockdown and lack of variety in life was reduced to some extent by innovative games and contests which were not just fun filled but very interactive too. It kept their motor and communication skills as well as their attention span in shape.



Back to the Centre!

With a diligent hygiene and safety protocol in place, the centre started functioning fully from December 2020 onward. Online training continues for those students who are not able to rejoin due to various reasons. Students are taken in smaller groups at a time at the centre, in order to make social distancing possible. Together Foundation received immense support from Perowshaw Dhunjishaw Bolton Charities and Rajni and Ramesh Tendulkar Charitable Trust in rebuilding work at the centre.

Training in the following vocational areas have been restarted:

1. Baking:

Our FSSAI certified bakery continues to be the focal point of the vision with which Together Foundation was born. The bakery team is working on a new healthy menu, suitable for all age groups and tastes.

2. Packing:

Packing of bakery products is an art, especially when it is done for gifting and celebrations. Many of our students are being trained for this work at different levels.

3. Embroidery:

The traditional art of embroidery can still be used in a variety of ways, both, as a means of vocation as well as for personal purposes. We have started with simple stitches which could be used on house hold items like pillow covers, napkins and table-tops.

4. Paper bag making:

Learning to make different kinds of paper bags continues. Since use of plastic bags is being discouraged, there is a good market for all types of paper bags and this skill can be developed later into a vocation.

5. Data entry:

Picking up where we had left before the closure of centre due to the pandemic: we started training in data entry with new zeal. Eight youngsters are currently being trained in two batches to take up data entry work for HDFC Bank.

6. Shop Management :

Getting trained to run a shop or assist in the shop owned by a family member/someone else can lead to good vocational opportunities. With this assumption, a small shop which was opened at the centre a couple of years back has reopened now. Apart from the items made at the centre, it also sells snacks and juices freshly made by the students. The older students are learning to organise the shop, interact with the customers in a civil manner, take the order, serve them whatever is asked for and basic money management (those who can)



A new beginning!

New Website

- Together Foundation launched a new website that gives free access to all our teaching programmes.

• Access Teaching Programme at – www.togetherfoundationtrust.org	
Guidelines, Visual Schedules, Demo Videos for:	
Online Teaching	Drawing, Paper craft, Games
Language and Communication	AAC, Talktime, Phone
Personal Hygiene	My Body, Washroom, Periods, Help
Vocational Training	Bakery, Paper plate, Paper bags, Shop, Job work

- **Summer Bakery Workshops:** have been started - 9 sessions per workshop at both basic and advanced level for youngsters with autism and other intellectual disabilities.
- **Sharing our learnings:** Our Founder Trustee, Sangeetha Chakrapani conducted webinars about our vision and work for: S.N.D.T University, Forum for Autism, Parents' Association at Muscat, Avapanam Forum for Inclusive Social Development etc. being some of them.

Our people

- **Board of Trustees:** Prof. Emeritus Dr. Y.K. Amdekar, Dr. Anjali Tendulkar, Ms. Sheela Sinha, Sangeetha Chakrapani
- **Staff:** Coordinator - 1, Special Educators - 3, Consultant Chef, Assistant Teachers - 2, Bakery Operations Assistant - 1, Support Staff - 1
- **Team Members:** 23 (Students at centre – 12, Students Online – 6, Students Home Programme – 5)
- **Our Parents:** Parents have always been a part of our team. It was with their active participation that we could continue providing our services through this difficult year. We had virtual staff- parents' meetings periodically during lockdown too and we are thankful for their participation and suggestions.

Our donors

We owe so much to them and it is with their support that we have reached where we are today.

- **Corporates:** Rajni and Ramesh Tendulkar Charitable Trust, Perowshaw Dhunjishaw Bolton Charities, Estate of Indu Chandrakant Parekh, H T Parekh Foundation, TATA Investment Corporation Limited, Mergermarket (India) Private Limited
- **Individuals:** Mr. Suresh Sadagopan, Mr. P.R. Shankar, Ms. Chaitra Rane, Dr. Mukundraj Keny, Ms. Mona Thakkar, Mr. Rajagopalan Ranganathan, Mr. S. Lakshminarayanan, Mr. Sanjay Vishwambhar Lal Seksaria, Ms. Prema Ravi, Mr. Anantha Krishnan, Mr. Baskaran Chandramouli, Mr. Rajan Ananthanarayan, Ms. Mythili Kannan

NOTE: We are happy to announce that in spite of financial challenges faced by the organisation during 2020, all the staff members' received their full salary during the entire period. Thanks again to our well wishers and friends whose moral support and good wishes strengthened our hands during this difficult period.

