



# Niramaya

Newsletter



Niramaya Health Foundation, Mumbai - 400 014.

Issue 5 – Oct - Dec 2007

## OATH PROGRAM



Dr. Vinayak Sonawane

**O- outreach**  
**A- action**  
**T- towards**  
**H- healthcare**

### Child Abuse - According to WHO

“Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and / or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent

treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

**A Study on Child Abuse (2007)** by Min. of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India shows that:

- Two out of every three children were physically abused in India;
- Over 50% were boys.
- Of the ‘physically abused children in family’ situations’, about 90% were abused by parents
- Two out of three school going children reported facing corporal punishment. 62% were in government and municipal schools.
- Most children did not report the matter to anyone.
- 50.% children worked seven days a week as child laborers.
- 53% children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse.
- 2. 22% respondents reported facing severe forms of sexual abuse
- Children on street, children at work and children in institutional care reported the highest incidence of sexual abuse.

### Editorial

In the last quarter of year 2007, Niramaya celebrated two major ‘marker’ days. For the World HIV/AIDS Day, several events were held in different areas in Mumbai over a week. A street play on the theme of prevention of HIV/AIDS was held in Baiganwadi which attracted large crowds. Another event was the Children's Day on 14<sup>th</sup> November. Sports activities and small parties were held for balwadi children at different locations.

Poster, essay writing and sports competitions were organized in several schools and prizes given to winners. Several other community-based activities for rapport building were carried out during Diwali, Eid and Christmas festivals in our operational areas.

The year ended with exploratory visits to Peth taluka in Nasik where Niramaya with support from GSK intends to start health services center for tribal communities. More on this in our new year issue!

Wishing all our readers a happy and prosperous 2008!

*Dr. Janaki Desai...*  
Hon. Medical Director

- 50% abusers are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility.
- Most children did not report the matter to anyone.

### **NIRAMAYA’S Approach:**

There are several NGOs working for street children, offering education, shelter, food and healthcare. It is observed that the healthcare provided in the shelters is through health check up camps with limited follow ups and almost negligible health education being given. Keeping this in mind, Niramaya’s **OATH** program is designed to supplement health check ups with specific focus on follow-ups and education awareness for street and shelter home children. Given the prevalence of large-scale physical/sexual abuse, special emphasis is placed on physical/sexual abuse and how to deal with the resultant stress.

### **About OATH:**

Niramaya started OATH program in June’ 2006, and till date has managed to reach over 400 children of thirteen shelters and sub centers.

### **Objectives :**

1. To provide primary healthcare to the street children and children in shelter homes.
2. To provide Health Education on personal hygiene, de-addiction and Adolescent sexuality education, including abuse.
3. To provide counseling services on need basis

### **Strategy :**

- Monthly Health check-up camp at every shelter and for street children
- Monthly Health Education and Awareness Sessions for each group
- Focus on de-addiction and sexual abuse
- Eye check-up in collaboration with “Bombay city eye hospital”, for every shelter once in year.
- Dental check-up in every shelter once in year and follow up as required
- Referrals for tertiary care centers
- Counseling on need basis

### **During the last three months,**

We conducted 22 health check up camps and examined and treated 760 children. Our findings show that nearly 66% suffered from Respiratory tract infections, & 26%

suffered from some form of skin infections like scabies, fungus. Three cases were referred to tertiary hospitals for malaria, fracture of right hand, and subconjunctival hemorrhage.

Eleven Educational sessions on Addiction, and Nutrition were conducted in shelters with Posters and IEC materials. An awareness program on Tuberculosis was also conducted in most shelters.

### **Freedom from addiction....**

*We are proud that three children from Aasara shelter – Vikram, Makdum, and Ankush and one -Ajay from Don Bosco shelter, have quit tobacco and glue sniffing. These children are regularly followed up and counseled to help them remain addiction-free.*

### **Abandoned finds Home...**

*Shehenshah, a 17 yr old male was found at Kurla Station in a poor state. He was rescued and sent to the Don Bosco shelter. After a two month stay in the shelter, he was sent back to his family in his village. Mukaddar Ali Musalman, 14 yrs, and Rajesh Mahadeo Kol 12 yrs, and Parvej Ali Musalman, 13 yrs, hailing from Uttar Pradesh were brought to Mumbai by their relatives to work as laborers. They were rescued from Dadar station by our health worker and sent to Pratham Panvel shelter. Ten days later, they were sent back to their native place and reunited with their families.*

### **Future Plans:**

OATH will continue to expand/diversify in following activities:

- Reach out to over 700 children in collaboration with shelter homes/other NGO’s
- Health Education sessions
- Adolescent sexuality Education to deal with sexual abuse, addiction & high risk behavior
- Services of Eye & Dental Checkup for every shelter
- Tetanus Toxioid immunization program
- Need-based counseling services
- Recreational activities, Sports and Drawing
- Sensitization Trainings for Teachers

Children are the future of a nation. As the former Secretary General of the United Nations- Kofi Annan, observed:

**“Only as we move closer to realizing the rights of all children will countries move closer to their goals of development and peace.”**



## DOCTORS COLUMN

During one of his visits to a sweatshop, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2005, Mr Manohar Phansekar our health worker came across a 15-year-old boy named Abdul Salam who was a migrant zari worker. He was suffering from a skin infection for a long time. The very next day the boy was brought to the Niramaya clinic at Bainganwadi, where the doctor on duty examined him and prescribed some medicines. We lost track of the boy until when he appeared after six months with the same complaints.

He was again examined in detail at the clinic and was suspected to be suffering from Skin Tuberculosis. Abdul was then referred to Bainganwadi Govt. Health post for investigation and treatment. He was treated for over 4 months with no improvement and was thus refer to Tertiary hospital.

A skin biopsy showed that he was suffering from skin TB and was advised anti- TB treatment including the duration

& cost of treatment. The patient came from a very poor economic background and lacked the necessary funds for treatment. After repeated efforts of Niramaya staff, donations for the medications were arranged through charitable institutions like Muslim League Hospital, Lok Sewa Sangam- an NGO working on TB and Leprosy, and a private Philanthropic doctor. The patient was severely malnourished and necessary Supplementation of food and nutrition was arranged by Niramaya.

Abdul is a now a frequent visitor to our clinic now. He takes his medicines regularly under the supervision of Niramaya. His health is improving, his appetite and nutrition is better and he enjoys the friendly atmosphere at the clinic. Abandoned by his own relatives, and having lived a life of pain and suffering, today Abdul can only remember the doctors and health workers of Niramaya as his near and dear ones.



Before Treatment



After Treatment

### *Sports Day Fest...*

What is freedom? Liberty, free will, independence, and lack of restrictions - you may find many synonyms in the dictionary. The real meaning of freedom was on the faces of hundreds of children who gathered at Matunga Gymkhana grounds on November 28, 2007. Niramaya Health Foundation, an organization working for the health of homeless and destitute children, organized a Sports Day for children residing in shelters in and around Mumbai.

One could see the joy on the children's faces when they took the buses from the shelters to the ground. They were sure that the day ahead would be full of fun, games and more fun. And why not? They were the special guests of one of Mumbai's leading gymkhanas and nobody would shoo them away, like in the past.

Niramaya arranged a variety of activities for over 300 children aged 4 to 18. Children from shelters - Pratham, Aasara, Don Bosco, Sparc and Vivekanand Youth Forum participated in the Sports Day.

As the king of games, cricket was first on the agenda. The older boys were very excited and one of the Niramaya staff did an excellent commentary of the match. Also to ensure that everybody could participate and be entertained, various sports events like running, skipping, potato race, spoon and marble, and sack race were conducted for the smaller children. The toddlers were kept busy with group games like kho-kho, dog and the bone and folk songs. A football match was organized so children could practice games other than cricket, which they enjoyed to the fullest. A German volunteer who had been training some of them for this game refereed the match. Shayari at the end of the games gave a glimpse of children's love not only for sports but also performing arts.

Former Indian cricket test player and Mumbai Ranji Team coach Mr. Praveen Amre graced the event with his presence. To the delight of the children, he gave tips and encouragement on how to play good cricket. Mr. Amre made some technical suggestions, like the correct use of wrists for the best outcome, and gave useful coaching to the interested teams. Mr. Bal Karmarkar, a former sports journalist, also spoke to the children and wished them good luck for their future.

Trophies and prizes were given to the winning teams and to individuals in various sports events. All the children were given certificates of participation.

On this day of unleashed freedom, children were treated like **Children**. At the end of the day, with chocolate bars and ice cream cups in their hands, their faces glowing with happiness and fulfillment, the children went back to their shelters. We wanted to do something for children on "Children's Day" but having said that, in reality, they gave us inexpressible joy!

We thank all the people who have helped make this event a huge success.

# EVENTS...



Happy and inquisitive kids alighting from the bus for a funfilled day

Our volunteer teaching the children the basics of football



Our staff playing with the toddlers

A shelter kid receiving a Trophy for his win



## WORLD AIDS DAY



World AIDS Day, observed on December 1 each year is dedicated to raising awareness of the **AIDS pandemic** caused by the spread of HIV infection. The 2007 theme, “*Stop AIDS-keep the Promise*” highlights the need for innovation, vision and perseverance in the face of the AIDS challenge. As a part of community mobilization and participation for the drive against HIV / AIDS, Niramaya organized various events in its operational areas.

- HIV/AIDs team organized cricket match for the karkhana zariworkers on first December at Shivaji Nagar with the active participation of the peers. People from the karkanas and the surrounding community were present in huge numbers. An exhibition on HIV/AIDs was held on the grounds and health workers were at hand to disseminate information. A rapid fire question round was held to assess the knowledge of people; Correct answers were awarded prizes. To promote safe sex practices, condoms were also distributed by Niramaya.
- Similar match but on a larger scale was organized for the Karigars from zari Karkhanas at Govandi on December 5. Six teams from Dharavi, Shivaji Nagar and Bainganwadi participated in the match. Red ribbons were distributed to all the participants. A live commentary of the match was given by one of the Kaarigars. There was lot of excitement and cheering from the crowd. The winning team was awarded a trophy. Pamphlets on HIV/

AIDs were given to all the people at the grounds and condoms depot was at hand for people wanting condoms.

- A poster, slogan and essay competition was held at two schools by the Sparsh team of Niramaya on World AIDS Day. The theme for the day was “Preventive Measures to stop the spread of HIV / AIDS”. About 85- 100 boys and girls took part in the event, and 3 winners were announced in each category. The principals and teachers then discussed the various issues related to HIV / AIDS with the students.



A poster exhibition was held at Shastri Nagar community where men, women and adolescent boys and girls visited and interacted with the health workers of Niramaya. To promote safe sex practices and to avoid HIV / AIDS infection, a health talk on HIV/AIDs was given by a doctor and condoms distributed.



### FELICITATION OF PEERS

The Peers involved in the HIV / AIDS education and awareness project were felicitated during the monthly health workers meeting for their commitment, in helping their peers to dispel myths and misconception on AIDS and some working at condom depots. Mr. Ashfaq, the active member from the peer group livened the festive atmosphere with Shero - Shayaris (poetry reading) and also thanked Niramaya for their active involvement to help migrant workers.

Quoting few of the shayaris below:

- १) आग सुरज मे होती है, जलना जमी को पडता है।  
मोहोब्त निगाहे करती है, तडपना दिल को पडता है।
- २) मैं न होता तो ये गजल कौन कहता,  
इन नयनो को कमल कौन कहता,  
ये करिश्मा है मोहोब्त का वरना उन पत्थर के  
ढेरो को ताजमहल कौन कहता।
- ३) बेखुदी की जिंदगी हम जिया नही करते,  
जाम किसी का छिनकर पिया नही करते,  
तुम्हें मोहोब्त है हमसे तो आकर इजहार करो,  
ऐसे किसी का पिछा हम भी किया नही करते
- ४) याद तेरी आती है दिल को थाम लेता हूँ,  
आँखो से आसूँ बहते है जब नाम तेरा लेता हूँ



### CHRISTMAS DAY

As a part of the advocacy tool and community participation, Christmas celebrations were planned in the communities of Baiganwadi and Kolsabandar, Sewri.

At Baiganwadi clinic, about 60 rag picker children attended the function. There were lots of indoor games, dance, music and cutting of Christmas cake. And the biggest excitement was the arrival of Santa Claus with sweets and gifts for the children. It was a great to see the joy on the faces of the children!

A similar cultural program was arranged at Kolasa Bandar (Sewari). Children under 5 years and their mothers from the Balwadi participated. Various events like drawing, singing and dancing competition were organized. One of

the interesting events was children dressed as Iron and Deworming (Albendazole) tablets, who gave information about the medicines in the local language. It was a wonderful moment to observe even the small children knowing about the importance of iron supplementation and deworming. This was the best advocacy for Anemia prevention and control program of Niramaya of making India Anemia free. The event closed with awarding of prizes to the participants and a vote of thanks to the community for their active participation.



### ECCE TRAINING AT PUNE

Pratham Mumbai education initiative and ICICI bank Social Initiative group have established a National Resource Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Mumbai with branches in other states. The main objective being to organize, generate and disseminate knowledge about care and education of children in their early years among their mothers and balwadi teachers in the rural and urban community.

A curriculum on education has been developed by resource persons from Pratham while the curriculum on Health Education is developed by Niramaya called **Basics of Good Health**. The health curriculum covers topics on Hygiene (Personal and Environmental), Growth and Nutrition, Anemia, Immunization, Vaccine Preventable diseases and Common childhood illnesses.

As a part of training under ECCE, a Training of Trainers (TOT) was held for the trainers of balwadi teachers in four zonal areas —Pune, Pune-Pimpri, Kolhapur and Nasik. 20 participants were trained using interactive sessions and participatory learning techniques.



## VOLUNTEER'S COLUMN



**Mr. Santosh Baing**

There are certain moments in our life which cannot be forgotten even if you try to !

We meet various people in life – some we forget and others we remember lifetime. Anyway, today was the last day – when I had to leave the sea of Niramaya and land up in my life. My thoughts were rather confused and making me uncomfortable. My mind was deep in gloom. I did not know what to say & what to do next. We do get such moments in life- I wonder whether they should come our way or not!

Niramaya-not sick, very healthy, happy, brave and determined country! Without trouble without headache! such is the attraction of the word Niramaya.

I joined Niramaya for field work on an auspicious Shrawan, Monday! the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2007. On the very first day I was introduced to Dr. Shubulaxmi Iyer and Dr. Janaki Desai. The first meeting itself was smooth and friendly. The organization seemed to engulf people with great ease. Work progressed slowly but steadily. The eight doctors working in the institute could be considered jewels of the Niramaya.

Our rural area has been neglected by all, especially government. Girls are made to marry at an early age. Their knowledge therefore about contraception, HIV, AIDS, addiction etc. is inadequate. The school education should include all these and also about sexual habits, interaction, misunderstanding etc. –but it is not done. Niramaya has taken a very major step in correcting this educational lacuna.

They visit village and spread the knowledge about various health related issues by various ways e.g. street plays trainings and health camps etc. This has helped in creating awareness in the communities. I feel a great satisfaction in having got an opportunity to participate in these various activities.

The entire team helped me a lot in my work and considered me as a part and parcel of them and am greatly honored.

The point of great importance of this organization is the monthly general meeting. This meeting evaluates and appreciates the work done during the course of time. This particular endorsement helps to bring out the latest talents of people. To my mind this is an important and useful routine.

(As translated from Marathi)



### *Help us*

Your support by way of donations could greatly help us improve the services rendered. All donations made to Niramaya are entitled to 50% tax exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. Niramaya invites you to join hands with us by contributing in any of the following ways :

- » General monetary contributions - any amount is welcome.
- » Infrastructure - office space, vehicle, computers, printers, etc.
- » Medicines & medical instruments/supplies.

Cheques should be made out to "Niramaya Health Foundation" and mailed to our office.

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