

NIVARA HAKK WELFARE CENTRE

Chariperson
Shabana Azmi

President
Anna Kurian

Secretary
P.A. Sebastian

Executive Committee
Members:

Anand Patwardhan
Arvind Adarkar
Gurbir Singh
P.K. Das
Gurubai Koli
Dr.E.E. Daniel
Dr.Sanjay Nagral

'Nivara Hakk' – Background and current projects requiring funding

Short Background:

The Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti (NHSS) was set up more than two decades ago as an umbrella movement in 1981 to provide an alternative path of development for slums and footpath dwellers. By 1987, largely on account of the sustained advocacy and street protests, the Maharashtra government passed a protective legislation recognizing the rights of slum-dwellers till the cut off date of January 1, 1985.

Nivara Hakk thereafter emerged as a voice for the dispossessed and homeless. Advocating the right of the poor to a home in the city, more than 40 slum pockets were protected from arbitrary eviction and demolition. It all started with the rehabilitation of one large slum community of over 350 families – Sanjay Gandhi Nagar – who had been evicted from Mumbai's Manhattan – Cuffe Parade – in December 1985. The success story gave hope to both slum-dwellers in the city and government officials that another world was possible. Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, relocated at Dhindoshi, near Film City, is today an icon of regeneration of a slum community through self-help and innovation.

Currently, Nivara Hakk is coordinating the largest urban rehabilitation effort in Asia. The resettlement of over 12,000 hutment families living on the borders of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park is a win-win for everybody. The Sanjay Gandhi National Park, an environmental necessity for the city of Mumbai, is in the process of being restored. At the same time hundreds of slum families that lived in squalid conditions and faced the threat of panthers carrying away their children, are now in the process of being moved to a life of dignity at a huge 45-acre rehab township at Chandivili, Andheri (East).

Over two decades, Nivara has intervened not only on civic and housing rights, but to provide aid and succor at the time of disasters and social conflict. In days of communal strife in Mumbai in 1992, Nivara took a lead in rehabilitating thousands of uprooted slum families. Nivara was also at the helm to organize peace committees and reach timely relief and aid material.

Similarly, in 1993, a massive earthquake hit the districts of Latur and Osmanabad in Maharashtra, and Nivara teamed up with international bodies such as Medicines Sans Frontiers and Americares to reach over Rs 6 crore of medicines and relief material to the affected villages. Nivara Hakk was able to mobilize substantial resources to rebuild the village of Kathechincholi, in Osmanabad taluka as well as reach critical temporary shelter and material to around 20 villages in the taluka of Omerga.

The Latur experience stood Nivara Hakk in good stead. When an equally powerful earthquake hit the Kutch region in Gujarat 20 years later on January 26, 2002, the organization mobilized private aid to move reinforced, steel-ribbed transit shelters for nearly a 1,000 families to Rapar taluka in the Kutch area.

Current projects that require funding:

1. **Balwadis:** Nivara Hakk runs two balwadis (day centers for children) directly and aids around 6 balwadis. Each balwadi has two trained teachers and one helper. Apart from learning and playing aids, the children are also provided simple midday nourishment that includes a high protein snack and a glass of milk. Each balwadi caters to around 50 to a 100 pre-school kids. Besides, freeing the mothers for their household chores and domestic employment, the balwadi also creates the foundation for sending the kids to proper schools later. The cost of running a balwadi (excluding capital expenses) is around Rs 25,000 per month, and includes the salary of teachers and the midday meal. The midday meal is a big draw and crucial for a balwadi's success.
2. **Medical Center:** Nivara is running a primary health center at its Goregaon facility. The facilities offered to slum-dwellers are free check and medicines at a heavily subsidized rate of Rs 5 for the required course. A basic Pathology Laboratory helps the diagnostic process, The Goregaon Center has also partnered the Municipal Corporation's Pulse Polio drive wherein oral inoculations are administered once every 4-6 months from the center. At an average 250-300 children are inoculated in each round. Funding is basically required for the medicines that require to be subsidized to the tune of Rs 15,000 per month. Sponsoring organizations have, in the past, usually teamed up on this by providing funding on actuals of medicines purchased.
3. **Empowerment of the Girl Child:** Since over a year, Nivara has begun two courses for girls in the community. The vocational training aims at giving them the basic grounding for economic independence. The two courses include: A beautician's course and a tailoring course. Both the courses are of 4-month duration and are conducted by trained beauticians / tailors under the supervision of Sister Rose. These have attracted a huge response and each batch of the two courses enrolls around 50 to 60 girls. At the end of the course, if the basic parameters are achieved, the girl student is awarded a certificate of achievement. This works as an aid for gainful employment. The basic costs for running the courses includes the salaries of the beautician/tailor teachers and the overall supervisor. However, in this case the teaching aids are recurring and expensive and vary depending on the number of students. Broadly, the training cost per student for a beautician's course of 4-month duration is around Rs 2,500 per student and for the tailoring course around Rs 2,000 a student. This is partly defrayed by a small, subsidized fee the students pay.

4. **Computer Course:** There is a big demand for providing basic computer education for slum kids, and initial surveys showed that Nivara would be able to take in 300 students per batch provided there were enough workstations and trained staff to provide the education. Infosys has offered computer hardware and programmes for the training courses, and we are in the process of working out the details.

ends