

CanAssist
society



NEWSLETTER

New year, new goals

The CanAssist Society has been raising funds to promote the self-sufficiency of women and children for over thirty years now. We're launching this newsletter to keep you informed of what's affecting the communities we support and to ensure that you know that in whichever way you get involved with us, whether it's by attending our main fundraising event, sponsoring it, or donating; you make a real difference in a lot of people's lives.

To further help us grow and to know when our next events will be, please do follow us on Instagram (@CanAssistSociety) and Facebook (CanAssist Society (New Delhi))

We started a new year in April with a new board and are really excited about this year's team. We decided to set our ambitions high and aim to raise more funds than ever to donate to the charities we support. The needs are ever-present and we are determined to come together to see how CanAssist can best support vulnerable women and children. This quarter, we talk about the devastating effects that the floods in Delhi had on slum communities supported by Asha and we tell you about how Health Inc. in Ladakh has been using the funds we raised for them.

If you're interested in getting involved with us, write to us at canassist.society@gmail.com



AUGUST 2023

ASHA PROVIDES ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR FLOODED RIVERBED COMMUNITY

The announcement that all residents must immediately evacuate came at night. Families — with no time to spare as the Yamuna River surged to dangerous levels — had no choice but to leave all their belongings behind. Now, 320 shanties washed away by the flood, the rebuilding process has begun, with charities like Asha providing a lifeline for many with home-cooked meals, medical clinics, clothing and materials like bamboo and tarps to construct their new homes.

Every year, the riverbed community — located on the embankment of the Yamuna — experiences flooding, but this year hit the residents particularly hard. Still recovering from the tragedy of having their shanties torn down by the government in preparation for the G20, residents had just started rebuilding their homes when the water started rising.

Riverbed resident Araika said no notice was given of the demolition; bulldozers suddenly arrived one day and began tearing down their homes. When the flood happened, a sense of panic and devastation took over, she explained, with another resident adding that the water rose higher than they imagined.

Their homes, along with their clothes, cooking utensils, blankets, and bed sheets, were all rapidly devoured by the river.

Skin diseases and eye infections from the unhygienic conditions now plague the community, as does anemia and nutritional deficiencies, explains the Senior Nurse Practitioner working on-site for Asha. A high risk of waterborne diseases like Malaria, Typhoid, Cholera, Dengue, and Chikungunya, is present, especially with a lack of safe drinking water available.

"A home gives you an identity; when you lose your home, you've lost everything," Asha employee Smriti said. "But despite losing everything, they still have hope and have the future in their eyes."



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Madhu, a young woman who lives with her parents in the community, was the first female resident to attend university. She studied liberal arts and graduated in 2020. Sitting under the yellow tarp of their newly erected home sits Madhu's parents; the three of them smile for a photo, Madhu's vibrant yellow sari and head scarf the same shade as their roof.



The colourful clothes and kind smiles are a stark contrast to the muddy, beige environment. Flood debris and garbage are everywhere, especially near the river, where the water rose to the top of the pillars supporting the bridge. Three little girls joyfully splash each other in the Yamuna River; they're as happy as if swimming in the clear, blue ocean of the Caribbean. The community's resilience is tangible, but help is still needed.

"Despite losing everything, they still have hope and have the future in their eyes."



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WOMEN'S WELLNESS PROJECT IN LADAKH

With the help of CanAssist, Health Inc., an NGO in Ladakh, is currently working on its Women's Wellness Project. Since April, the NGO has accomplished several goals, including the following:

- Conducted research in three remote areas and two sites in the Leh-urban area to understand what people know about adolescent sexual and mental health and learn what sources they receive information from and how accurate it is.
- Conducted awareness campaigns at three remote sites in Nubra and three remote sites in Nyoma Blocks as well as two sites in the Leh-Urban area.
- Distributed 80 menstrual cups and hundreds of washable menstrual pads to the above camps.
- At the camps, tested some educational materials HEALTH Inc is developing in partnership with Amaze (Advocates for Youth) on mental and adolescent health.
- Produced 12 short videos on a variety of topics in Ladakhi – and plan to produce another 14.
- Recruited a Watson Fellowship Volunteer to return to three of the test sites in October to set up the Peer Education Girls Group as a part of the Health Ministry's Peer Adolescent Education / National Health Mission.