

## Impact stories for 'HOPE foundation'

*Documentation (field visits & interviews)*

*Writing & concept for different platforms/products*

*Photography ('Little Girl Blue' & 'A Life Changed, in Years')*

'HOPE foundation' is a not-for-profit organisation working across India in education, health, care and livelihood, to improve the lives of under-privileged communities.

These stories not only informed donors of how their support was making a difference, but also helped raise more funds through a variety of communication platforms such as annual reports, brochures, the website and newsletters and on social media.

The opening story is that of nine-year-old Angel who lives at HOPE's home for children and women affected by HIV/AIDS. I spent a whole day playing with her, talking and listening to her. Since her real identity or her photograph could not be revealed, I decided to weave Angel's story around her favourite colour – blue. From the dress she wore to the chair she sat on, Angel liked all things blue. When I asked her why, she replied: "It makes me happy!"

'Little Girl Blue', went on to become one of the most widely shared and liked on HOPE's social media page and featured prominently in their donor communication.

## Little girl blue



"Blue's my favorite color – it makes me happy!"

She wears at least one item of blue every day – a dress, shoes, earrings, a hair barrette or bangles. When this picture was taken, she even chose a *blue* chair to sit on!

Meet nine-year-old Angel (name changed) who lives at the Arias Home of HOPE in Acharapakkam near Chennai, Tamil Nadu, where we care for children and women living with HIV/AIDS. Angel's mother died six months after Angel was born. Angel's mother had tested positive for HIV. Angel was cared for by her grandmother till she was three. In 2009, her grandmother brought her to Arias Home after hearing about it at the tuberculosis sanatorium in Tambaram where Angel was being treated. She wanted better care for Angel than what she could afford.

Angel wants to become a teacher. "I will be a good teacher; I will never hit my students," says the third-grader. Angel often plays at being a teacher at the Home, teaching her friends her favorite subject, Tamil. "I scored 10 on 10 in Tamil – I'm very good!" she says, flashing a grin. When she's not 'teaching', Angel likes to play hopscotch with her best friends and fellow residents, Jayakudi and Devi.

There is one more blue that Angel loves – the sea.

*Angel's story was featured in several communication products, including HOPE foundation's annual report 2014, monthly newsletter and on social media where it was one of the most engaging posts.*



# A LIFE CHANGED, IN YEARS

USHA , DODDANAGARA SLUM , BANGALORE

**1993**

We had never been to school. No one we knew had been to school. I was to help Amma at home and work in other people's homes till I got married.

**1994**

HOPE *foundation* started a school in our colony with 30 children. My brother Ramki and I were among them. I was three; he was four. As we sat down for our first lesson, I remember being hungry and thinking, maybe school is a place where I'll get something to eat.

**1996**

We did get a full meal, and a lot more, at school. We learned to read and write, recite nursery rhymes and count. Our teachers were always there for us – they listened to us and took care of us when we fell sick. They talked to our parents so that we did not miss a single day of school.

When neighbors saw us rattling off our ABCs and 123s, they wanted their children to go to school as well. Our school got 150 new admissions!

**2000**

My father worked as a coolie, but drank away most of his earnings. Amma rolled incense sticks making Rs 4 (\$0.6) per 1,000 sticks. One day, she came to know that the school was looking for a cook.

She applied and got the job. Amma wore her best saree to work the first day! She still works there and makes Rs 7,000 (\$113) a month. Amma would say, "I can't read or write, but you will have a good life."

**2009**

After school, I wanted to study Commerce. Amma had some savings, but it was nowhere close to the course fee of Rs 15,000 (\$240). HOPE *foundation* gave her Rs 12,000 (\$195) towards Ramki's and my college fees!

**2012**

I graduated and got a job with a leading multinational company. Ramki is now in his final year of Engineering. Even today, we hear our neighbors tell their children, "You have to be like Usha and Ramki."

**2013**

My father always thought I would have been better off married. But today, he tells people how proud he is of me.

To all the people who made this possible: **Thank you.**

# Muskaan is chasing her dream of becoming a teacher, at our school.

Muskaan is a typical 12-year-old. She likes to play with her friends and draw. She wants to become a teacher like Miss Susan, her Kannada teacher at the HOPE *foundation* school in Bangalore. About two years ago, Muskaan's mother started working for the first time in her life so that her daughter could keep doing the things she enjoys doing and pursue her dream. After her husband was taken ill, Muskaan's mother learned tailoring and started stitching clothes on order. Muskaan, in 6<sup>th</sup> grade now, says, "I want to become a teacher – my mother says we should help others and not just ourselves."

*Our school in Bangalore is supported by our partners, EMC<sup>2</sup>, SAP Labs, Allegis, H&M and KPMG, to name a few.*



# How we helped Preeti start school on time – and her sisters too!

Sisters Preeti, Priya and Pinky make for a happy picture. They live with their mother in Okhla, Delhi. They go to school together, play together and eat together. But three years ago, Preeti used to stay at home to take care of her younger sisters while her mother went to work. She was five and should've been in school. Through our Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD) program in Okhla, Delhi, we helped take care of Preeti's younger sisters so that she could start school. Two years later, her sisters followed. At ECCD, we work with government childcare (Anganwadi) workers to care for children aged six and below – keeping them healthy and preparing them for school, through lessons, games and health check-ups.

*ECCD is supported by Save the Children.*



# Balaji has a happier and better life at our orphanage in Trichy

A safe home, good education and a happy childhood – Balaji's mother always wanted these things for her son but she was unable to give them to him on her own. She struggled to support her five young children after her husband left. Young Balaji would help his mother by selling *diyas* (oil lamps) outside the temple near their house. One day, Childline India Foundation, a non-profit working for child rights and protection, met Balaji and his mother and offered to bring him to our orphanage, Divya, in Trichy. Balaji's life has transformed ever since he came to live with us. He is 14 today and studies in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He wants to become an IAS officer when he grows up. As for his mother, she is overjoyed that her son now has a better life, a life she had always dreamed for him.

*Our work in Chennai region & Hyderabad is supported by donors like Dell Inc, CA Technologies and Pavers.*



# With a little help from us, Suresh turned his once-failing enterprise into a huge success!

Astride his trusty bike, Suresh is a familiar face around Nagapattinam, known for his fresh and delicious sweetmeats and savory snacks which he supplies to 100 shops here. Suresh earns Rs 10,000 (\$147) on a monthly average to Rs 40,000 (\$600) during festivals. Suresh and his wife Rajathi work hard to keep the business running so that they can send their two children to college one day. In the last five years, with hard work and help from our zero-interest loans, Suresh has turned his once-failing enterprise into a huge success. Within six months of borrowing from us, Suresh managed to scale up production and pay off previous debts. Another six months later, he had paid back HOPE foundation too!

*Our zero-interest loan program is supported by our partners, Shetland Island Council and United Way.*



## Adi loves his school and his parents do too!

Our students in Bhuj love coming to school and the word is out – new admissions have been increasing every year! Our student strength has grown from 285 in 2013 to 430 in 2016! For Adi's parents, a school like ours was exactly what they were looking for. Adi was born with impaired speech and hearing. In 2013, when Adi was four, his parents brought him to meet us. Adi's older sister, Prachi has been studying with us since 2011 and they wanted the same kind of care and attention for their son too. They were confident that Adi would love it here. And they were right!

While we do not have special educators to work with differently abled children, our staff work hard to ensure Adi is safe and happy at school. Our teachers help him learn at his own pace, giving him the time and attention he needs. Adi has a hearing aid implant above his ear which means he cannot play contact sports. However, we make sure that he is involved in plenty of other games that are safe for him. Six now and in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Adi has made great progress. He is able to respond to his teachers in class. He has made many friends here, and he loves being in school, just like his parents had hoped for.







## **Your contribution makes children like Ghousiya come to school every day.**

Ghousiya is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at our school. The seven-year-old lives with her father, Amir who drives an auto-rickshaw. Ghousiya can often be seen doing her homework in the backseat of her father's rickshaw after school, while he waits for passengers.

Several months ago, her father, Amir told us his daughter had to change her school due to personal problems at home. Ghousiya stopped coming to school. But a week later, she was back!

With her schoolbag and lunch-box in hand, she happily walked through the school gates, accompanied by a bemused Amir who later told us his daughter refused to consider moving to any other school: "She loves it here so I had no choice!"



# The boy who loves puzzles

**“My favorite game is jigsaw puzzles -I like putting the pieces together.”**

Vijay\* lost his mother when he was four. After his wife’s death, Vijay’s father found it difficult to bring up his son on his own and grew distant from him. He also often got violent. At six, Vijay ran from home. When a beat cop found him on the streets of west Delhi, Vijay was hungry and terrified but refused to go back home. That’s when he came to live with us at Asharan Orphanage in New Multan Nagar, West Delhi. Vijay had never been to school or interacted with children his age before. Over the last one year, Vijay has warmed up to his friends at Asharan. He is in Upper Kindergarten today. He will turn eight in 2016. Among all his toys, Vijay loves jigsaw puzzles and likes to spend all his playtime putting them together.

(\*name changed)



# A MOTHER'S DREAM

Eight-year-old Rohan works hard at school and at home.

He wakes up at 6 every morning to fetch water from the nearest source – about a mile away. There is no running water in his house – a hut in the slum settlement near the Narangi railway station, where he lives with his mother and two sisters. As soon as he's back, Rohan gets ready for school.

At school, Rohan finds it difficult to learn at the same pace as his class mates. He has impaired sight in one of his eyes. But he tries hard to keep up, and his teachers put in extra effort to help him. Rohan comes to school regularly. He loves to play football with his friends during recess.

Rohan joined the HOPE *worldwide* Education Center in 2013 in Nursery. He is in Lower Kindergarten today. Rohan's mother Purnima struggles every day to take care of her children on her own. Purnima has a skin affliction that often sees her being turned away from jobs. On a good day, she earns about Rs 80 (\$1.34) from cleaning in other people's homes to working at construction sites. Most days, she earns next to nothing. Rohan's older sister is 11 but doesn't go to school; she stays home to look after her younger sister when their mother goes out to work.

For Purnima, Rohan is her only hope. "I want him to go to school because if he is educated, he can get a good job when he grows up, and support us. At the Education Center, he can study for free and they teach him good things. He is learning well," says Purnima.

## The Asha Kirana effect

### *Sisters in school!*

The first time we met sisters Mybu, Shaiju and Shabanam (in picture with their mother and brother) was on a sunny afternoon when they were playing near the brick kiln where their parents worked in Orohalli village. On seeing the children there in the middle of a school day, our outreach worker immediately went to talk to the parents. Our efforts were initially met with resistance – with barely enough money for food, ensuring quality education for their children was the last thing on the girls' parents' mind. We persisted with our efforts to help them understand the importance of education for their daughters. We visited the family daily and also spoke to the girls about school.

Though their father was still not fully convinced, the family finally enrolled the girls at the Orohalli Government Higher Primary School. In grades 3 and 5, the sisters have made considerable progress at school. They are eager to learn and come to school every day. During the Annual Day celebration, the sisters were part of cultural performances representing their school. And sitting in the audience was their father, Mohammed beaming proudly throughout the event!



**"I see a great change in my children. At their old school, they never showed much interest in going to school so we didn't encourage them either. But here, they love going to school and do their homework diligently. For their school Annual Day celebration, we spent Rs 2,800 on new dresses for them – though this is a huge sum for us (the family earns Rs 13,500 a month), we want to encourage them as much as we can."**

*– Munna Begum, mother of Mybu, Shaiju and Shabanam*

**"Shabanam has made tremendous progress in academics. Initially, she had difficulty learning. Now, she scores 80-90 per cent in dictations; her earlier scores were 30-40 per cent. Though she is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, she can solve 4<sup>th</sup> grade Math problems!"**

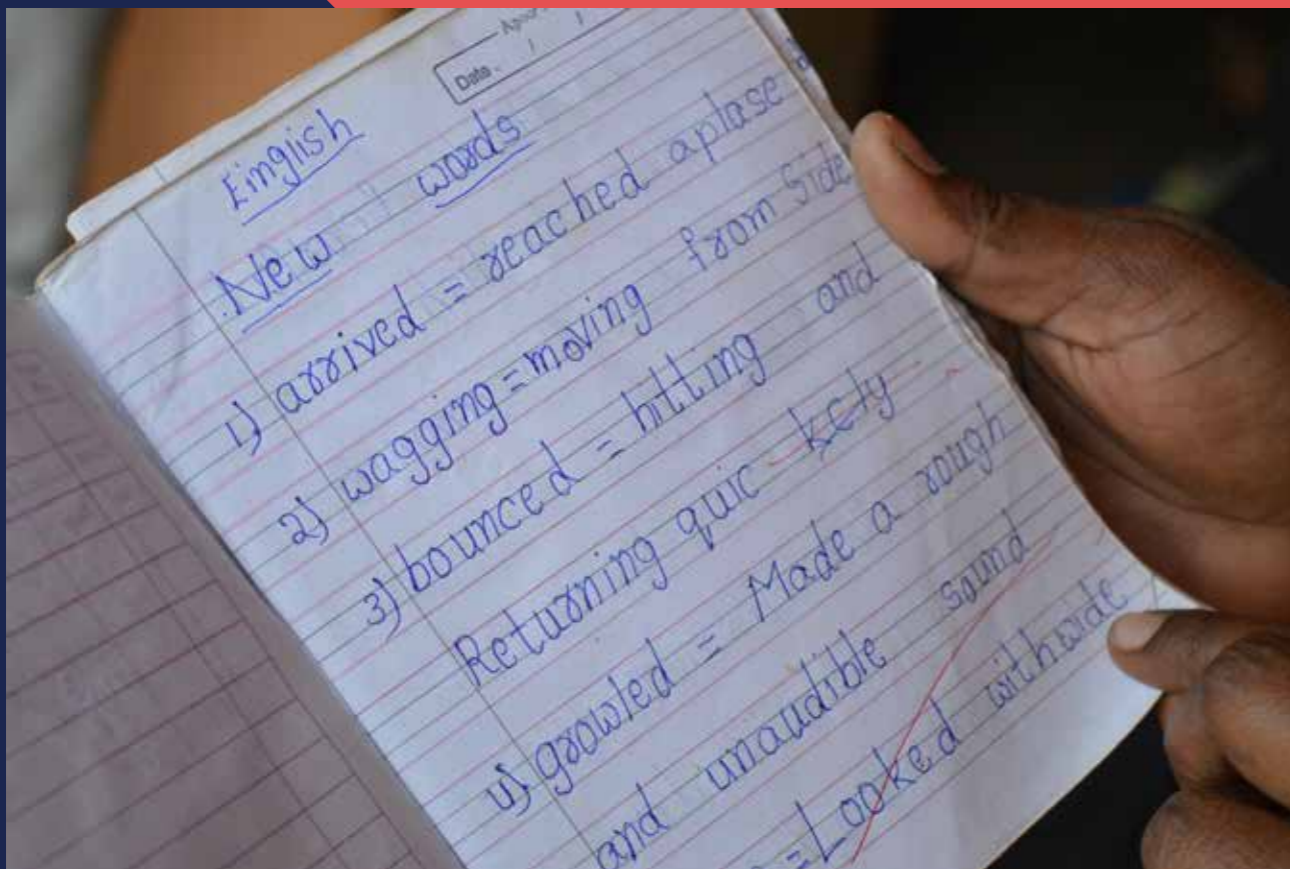
*– Vijaya Shetty, Shabanam's teacher*

**"When she first joined school, Shaiju was very shy. So we made constant efforts to encourage her to interact with the other children and be involved in the class activities. Now, she is part of extra-curricular activities like cultural competitions, and is an avid learner in class. She shows a higher interest in her lessons and knows tables up to 30 and is getting good at Math."**

*– Novan, Shaiju's Asha Kirana teacher*

**"I was initially skeptical about Mybu, Shaiju and Shabanam coming to school regularly, but after seeing their progress and talking to their teachers, I realize my doubts were misplaced."**

*– Murali, headmaster of GHPS Orohalli*



### *Little Trisha is ready for school!*

The characteristic smile on four-year-old Trisha's face has only gotten wider ever since she started coming to the Anganwadi in Injinahalli village along with her older sister, Preethi. At 9.7 kilos, Trisha was underweight for her age. Her father is a daily wage worker and her mother works in other people's homes. With very limited income, they were unable to provide Trisha with the right diet and nutrition she needed at her age. This was in June when Trisha first came to the Anganwadi.

At the Anganwadi, we ensured Trisha and her sister had nutritious food every day, including fresh fruits like apples, bananas and oranges and eggs and milk. In six months, we recorded an 11 per cent increase in Trisha's weight. She has also grown taller. Similarly, her sister Preethi also gained over 2 kilos. Trisha and her sister also learned the alphabet, numbers 1 to 100 and nursery rhymes and learned to identify different fruits and vegetables. Trisha and Preethi are all set to start school this new academic year.



## *Bhargavi aspires to be like her teacher*

From a 60 per cent score to a 90 per cent score, Bhargavi (right in picture) has made a huge improvement in her school performance ever since Asha Kirana project was rolled out in her school, the Government Higher Primary School in Chikka Thagali village. The 11-year-old is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and is cheerful and friendly with a high confidence level. Bhargavi's teacher Premila who has been appointed to the school under Asha Kirana project recalls, "Bhargavi used to have a lot of difficulty focusing on her lessons before. At home, she and her family were coping with the recent loss of her mother. What she needed was constant motivation in school – I worked with her to identify her strengths and her challenges in learning." Bhargavi's and her teacher's hard work has paid off – she attends school regularly, is always on time and never misses her homework. Bhargavi also participates in extra-curricular activities like cultural performances and dance competitions at her school and has made many friends. Bhargavi wants to become a teacher just like Premila when she grows up!



# Living a dream, stitch by stitch

Ananthi is very popular with her friends. “The first time I stitched a *churidar-kameez* (pants and loose top worn by women), they said it was great. They complimented me on the design, and said I had a flair for tailoring,” says the 19-year-old from Tharangambadi, Tamil Nadu.

As a child, Ananthi watched her plumber father make ends meet by stitching clothes. Her fascination with threads and colors began then. After completing Class X, Ananthi approached a tailoring class near home but the fees, at Rs 500 (\$10) a month, were too high. In contrast, the Manpower Vocational Training Center, run by HOPE *foundation*, charged just Rs 600 (\$11) for a six-month course. The center also arranged a van to pick up students from their homes and drop them back. “My mother would never have let me go out alone,” she says.

At the HOPE *foundation* center, Ananthi was inspired by the patience of Amudha, the tailoring instructor. “She would explain a thing several times, until we got it.” It is this attention to detail that has given Ananthi a sound training in the fundamentals of tailoring, such as cutting and stitching. She learnt to make *churidars* (pants), *kameezes* (loose tops), blouses, petticoats and clothes for children, all of which sell well in the market. She also learnt other types of craft, such as embroidery, weaving baskets and making greeting cards: “But my heart is in tailoring.”

“Today I teach students basic and advanced techniques in cutting and stitching, at a private firm in Tharangambadi.” Ananthi got this job through a reference from HOPE *foundation*’s teachers. She frequently visits the HOPE *foundation* center even now. “Whenever I have a doubt about anything, I consult Amudha ma’am.” Ananthi’s eyes sparkle with plans for the future. “I earn Rs 1,800 (\$34) a month at my job. In addition, I would like to teach tailoring privately at my place – I could earn as much as Rs 100 (\$1.85) every month for a student.” During the festive seasons, she plans to stitch clothes for neighbors and add to her income.



Ananthi working on her dream

Ananthi now sends a portion of her salary to her younger brother, who is studying engineering. “My mother can’t get over the fact that I go out alone, work for a living and support the family. No girl in my family has done that. My father is equally proud.”

As for her friends, many of them have queued up at HOPE *foundation*’s vocational training center, wanting to learn tailoring too. Talk about being a role model for her peers!

The kind of knowledge and skills required by the new economy in India are different in many ways. The country needs skilled and motivated young people. HOPE *foundation* works to address these issues and contribute to the government’s target of training 500 million people by 2022.

– P Chandrasekaran,  
Senior Program Director,  
HOPE *foundation*