

India

Tirupati is situated in the province of Andhra Pradesh, which is a province of over 84 million people of which 30 million are children. Despite a growing economy the poverty levels are still rising and over a million children are without parental care. Many children do not get to go to school but instead must work to help support their families, and the lives of girls and women are particularly difficult.

SOS Children's Villages has been present in India since 1963. In 2010 a family strengthening programme started in Tirupati and the year after, the family care programme was initiated.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a big impact on India, both in terms of economic activity and loss of lives. The economic downturn has been fundamentally different from previous recessions, and it has been very difficult for the SOS care leavers and youth to get jobs.

SOS Children's Villages India started preparations for stifling the coronavirus already in February 2020. Awareness campaigns were launched to inculcate habits of frequent handwashing, and soaps were distributed within the programmes. New social behaviors upholding health and safety were incorporated, whilst trying to retain routines for children with psychosocial support, engaging them in activities and online and onsite sessions on emotional wellbeing. A transition was done to online teaching and learning, and several initiatives were undertaken with corporate partners for youth skilling and employment.

SOS Children's Villages always strives to support operations, children, and young people where the needs are greatest. Therefore, we are constantly assessing and analyzing the needs as well as possible reallocation of funds based on the countries' own ability to finance their activities. What we want to achieve is partner organizations and operations that are self-sufficient and financially stable. After many years of cooperation, SOS India has managed to strengthen their local fundraising and are now basically self-sufficient. As previously communicated, we have initiated a dialogue between SOS Sweden, SOS India and regional and international offices, to gradually phase out the financial support to SOS India. Funds will instead be re-allocated and used in countries and programmes where the needs are bigger and the pre-conditions for local fundraising are very limited, to ensure that funds are used where they are needed the most.

The phase-out is gradual and will be supported by all involved stakeholders to ensure it will not affect the quality of the programmes. SOS India has planned a gradual phase out plan during 5 years until 2025 at latest. The plan is based on the local contexts and pre-conditions but given the challenges and uncertainties that comes with the pandemic, all partners will have a certain degree of flexibility when it comes to the time plan.

Programme information

The Children's Village in Tirupati

The schools were closed for most of 2020, and the children were attending online classes until November, when they could start attending classes in schools and preparatory curriculum classes in the village. 20 children completed a computer certification course, and 30 children completed a course in English communication. In the village, children kept active by using the digital library and doing quizzes and online sessions and workshops from eminent institutions. Evening tuitions and self-study sessions were organized in the morning and evenings for youths. 13 of our youths are pursuing professional and vocational courses and eight others who are in professional education have completed one-month internships in reputed organizations in spite of the pandemic.

All children in the village were tested for covid-19, and 20 youth completed an online certification course on covid in order to become resources and support for mothers and children for covid-19 awareness talks. Also, sessions on health and hygiene, child safeguarding, sexual education, positive interaction, life skills, mobile economic apps and other important issues were arranged. Bank accounts were opened for 80 children, to help them save and handle money for their futures as self-sufficient adults.

To protect the emotional well-being of both children and SOS-mothers many recreational activities were organized, such as games, competitions, meditations, exercise, dance, movie screenings and online sessions. All family homes started a kitchen garden to cultivate their own vegetables and fruits. Traditional celebrations of festivals and celebratory days were celebrated in adherence with covid protocol and brought great joy to the children in the village.

The planned renovation of four of the family houses and some of the administrative buildings that was planned for 2020 has been delayed. One of the houses is already renovated, and the rest of the renovation work will be conducted during 2021. This is not expected to affect negatively on the care of the children, neither on their school-going or other activities

Youth care Tirupati

The support to youth is aiming at preparing the young people in their transition to adulthood, and to increase their capabilities to build independent lives and become self-reliant adults. 2020 was a challenging year for the youth but despite this, all the youths in the programme are in good health, and many of them excelled in various sports and games at different levels, like football, softball and Kho-Kho, a traditional Indian team game, in the beginning of 2020. Online motivation and academic sessions were arranged, and the youths were encouraged to develop team spirit and build up positive contact with relatives and friends. They were involved in activities such as yoga, meditation, kitchen gardening and support to the Family Strengthening team during relief distributions.

Self-study sessions and tuitions, computer training and spoken English online classes have been arranged at the youth houses, and the youths were encouraged to use the digital library and become better readers. 20 youths have successfully completed a certification course from the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) and eight others have completed 2-month internships in reputed organisations.

Since the youths could not visit the family homes due to the pandemic, the SOS-mothers visited them at the youth homes during festivals and supported them in preparing special foods.

The Family Strengthening Programme in Tirupati

The pandemic has rendered millions of Indian people homeless and without a livelihood, which endangers quality care for the children. In response to this, the family strengthening programme reached out to more families than before. The family strengthening programme supports families with the goal of keeping them together, so that the children are given adequate support.

During the lockdown period, the family strengthening programme supported 469 families in the Tirupati area with dry ration kits, and 169 families were supported with various income generating activities. Since the schools were closed for almost the entire year, the programme organised community tuition centres which ensured education for children. In extreme situations such as a natural disaster or a pandemic, and/or in economic crisis, there is an increased risk of school dropouts and child marriage as a mean for families in extreme situations to manage this situation. Girls are more at risk. Through the intervention and support to families in vulnerable situations, the programme ensured zero school dropout and child marriage at all locations.

In regard to health, special vaccination drives organised with medical departments ensured compulsory regular vaccinations for 104 children below 5 years of age, and a majority of the children who received nutritional support made improvements in their BMI.

Two remarkable achievements in the project were made during 2020: the family strengthening programme facilitated 41 landless families under SOS support with housing plots from the Andhra Pradesh government, and 145 families received education scholarships facilitating education for the children.

Active partnerships were also developed with media and various government and non-government agencies and provided good visibility and awareness for the programme.

The year in numbers Tirupati:

- Children in the villages **115**
- Family houses **12**
- Youths in the programme **76**
- Youths doing their professional education **19**
- Families in the family strengthening programme **353**
- Children in the family strengthening programme **530**

Positive development in Chindepalli

Chindepalli is a small tribal habitat located in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. The area was inherited by the Yanadi tribal community, who for many years lived in isolation on the island of Sri Harikota, off the Nellore district. In 1835, the British government took possession of the island and forced families to migrate to other parts of Andhra Pradesh.

SOS Children's Villages started a Family Strengthening programme in the Chindepalli tribal colony in 2016. The reasons were that primary class children attended school irregularly and almost 90 % of the children used to drop out after 5th grade to work as child labourers in agricultural fields nearby. Child marriages were widely reported from the community, and the women in the community did domestic work and supported their husbands in agricultural activities, and no alternative livelihood options were available, which often led them to money lenders.

After several fires in houses in 2017 it was discovered that the houses in the community had illegal electrical connections, connected to the main electric line, which caused electric short circuits. When the Family Strengthening team contacted the electricity department for legal electricity connection, it was then observed that none of the families had any basic documents like land ownership, ration card, caste certificates etc. The team then managed, with the help of Tribal Welfare Department, to get caste certificates for all families, and thanks to that the families could get temporary land documents. When they had that, they could also get ration cards and electricity connections in 2018.

All this was done to empower and educate the families to negotiate and achieve their rights, which they didn't know to do earlier.

These basic documents made them eligible for many other government schemes. When the government announced housing plots for families below the poverty line in 2019, the Chindepalli families were able to apply. In December 2020 the government had allotted 41 landless families under Family Strengthening programme support with housing plots. During 2021 these families will be receiving support for construction of houses.

Since the title deeds are issued in the women of the families' names, the scheme has been hailed as a move to make women self-reliant and empowered.

Financial report

Donated by Akelius University Foundation, EUR			2021
	2020 Budget	2020 Actuals	Budget
Investment costs renovation	143 659	0	143 659
CV, YF, and FS Tirupati	349 809	349 809	347 871
Total	493 468	349 809	491 530
SEK (using exchange rate at the time of payment)	5 354 130	3 795 433	5 259 372
Average exchange rate	10,85	10,85	10,7

Total budget/actuals, all facilities above, EUR			2021
	2020 Budget	2020 Actuals	Budget
Investment costs renovation (transfers)	134 803	0	134 803
Investments/maintenance	2 530	8235	10 765
Current working expenditures	222 126	172 055	302 856
Personnel expenditures	114 119	103 048	110 785
Other expenditures	6 612	5 646	8 793
Total	480 190	288 984	568 002
Share covered by Akelius	93%	100%	83% *

* Remaining part is covered by local income and balance from 2020