



TURNING POINTS

PATHWAYS TO PROTECTION AND POSSIBILITY

SUCCESS STORIES OF CHILDREN ACROSS 7 COMMUNITIES OF DELHI NCR

Case Study Compendium 2024-2025

Supported by Mukul Madhav Foundation



children RAILWAY
No child lost to the streets

Since September 2023, the support of the Mukul Madhav Foundation (MMF) has played a pivotal role in transforming the lives of numerous children, adolescents, and families across 7 communities in the Delhi NCR region.

The NCR region has been a primary focus for Railway Children India's (RCI) interventions, particularly around transport hubs in Delhi and Ghaziabad. Leveraging its prior experience, RCI sought to enhance its community-based prevention model with a stronger focus on local communities. The goal was to address two closely linked challenges: preventing children from becoming victims of abuse and exploitation and avoiding unnecessary family separations. Achieving this required a multi-level approach, involving children, their families, the broader community, and government officials. This refined model emphasized holistic interventions, recognizing that children's decisions are significantly shaped by their family conditions and the surrounding environment.

To this end, RCI aimed to gain a deep understanding of the factors driving children to migrate, work, or leave their homes. These insights were instrumental in designing and implementing effective prevention strategies that prioritize the well-being of children. The overarching objective was to reduce vulnerabilities and ensure the safety, security, and protection of children, focusing specifically on seven vulnerable communities in the Delhi NCR region.

The following success stories highlight the impact of family strengthening efforts, including linking families to livelihood opportunities and supporting children of single parents through preventive sponsorship schemes (cash transfers). These measures have been crucial in keeping children within the protective environment of their families, thereby preventing unnecessary separations. The stories also capture efforts to enrol and re-enrol children in schools—children who had dropped out not due to a lack of interest in studies but because they lacked the necessary documents for admission. Additionally, they showcase the inspiring transformation of an 11-year-old boy who overcame addiction to return to school and the remarkable initiative of an all-girls group in the community, aptly named Power Girls.



This case study compendium encapsulates the extraordinary human stories of resilience and determination. We have titled it 'Turning Points: Pathways to Protection and Possibility' to illustrate how each conversation, home visit, collaboration, effort and action turned into children and families lives changed forever.



EMPOWERING A MOTHER, PROTECTING A GENERATION: PINKY'S PATH TO FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

35-year-old Pinky has 3 children, 2 adolescent boys aged 17 years and 18 years and one adolescent girl aged 14 years.

RCI supported all her three children, who frequent the community activity centre.

Her 17-year-old son has been enrolled into computer training by RCI and he is presently studying in class 9, hence this is a very crucial stage and a strong follow up is being made to ensure his smooth transition into class 10 so that he will be able to appear for his board exams. The 18-year-old son had dropped out of school, but with assistance from RCI, he has been enrolled in open schooling to complete his class 10 board exams. Pinky's daughter attends school regularly and actively participates in activities at the community centre. Given the economic insecurity within the family, it is crucial to closely monitor the children to prevent the risk of adolescent boys dropping out of school and engaging in labour activities.

Pinky, like the other homemakers, living in the urban slums often encounter financial constraints due to limited employment opportunities outside their homes. However, sewing machines have emerged as a transformative instrument, enabling these women to earn income while remaining in the comfort of their households. This case study delves into the experience of one such homemaker who has utilized sewing machines to establish sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families. Pinky's narrative illustrates the transformative potential of a seemingly modest gift – a sewing machine – in enhancing the livelihood of a struggling family. Provided by Railway Children India, this sewing machine has risen above from its simple materialist nature to becoming a ray of hope and empowerment for Pinky and her family.

With a family of five and her husband earning a modest income as a rickshaw puller, Pinky grappled with significant financial challenges. The irregular and insufficient earnings made it challenging to meet basic needs, let alone save for the future. The weight of financial responsibility bore heavily on Pinky, compelling her to seek additional income sources and also imposing an indirect threat for the adolescent boys to drop out of school and join the labour force.

Railway Children India's timely intervention altered Pinky's trajectory. The organization gave her a sewing machine, to use the same to earn a livelihood. This gesture provided Pinky with an avenue to explore livelihood opportunities and supplement her husband's income. Armed with the sewing machine, Pinky wasted no time in leveraging her newfound opportunity. She sharpened her sewing skills and commenced offering tailoring services within her community. Initially, Pinky started by sewing clothes and mending garments, effectively catering to the tailoring needs of her neighbors. She earned approximately Rs. 1200 to Rs. 1500 per month, depending on the frequency of orders, which were sporadic rather than consistent. However, she aspires to broaden her clientele within the neighbourhood, and word of her adept craftsmanship is spreading rapidly. Pinky has observed a surge in demand for her services compared to her initial days, owing to her dedication and the superior quality of her workmanship.

Pinky's initiative has helped positive changes throughout her family. The supplementary income generated from her sewing business alleviated financial strain, enabling the family to afford essential expenses and enhance their quality of life. With a more stable income stream, Pinky's husband could concentrate on his work without the constant worry of making ends meet.

Pinky's active participation in parent meetings at the Activity Center in Balmiki Basti underscores her commitment to community involvement. As an engaged member, she shares her insights and experiences, fostering a supportive environment for fellow parents grappling with similar challenges. Pinky's journey serves as a source of inspiration, illustrating the transformative potential of perseverance and opportunity.

Pinky's narrative represents the profound impact of a single act– the gift of a sewing machine – on a family's livelihood. This serves as a classic example of family strengthening, from the lens of securing the economic stability of the family and being able to take better care of her children and preventing them from becoming victims of child labour.

BANKING ON HOPE: A MOTHER'S EFFORT, A CHILD'S RIGHT

Divansh, a 7-year-old resident of Daya Basti, Delhi, found himself navigating a challenging life situation following the untimely demise of his father two years ago.

His mother, Ranjana Singh, a single parent, faced numerous hurdles, exacerbated by a lack of support from her in-laws. Determined to provide a stable environment for her two children, Divyansh and Suryansh, Ranjana made the difficult decision to relocate to her parents' home in Daya Basti.

In the midst of coping with her husband's loss and the financial strains that ensued, Ranjana encountered obstacles in accessing government schemes for Divansh through his school. The primary roadblock was the absence of a bank account for Divansh, a prerequisite for availing the benefits of various government initiatives. Recognizing the importance of financial inclusion in unlocking opportunities for vulnerable families, Ranjana sought assistance from RCI. RCI's intervention involved guiding Ranjana through the process of opening a bank account for herself and subsequently establishing a joint account for Divansh. However, the journey was not without its challenges. Expressing her frustration, Ranjana shared the difficulty she faced in opening her personal bank account, a prerequisite for creating a joint account for Divansh. Despite the challenges, she persevered with the support and guidance provided by RCI.

However with support, Ranjana successfully opened her bank account, overcoming the hurdles that had initially seemed insurmountable. The subsequent week saw the realization of a joint account for Divansh and his mother. This achievement brought immense relief and joy to Ranjana, knowing that her child would now be eligible for the much-needed government scheme benefits. The case of Divansh highlights the transformative power of financial inclusion and community support in overcoming adversity. It underscores the need for ongoing efforts to empower individuals, particularly single parents, with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate the intricacies of the financial system and access the opportunities that can make a significant difference in their lives.

COUNSELLING, CARE AND COURAGE: VENKY'S PATH TO RECOVERY

Venky, a young boy, aged 14 years, resides in Kishan Ganj with his family, close to the railway track of Sarai Rohilla Station. The family has been living there for the past 4-5 years. Venky's father works at a restaurant in Karol Bagh, while his mother works as a domestic worker.

During a home visit on November 10, 2023, staff met with Venky and discovered his involvement in drug use. They learned that he had fallen in with a group of substance abusers. Subsequently, they planned to meet with his parents on a future visit. During this meeting, Venky's mother revealed that he had dropped out of school after 3rd grade and had been engaging in various forms of substance abuse for the past 3-4 months, including sniffing glue, smoking, consuming cannabis, and alcohol. She expressed concern about his declining health and spending habits, as he often lost consciousness while intoxicated. Despite the family's efforts to deter him, Venky continued his harmful behaviour, frequently leaving home to indulge in substance abuse.

The staff committed to meeting regularly with Venky to understand his substance intake patterns and conducted counselling sessions to encourage him to resume his education. Despite their efforts, Venky began avoiding the staff and eventually ran away. However, the staff persisted in counselling him and attempted multiple times to enrol him in a de-addiction center. Although initially hesitant, Venky's family eventually agreed to seek treatment for him, acknowledging the concern and efforts of the staff.

On January 2, 2024, Venky and his family appeared before the Child Welfare Committee, where counselling sessions were conducted. After a medical examination, the committee ordered Venky to be sent to a drug deaddiction centre for treatment.

Following the necessary procedures, Venky's mother expressed her relief and happiness that her son would receive treatment and be away from substances. She was informed about the monthly visits to the de-addiction center and expressed her intention to visit regularly to monitor her son's progress with a smile.

Venky underwent deaddiction treatment successfully and there has been no reoccurrence and has been admitted in school. He is doing good, going to school daily, comes to RCI's centre, attends activities.



RAISING ROSHNI: A FAMILY'S JOURNEY TO SCHOOL READINESS

Roshni Parveen, a six-year-old girl, is the daughter of Mohammad Wakil and resides in Tulsi Nagar. During the survey, it was noted that she had never been to school and spent her days wandering about in the community.

Her father, Mohammad Wakil, works as a labourer in a bag factory and also drives a car, earning around Rs 8000 per month, which he uses to support his four children. The family lives in a rented tin-shade house, and Roshni has three brothers.

The RCI staff faced challenges in encouraging Roshni's parents to prioritize her education. Mohammad Wakil's irregular work schedule, returning home only once in 10 days, and the absence of necessary documents made enrolling her in school a challenging task.

To overcome these challenges, the RCI team raised awareness and engaged in conversations to persuade Roshni's parents about the significance of education. The team also assisted in obtaining an identity card for Roshni's mother from Bihar, enabling Roshni to be admitted to school. Thanks to these efforts, Roshni is now in the second class at Indralok Primary School. She attends school regularly and is a content and happy student. While her two younger brothers are still minors, her elder brother is yet to be enrolled in school.

WHEN CURIOSITY SPARKED, SCHOOL FOLLOWED - SARIKA'S SHIFT FROM ACTIVITY CENTER TO CLASSROOM

Sarika, a 13-year-old girl residing in Valmiki Basti, Delhi. Despite her initial reluctance towards education, Sarika found her path back to learning thanks to the unwavering support of Railway Children India (RCI).

Her transformation underscores the significance of community involvement and perseverance in nurturing education and personal growth.

Sarika hails from Rajasthan and belongs to a family with modest means. Her father, Suresh, works as a sweeper, while her mother, Sushila, is employed as a domestic worker. Sarika has four older sisters and one elder brother, all occupied with their own responsibilities. Sarika faced a two-year break from school due to her disinterest in education and the family's inability to procure a Transfer Certificate (T.C.), posing significant obstacles to her educational journey.

Sarika's meeting with RCI occurred during one of their outreach campaigns. Identified as a potential candidate for RCI's activity center, Sarika's disinterest in education became apparent upon their initial meeting. Her parents shared their concerns regarding her disengagement from learning and the lack of a T.C. In response, RCI's community outreach worker and the volunteer engaged with Sarika's parents, emphasizing the importance of education and its pivotal role in shaping her future.

Sarika's life took a positive turn upon enrolling in RCI's activity center. The center offered a diverse array of engaging activities, cultural events, games, and social interactions, igniting her curiosity and passion for learning. These activities not only enriched her life but also reignited her desire for education. Despite

facing hurdles related to admission deadlines, RCI's relentless advocacy paid off. The local school agreed to admit Sarika in the following academic year, marking a significant milestone in her educational journey.

Sarika remained an active participant in RCI's activities, immersing herself in cultural programs, meetings, and games over several months. Her growing enthusiasm for learning was palpable. This ongoing engagement provided a nurturing environment that fostered her educational aspirations. With unwavering support from RCI and the dedication of volunteer, Sarika's enrolment in the 6th grade was secured through an online application process. Her formal education journey had finally commenced. Consistent school attendance, coupled with her continued connection to RCI's activity center, showcased her unwavering commitment to personal growth and education.

Sarika's remarkable transition from an uninterested non-learner to a motivated student stands as a testament to the power of community engagement and resilience in surmounting educational challenges. RCI's intervention, paired with Sarika's determination, culminated in her successful admission to school and ongoing personal development. This case study underscores the pivotal role RCI play in bridging educational disparities and nurturing comprehensive growth among marginalized children.



WHEN SCHOOL BECOMES POSSIBLE: SABAH'S JOURNEY TO THE CLASSROOM

The young girl named Sabah, the beloved daughter of Jilani, who was a 9-year-old. They resided in a modest three-set rented house. Sabah's father had once operated an embroidery machine, providing for his family.

However, their lives took an unexpected turn when he suffered a debilitating fracture six months ago, rendering him unable to work. It was then that Sabah's mother bravely took on the role of a sweeper, working tirelessly in other people's homes to make ends meet.

Sabah had two younger brothers and two sisters, all living together in their humble abode. Despite their dreams of a better future, the family's precarious financial situation had kept Sabah from attending school.

In June 2023, when Sabah was identified "not going to school" during a vulnerability assessment conducted in community. On August RCI team visited to Sabah's house for a follow-up. The entire family had gone to their village, Bahuara Post, in Hariharpur District, Darbhanga, Bihar. Determined to help Sabah get an education, Shubham spoke to the mother over the phone, learning about their return plans.

Shubham, an outreach worker visited the house again, only to find it locked. Neighbors informed him that Sabah's family was still in the village. However, hope arrived in September when Sabah's family finally returned to Tulsi Nagar. The RCI team member explained the importance of education and informed them about school admission.

The father, though unwell, promised to consider the idea and make a decision soon.

Concerned about their financial constraints, Sabah's mother expressed her worries about obtaining the necessary documents and photos for school admission. Shubham reassured her, taking photos would be his responsibility and emphasizing that sending their children to school regularly was the most critical step.

RCI staff supported in obtaining the photos and required documents to process the school admission process. Finally, after continuous efforts the school application form was filled out and submitted to the admission in-charge. Sabah, full of hope and excitement, started attending 3rd class in the school regularly for the first time. The mother and family were overjoyed, as they knew that education was the key to a brighter future.

The story of Sabah's journey to education is a testament to the determination and unwavering support of the RCI team. They had not only opened the doors to learning for Sabah but also brought a ray of hope and happiness into her family's life. With regular follow-ups, Sabah's educational journey was set to flourish, offering her a path towards a better life.



FROM LEARNER TO LEADER - AARYAN EARNS THE TITLE OF PRESIDENT

12-year-old Aaryan was discovered through the vulnerability assessment in the community, where he was introduced to the RCI Community Centre and its activities.

This introduction enhanced his interest, leading him to frequently inquire about the Community Activity Centre. Aaryan, whose father works as a cobbler while his mother is a homemaker, is currently in the 7th grade and excels in his studies. He finds joy in participating in the activities at the centre, an enthusiasm shared by all his siblings who are also involved and regularly attend the various activities in the community centre. Aaryan is remarkably active, demonstrating consistent attendance at the Community Centre. He particularly enjoys playing cricket and has a talent for drawing. His leadership qualities have earned him the role of President within the adolescent boys' group. The provision of an educational kit further enhanced his excitement and commitment to the Community Activity Centre, where he now regularly attends the evening sessions.

Aaryan has set an example for the other adolescent boys in the community and a close follow up is being kept ensuring that there is no disruption in Aaryan's studies and also for his siblings, who should not become victims of any forms of abuse.





A SINGLE FATHER'S STRENGTH, A DAUGHTER'S NEW START

Roshni Parveen, a six-year-old girl, is the daughter of Mohammad Wakil and resides in Tulsi Nagar. During the survey, it was noted that she had never been to school and spent her days wandering about in the community.

Her father, Mohammad Wakil, works as a labourer in a bag factory and also drives a car, earning around Rs 8000 per month, which he uses to support his four children. The family lives in a rented tin-shade house, and Roshni has three brothers.

The RCI staff faced challenges in encouraging Roshni's parents to prioritize her education. Mohammad Wakil's irregular work schedule, returning home only once in 10 days, and the absence of necessary documents made enrolling her in school a challenging task.

To overcome these challenges, the RCI team raised awareness and engaged in conversations to persuade Roshni's parents about the significance of education. The team also assisted in obtaining an identity card for Roshni's mother from Bihar, enabling Roshni to be admitted to school. Thanks to these efforts, Roshni is now in the second class at Indralok Primary School. She attends school regularly and is a content and happy student. While her two younger brothers are still minors, her elder brother is yet to be enrolled in school.



PACKED WITH HOPE - HOW A SCHOOL BAG CHANGED EVERYTHING

6-year-old Ritika lives with her parents and her four siblings in Tulsinagar community. She had never been to school. During the routine home visits Railway Children India (RCI) team visited Ritika's home in the Tulsinagar community. They had a meeting with her family, who said that Ritika wasn't going to school.

The RCI team helped Ritika get involved in activities at the community center and join a mixed children's group. They also convinced her parents to attend monthly meetings. The team helped with her school admission by getting her legal documents like a birth certificate and Aadhaar card. Ritika was admitted to first grade on April 3, 2024. The team regularly checks to make sure she goes to school and she has completed her first grade and entered her second grade.

When a team member visited, the family said Ritika was excited about school but didn't have a school bag and she was hesitant as to how she would be taking her books, her pencils to school.

RCI team communicated the need of the child internally and assured the family that she would get a school bag. RCI team gave her a school bag so she could carry her books. They witnessed how happy she was to have the bag and felt very proud to own one. Now, Ritika regularly goes to the community center after school and participates in activities there. The story of Ritika outlines that a simple gift like a school bag can serve and bring a smile to a child's face and motivate her to go to school.

BEAUTICIAN, NOT A BRIDE: A COMMUNITY'S STAND TO KEEP ALFIYA SAFE AND PURSUE HER DREAMS

This is the story of 16-year-old Alfiya (name changed) a girl living in the Tulsi Nagar community. Last year, her father, who was her primary caregiver, passed away in an accident.

Her parents had divorced a few years earlier, and her mother remarried and now lives with her second husband. After her father's death, Alfiya's grandparents, particularly her grandmother, took custody of her. At that time, RCI linked her to a sponsorship scheme, and she has been receiving Rs. 4,000 per month since then.

Recently, however, Alfiya's grandmother, who was her primary caregiver, also passed away. Since then, her care has fallen to her grandfather. Alfiya now lives with him and her uncle. Her grandfather makes a living by selling fruit, while her uncle is an alcoholic, which led to his wife leaving him several years ago.

During a meeting, Alfiya shared with the RCI team that she feels unsafe and insecure in her home due to the absence of a female guardian, particularly because of her uncle's behaviour. The situation at home is extremely challenging. Her uncle often comes home late at night, drunk, and sometimes physically abuses her. She is responsible for all the household chores, including cooking. In a recent incident, her uncle physically abused her because the clothes he asked her to wash were not dry. She was only saved from further harm by her grandfather's intervention. The RCI team conducted a session with active adults living in the same neighbourhood. These meetings were also held when Alfiya's paternal aunts visited for her grandmother's post-death rituals, and the team ensured their participation in the session.

In this meeting, topics such as child marriage, physical abuse, and the legal consequences of these actions were discussed. Alfiya's grandfather was informed about whom to contact in case such incidents occur, and certain parents from the community who can assist in such situations were introduced. Additionally, peer group members have been involved and trained to support Alfiya in case of any such recurring incident. Members from the parents have volunteered to keep an eye on Alfiya's situation and respond as a group if needed.

Involving family members and the community was aimed at conveying a strong message to Alfiya's uncle about the consequences of any abusive behaviour. Alfiya has also been made aware of whom to approach and how to seek support if such incidents occur in the future.

Following her grandmother's death, Alfiya's paternal aunt began searching for a groom and was pressuring the family to arrange her marriage within six months. Alfiya, who had failed her 9th-grade exams, had dropped out of school and been at home for the past year. Despite multiple attempts by the RCI team to encourage her to re-enrol in school or join a vocational training program, she consistently refused.

However, the team persisted, and through life skills sessions and awareness programs on child protection, child marriage, and the importance of education, both Ayesha and her family were convinced to link her with a vocational training course. Ayesha now regularly attends a vocational training center where she is learning to become a beautician. She has completed her vocational training course, refused all marriage plans and is focused on building a career as a beautician and continues to stay with her grandfather.



NOT JUST A NAME, A MOVEMENT: THE STORY OF THE POWER GIRLS RISING IN TULSI NAGAR

“Power Girls” is a group of adolescent girls from the Tulsi Nagar community who exhibit resilience, leadership, and a strong determination to achieve their full potential while inspiring others.

The group currently consists of 15 members, including four Peer Leaders. They meet monthly at RCI’s Community Safe Space, where they openly discuss challenges affecting their community, particularly those impacting children, and share their aspirations for the future.

These girls chose the name “Power Girls” because, through RCI’s sessions, training, and meetings, they felt strong and courageous. They realized they could make their own decisions and empower others in their community. They believe in their ability to transform their own lives while supporting other girls and women in improving theirs.

Many of these girls come from families where daily wage labour and domestic work are the norm. However, they have ambitious dreams of education and independence. For example, Ayesha aspires to become a doctor and serve her community, Anjali hopes to work in banking, and Drishti dreams of becoming a fashion stylist. Drishti, in particular, has developed a deeper understanding of child protection issues, such as child marriage and child labor, through her participation in the group.

Through informative sessions at the community center, the girls are encouraged to speak out on critical issues like child marriage and share their concerns. They aim to spread awareness in their community by organizing sessions that promote positive change and empowerment among women and girls.

As part of their training, the girls have attended life skills sessions. The Peer Leaders, after receiving training on life skill sessions, shared their knowledge with the rest of the group. These sessions have helped the “Power Girls” gain valuable insights and a better understanding of themselves. They now have a clearer vision of their future aspirations, both in terms of career and personal growth. Previously, many of them were uncertain about their goals, but now they possess a strong sense of direction.

Zainab, one of the group members, shared how the training helped her recognize and understand her emotions. Previously, she struggled with expressing and controlling her feelings, but after learning communication skills, she now confidently expresses herself assertively. She realizes the vital role communication plays in life.

The girls also received training on gender and sexuality, which provided them with essential insights. They learned that gender defines who they are, while sexuality pertains to who they are attracted to. This session clarified important distinctions, enhancing their understanding of these topics.

Another significant session focused on menstrual hygiene. Before this training, many girls lacked proper guidance and were confused about menstrual health.

They shared their experiences of fear and uncertainty during their first periods. Some were unaware that using unclean cloths could lead to infections and health complications. The session provided them with critical knowledge on maintaining hygiene and feeling more confident about this natural process.

Through these various training sessions, the “Power Girls” have gained knowledge, strength, and a sense of empowerment. They are emerging as leaders in their community, ready to create a positive impact on the lives of other women and girls.



PARI'S PATH: FROM PANDEMIC DROPOUT TO FUTURE BEAUTICIAN

Pari, a 17-year-old girl from Tulsi Nagar, dropped out of school in Class 5 during the COVID-19 pandemic due to not having a smartphone for online learning. Since then, she has been staying at home without any productive activities, leading to feelings of sadness.

During a home visit, the RCI team learned about her passion for makeup and her dream of becoming a beautician, though she lacked a clear path forward. “Mujhe makeup sikhne ka hamesha se shauk tha, par mujhe samajh nahi aa raha tha kahan se shuru karun. Ab main apna sapna poora karne ke liye excited hoon.” (“I always wanted to learn makeup, but I didn’t know where to start. Now I am excited to fulfil my dream.”)

The RCI team quickly took action, offering motivational support and guiding her toward vocational training. They partnered with a local vocational centre to help Pari enrol in a 4-month beautician course. With her parents’ support, Pari began attending the course regularly. As a result, she is now actively learning a new skill that can gradually open doors to career opportunities. Her parents are relieved to see her on a productive path. “Humein khushi hai ki Pari ab kuch sikh rahi hai aur apna kaam start karegi.” (“We are happy that Pari is now learning something and will start her own work.”)

However, Pari will require ongoing social and emotional support as she embarks on this new journey. The RCI team is in touch with her, involving her in her life skills training to further enhance her career prospects.



FROM DIAGNOSIS TO RECOVERY: A LIFELINE FOR TWO SISTERS POWERED BY COMPASSION AND COLLABORATION

During a home visit, the RCI team identified that 5-year-old Asha had a cross-eye condition. She had undergone eye surgery before the lockdown, but the pandemic delayed her follow-up procedure.

Tragically, Asha's father passed away in April 2024, resulting in financial hardship for the family. Without sufficient resources, her treatment was put on hold. Learning about Asha's condition, the RCI team arranged for her to be examined at a health camp, where doctors confirmed that further surgery would correct her vision.

The RCI team quickly organized support for Asha and her mother, facilitating their hospital visits and arranging for necessary tests, including an X-ray and blood tests, to ensure Asha was fit for surgery. On October 6, 2024, Asha underwent a successful eye operation at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital. RCI also provided post-surgery medication and nutritional support to aid her recovery. Additionally, we helped Asha with school enrolment.

The RCI team, who coordinated the medical visits with the staff at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, who performed the surgery. Asha's mother, Razia, who diligently followed up with treatments and took care of her daughter. Asha's eye surgery was successful, fully restoring her vision. She can now see clearly and continue her schooling without difficulties. The family also benefited from the nutritional support provided by RCI, which has contributed to their overall well-being.

During this entire journey, we found that Alisha, who was Asha's sister also was born with crossed eyes and a heart condition that had affected her from birth, faced many challenges as she grew up in the Tulsi Nagar community. Her heart vessel was blocked, preventing her from leading a normal life. She couldn't play like other children or engage fully in school activities. The condition was limiting her physically and emotionally, and her mother, Razia, was deeply worried about her daughter's future.

During one of these health camps, in collaboration with Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, the RCI team discovered that Alisha's eye condition could be treated with surgery. However, just as they were beginning to move forward with Alisha's treatment, a major obstacle emerged. Doctors found that Alisha's blocked heart vessel would need to be treated before any surgery could be considered for her. The news was overwhelming for Razia. She had hoped to see Alisha's vision improve, but now she was faced with the difficult task of addressing her heart condition first. However, the RCI team once again stepped in to support the family. They worked tirelessly to find the right specialists and treatment options for Alisha, ensuring she would receive the care she needed.

After much effort, RCI connected the family with the Child Heart Foundation, which provides free-of-cost treatment for children with heart conditions. On November 26, 2024, Alisha underwent successful heart surgery. The procedure was a success, and Alisha's health was restored. No longer bound by the limitations of her heart problem, Alisha could now enjoy life in ways she had never been able to before. She was able to play with her friends, participate fully in school activities, and experience childhood in a way that had once seemed out of reach. Alisha's recovery marked a turning point for the entire family.

Razia was filled with immense relief and gratitude. The RCI team's unwavering support, both for Alisha's heart surgery and the subsequent care, allowed the family to overcome the challenges they had been facing. Alisha, now healthy and full of life, had a brighter future ahead, and her mother couldn't be more thankful for the help and care they received.



IT TOOK A HOME VISIT - HOW ONE CONVERSATION CHANGED ANITA'S PATH

11-year-old Anita who was a regular to the activity centre became irregular. The community mobiliser and also the community volunteer immediately conducted a home visit.

During a home visit, the RCI team discovered that Anita was a bit worried and had stopped attending school regularly. Previously, Anita went to school consistently, but for some time, she began missing classes. When we spoke to her, she admitted that she was struggling to understand her lessons, which caused her to lose interest in studying.

To support her, we encouraged Anita to go to school every day and to ask her teacher for help whenever she didn't understand something. We also invited her to visit the activity center to clear her doubts and ask questions.

We spoke with her mother as well and advised her to support Anita without pressuring her for high grades. We also suggested arranging educational support for Anita. In response, Anita's mother started additional support class to help her.

Now, Anita attends classes and visits the activity center daily. This support has helped her improve her studies, and she is back to attending school regularly. Anita is happy, focused, and currently taking her Class 6 exams.

When a child struggles to understand their lessons, it can feel overwhelming, causing them to lose interest in learning. Fortunately, Anita's challenges were identified in time, and with the right support from her parents, she did not drop out of school. Today, she is studying with dedication.

HEALING FIRST, LEARNING ALWAYS - SEEMA'S JOURNEY BACK TO SCHOOL

During tracking, the team noticed that Seema was irregular in school, so they decided to visit her home to understand the reason.

When the RCI team visited Seema's home, they learned that her father works as a guard, and her mother is a homemaker. The family's financial condition was not good, and Seema had also been diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB). Her treatment was ongoing at a government hospital, but Seema and her parents were not fully aware of the importance of taking her medication on time. Seema also shared that she wasn't receiving the proper diet recommended by the doctor, which made her very weak. As a result, she was unable to attend school regularly.

Upon hearing about Seema's condition, the RCI team took immediate action. They spoke with her family and explained the importance of taking the medication on time to prevent the condition from becoming chronic. The team also emphasized the need to follow the doctor's advice for a proper diet to help improve Seema's health.

RCI provided nutritional food twice to support Seema's recovery. Additionally, the team linked her to a government scheme that provides TB patients with a monthly financial support of 150 rupees.

Since receiving support from RCI, Seema's health has improved, and she is feeling better. She now attends school regularly, takes her medication on time, follows the proper diet, and participates in adolescent girls' group meetings, menstrual hygiene sessions, and visits the activity center.

Seema and her mother expressed their gratitude to the RCI team for the help and guidance they received.



WIDOWED, NOT DEFEATED: A MOTHER'S FIGHT FOR HER CHILDREN'S FUTURE SUPPORTED BY OUR FAMILY STRENGTHENING INITIATIVE

Rajni, from Gonda, Uttar Pradesh, lived with her two children in tough conditions. Her husband worked as a labourer, and although their financial situation was difficult, they managed to get by.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, tragedy struck when her husband passed away. His body was thrown into the river, and no rituals were performed, making it impossible to get a death certificate.

After her husband's death, there was no one to take care of her in-laws' house, so Rajni moved to Delhi to live with her sick and elderly mother. It was very hard for her mother to take care of both Rajni and the children. During this time, the RCI team met Rajni and her children. They learned that the children were not enrolled in school and were often roaming around. The RCI team decided to help by enrolling the children in school. However, the children did not have Aadhaar cards or birth certificates. So, the RCI team helped get made their Aadhaar cards and enrolled them in school.

Although the children were now going to school, they were not receiving any financial aid because they didn't have bank accounts. To solve this, the RCI team opened joint bank accounts for Rajni and her children. As a result, they started receiving money for school uniforms, shoes, school bags, stationery and books, provided by the Government.

However, Rajni was still facing financial problems and couldn't receive the widow pension due to the lack of a death certificate. The RCI team tried to connect the children

to the preventive sponsorship scheme, but again, they needed a death certificate. So, the RCI team went to the DCPU (District Child Protection Unit) office and asked for advice. The staff there suggested that Rajni write a letter, on the village head's letterhead, confirming her husband's death. Rajni followed this advice, went to her village, and got the letter from the village head. The RCI team submitted the letter and filled out the form for the children's sponsorship. Fortunately, the children's names were selected, and they were approved for the sponsorship scholarship, which provided some financial relief.

But the RCI team didn't stop there. They knew that if Rajni didn't find a way to support herself, the financial situation wouldn't improve in the long run. So, they continued to encourage and motivate her to find work through monthly meetings and home visits.

With their support, Rajni worked hard to improve her situation. She found a job as a packing worker in a nearby factory, earning Rs. 8,000 per month. With this income, she was able to send her children to regular school and support her family. She is deeply grateful for the help she received and feels empowered to continue working toward a better future for herself and her children.

This case shows the challenges faced by single mothers in tough situations but also highlights the importance of community support and determination to overcome difficulties.



All names have been changed to protect the identities of the children and families, and photos have been used for representational purposes only.

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