

Update Report on Bus Funded by WiTR

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Project Overview

Ashar Alo Residential Child Care Centre provides a safe environment for girls in need of care and protection. Girls of 6 – 18 years who were at high risk, connected to the streets and slums and in need of care and protection are placed in Ashar Alo under the protective order of the Child Welfare Committee¹. Individual care plans are developed for each child with an integrated approach to respond to all aspects of childcare, covering shelter, education, nutrition and health for their emotional, social, cultural and cognitive development.

Ashar Alo aims to improve and strengthen the socio-economic conditions of the girls by ensuring their retention in education and attaining higher education, participation in skill-building and personality development classes.

30 girls residing in Ashar Alo attend schools affiliated with the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education and West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education. Special education and private tuition support are provided to the girls by special education teachers and private tutors to ensure their retention in school. The progress of the girls' academic performance is reviewed and monitored every quarter, and lesson plans are developed accordingly.

The girls are enrolled in many sports, such as cricket, taekwondo and football, and participate in tournaments and competitions. Apart from sports, the girls attend dance classes, singing classes as part of the HOPE girl's band, art & craft, and vocational training classes. The girls often participate in dance and art competitions, and the HOPE band performs at many events in Kolkata every year.

The Mother and Child Care Unit is a residential centre for mothers and children in distress and unsafe situations. It is a short-term stay centre which provides a safe, loving family environment for mothers and their children who were at high risk, abused, or abandoned. The mothers and children stay in this centre until they are restored to their families or rehabilitated to other organisations as per their need of long-term care, medical and other support.

The mothers and their children are placed in the Mother and Child Care Unit through General Diary in the local police station or as per the order of the Kolkata Child Welfare Committee and Social Welfare Department.

The mothers and children are provided holistic care for their physical and psychological well-being. This support includes a healthy diet, counselling, healthcare, vocational skill improvement, job placement, etc. They are linked with government schemes and entitlements to ensure their rights of survival and citizenship. 6 mothers and 9 children are currently residing in the Mother and Child Care Unit.

WiTR Bus

The new 14-seater bus funded by WiTR is providing much-needed services for the girls of Ashar Alo and the mothers and children of the Mother and Child Care Unit. A full-time professional driver is employed to run and take care of the maintenance of the bus.

The bus has made the lives of the children, mothers and staff safe and trouble-free in many ways, especially in dealing with the lack of safe transportation after the COVID-19 pandemic. The bus is being used to drop off

¹ Child Welfare Committee is a first class magistrate Board of one Chairperson and 4 other members. As per the Juvenile Justice (Care and protection) Act 2012 and Integrated Child Protection Scheme of India the board is sole authority for the children who does not have parents and are in need of care and protection.

and collect the children from schools, coaching classes and various recreation/sports events such as drawing competitions, football games, cricket training etc.

The bus is vital for the organisation to ensure the children continue their education and participate in sports and recreational and cultural events. Due to the accessibility of the bus, the children have increased participation in events and activities to disseminate their skills and talents, which are also small steps towards rehabilitation and mainstreaming in society. Access to healthcare is vital, and the staff can bring the girls to hospitals and health centres for treatment and check-ups in the safety of the bus.

Pregnant women and mothers with newborn babies require check-ups and attend visits for immunisations and other health support. 5 mothers in the Mother and Child Care Unit require psychiatric treatment and need to visit the hospitals regularly. The mothers have been able to safely travel and attend their appointments on time, with the bus funded by WiTR, which ensures their accessibility to quality and timely health treatment.

Gallery



Ashar Alo Girls going to School



Ashar Alo Girls going to Football Training



Ashar Alo Girls going to Cricket Training



Children from the Mother and Child Care Unit going to Creche



Children from the Mother and Child Care Unit going to Creche



Mothers going to Medical Appointments