

Meeting Conducted with School Principals under the School Health Project

Since the establishment of Sehat Ghar clinic in Machar Colony, Imkaan's work has developed. With an aim to provide support to children in Machar Colony, Imkaan has started a School Healthcare Project. Under this project, free of cost healthcare will be provided to school children. Nine schools have been identified within the vicinity of the clinic.



The project could only be initiated with the help of the community and the cooperation of the school principals. With a view to get feedback and ideas from the principals and teachers and explain the project to them, a meeting was held at a

community home near Imkaan's clinic. During the meeting, Parvez Akhtar, Field Programme Manager and Head Community Services, explained to the participants the process of creating a medical history for each child that visits the clinic for a checkup. Each student shall be provided free of cost healthcare which includes medicines, blood tests and other medical aid required. Teachers of the identified schools will also be provided free healthcare.

During the meeting, the participants spoke about their expectations from the project and highlighted pressing issues related to health and hygiene that needed to be addressed. As teachers are the main source of information for the students and an important part of their development, it was agreed that the health awareness component of the clinic will involve teacher training on issues such as hand washing, clean drinking water and personal hygiene so that they can be incorporated and form a part of the curriculum.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

There is always immense pleasure when we set out to begin any new component of Imkaan's Projects. This month has seen the beginning of the School Healthcare Project. This is a project that our team has discussed over the past few months. For Imkaan's team these are little but important milestones that we achieve. From when we begin discussing an idea to the point that we see the implementation of the same is a journey which we have been very lucky to have proactive community members share with us. The meetings with relevant people and stakeholders guide us and help in formulating and implementing new programmes. We have also been liaising and meeting with other organizations that have been working with communities with an aim to learn from their expertise and understanding. A heartfelt thank you to all those who extend their support to us in any form.

Tahera Hasan

Individuals who are interested in volunteering for the awareness component of the School Healthcare Project can email us at info@imkaan.org for more information

COMMUNITY INTERVENTION – SMALL STEPS TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

TESTING FOR HEPATITIS C

Our community outreach team has been coordinating with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), also known as *Dais*, in order to create awareness about the presence of our healthcare facility and educate them with regards to safe delivery practices. Ten TBAs who have been working in the vicinity of the clinic were identified and were subsequently tested for Hepatitis C free of cost. As women still believe in giving birth at home, it was thought necessary to conduct tests and ensure safe practices so that the diseases are not transferred to others. Out of the ten, three TBAs tested positive for Hepatitis C.

COUNSELLING HEPATITIS C PATIENTS

The three TBAs who were Hepatitis C positive were invited to the clinic to have a one on one counselling session with the clinic team. Dr. Naureen Kazim explained to them the way the disease can spread. The TBAs were advised to keep separate toothbrushes, nail clippers and combs at home. During deliveries, they were advised to wear surgical gloves, cover any cuts or blisters with bandages and also carefully dispose of soiled bandages or anything with blood on them. The counselling sessions will continue throughout the treatment process.

TREATMENT PROCESS

The treatment of Hepatitis C is expensive. Government hospitals and NGOs have an extensive list of people waiting for treatment. Imkaan facilitated the three TBAs by coordinating with SINA, an organization that provides free of cost Hepatitis C treatment through their Zakat fund. The TBAs were registered and provided necessary documents to SINA. Imkaan will be accompanying the TBAs throughout their treatment process and will continue their counselling regarding the disease, so it can be curtailed through necessary awareness.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD – INSPIRATIONS FOUND IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Machar colony, a place where different cultures meet and a place where you will find many stories. Stories of hopes, dreams, losses and pain. In the midst of everything there are stories of struggle, inspiration and survival. This is Musmat's story - brought up in a loving household she was fortunate enough to marry Nadeem. Nadeem was a fisherman by profession, but a social worker at heart. He was known for his kindness and helpful nature. He was so loved and appreciated in the community for his righteousness that they even named a street after him. Musmat and Nadeem went on to have four daughters and were living a content and happy life. One day Nadeem was invited by his friends to have tea after dinner at a hotel nearby. He was shot dead by two men.

Life as Musmat knew it, came to an end. Musmat was not equipped to deal with life as she had lived until now in a very protected and loved environment. She was unable to support her family and provide for them. Her daughters had to be pulled out from school and she was forced to marry her brother in law. Her life with the new husband was living hell. He beat her up regularly and would not let her meet or talk to anyone. Musmat went on to have three more children adding to an already large family. The husband was too drunk and drugged to get a job that he would sustain which left Musmat with no other choice but to find a way where she could provide for her children. As do most women in the area, Musmat started peeling shrimps day and night to be able to earn to support her children. Her daughters also started helping her with the work. Survival for a widow is very difficult in society and Musmat didn't want the title of a divorcee attached to it. She has worked relentlessly with no help or support to make sure that her family survives. Due to her efforts her children are taken care of and her eldest daughter happily married. She has single handedly been the provider and protector of her children. We are surrounded by many Musmats whose strength is a source of inspiration to others in similar situations.