



# NEWS LETTER

May 2021

## Through troubled times...

Planet Hope presents our quarterly newsletter to keep you updated with our ongoing initiatives. We speak to all of you at what we know to be an increasingly difficult time, a time of great tribulation, financial difficulty to many and enormous challenges. The pandemic has escalated and taken many lives and altered livelihoods beyond recognition here in India.

With growing concerns related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact in our communities and especially in India at large, our team has constantly strived to achieve our proposed and planned projects. Our efforts have been centred to overcome the challenges and deliver to the vulnerable communities of women, youngsters and children. These are extremely difficult times as we are not even sure what the prognosis is on the Covid-19 front even after 15 months of living under unprecedented conditions.

Over the last three months it has been fascinating to see the depth of our legacy in impacting the lives of the most marginalised children, youngsters & women. The impact driven by the grassroot level innovations, pioneered by our teams across the domains of vocational education, livelihood, and humanitarian assistance has been impressive. We have the ambition to set our aspirations high to multiply our impact at scale by working in close collaboration with governments, development partners, NGO's and communities.

Our team showed their creativity, flexibility and ability to innovate. New partnerships and collaborations have opened doors for disadvantaged sectors, during the global pandemic. We are constantly innovating our projects to achieve our goals and create opportunities for disadvantaged families.

We have seen heart-warming scenes of people coming together to help others and our enduring strength in our endeavours has come from the support of our donors and sponsor families. We are deeply thankful to them for their sensitivity and generosity. Through troubled times like these, we strive to collectively fight against Covid-19 and become a beacon of hope. Every small effort counts. Thank you for being with us throughout our journey and we hope for your continued support and to stand beside us in our mission.

Karen Duys  
President  
Planet Hope Netherlands



# OUR INITIATIVES

## EDUCATION

### Day care/ Tuition Classes

The Planet Hope Day-care project through the uncertainties of the times had held on. The easy-learning classes are impactful. By the end of the year, we see our children equipped with the fundamental understanding of general knowledge and numbers and to be a good user of English. To accommodate the constant lockdowns and also to maintain COVID-19 related protocol, our day care classes are being conducted both offline and online. During lockdowns, we continue our online lessons by creating a whatsapp group with all children and their parents. Once a week our teachers go door by door to see the children and check their improvement.

Along with this, the day care has now expanded to even a tuition centre for the children which is conducted in the evenings, where all grades of children now learn and study with the help of our coordinator.





# VOCATIONAL TRAINING



## Geriatric Caregiving Course

The elderly care course has also picked momentum with the collaboration of three esteemed organizations (Planet Hope; Ashley Home Care, Hayden Hall; ROC Mondriaan) renowned in their own fields to bring to lesser fortunate students with an internationally certified Geriatric care course that provides an opportunity to explore the area of Gerontology, a field of nursing that focuses on the care of older adults.

Catering to girls from disadvantaged back grounds, the geriatric course presents the unique health care needs of older adult and introduces students to nursing approaches to managing those needs. The goal of this course is to train these students with the right knowledge and develop their skills for career growth contributing to their livelihood improvement while also answering the need of geriatric care givers in active workforce in India.

Upon asking one of the students on their experience of being a student of the course she had to say "I have a very good experience learning the international geriatric certificate course. Coming from a small town, I did now know the opportunities that I had as a caregiver. My wish is that more and more students can join this course and learn from it just like I have got the opportunity to learn."

– Ms.Vijaylashmi

The course has empowered all the students to use the education received well and seek out opportunities to develop oneself not only professionally but also personally.







## Advanced Tailoring Course

We initiated a vocational training program of tailoring that is offered free for women from lower-class background to learn a new skill for employment or self-employment. The training program that began only last year is now currently catering to 24 students with one batch already graduated. In collaboration with the ROC Mondriaan, this course is also specifically targeted to train women at the local level and also provides them enough exposure to carry on an income generation activity at the end of the course.

The one year diploma course in advanced tailoring focuses not only on the fundamentals of tailoring but also on the advanced techniques of tailoring and apparel designing. Ms. Sangeetha, a student enrolled in the course says “Since I have joined the tailoring classes, I have got the opportunity to learn something new and get out of my comfort zone. It also helps that the course is offered to us free of cost and I’m making most of this opportunity!” and Ms Vidya says “I consider it my privilege learning at Connexion Learning Center. More than giving skills it shapes lives, I am proud to be a part of it. I thoroughly enjoy the class and I am learning so much here, thanks to the organisation for their constant investment in us and for shaping our destiny, I am very grateful”.

The teacher Mr. Sathya (who is a professional tailor and has his own shop) too reflects and feels proud about the work he is doing saying “Its my first job where I’m teaching so many students. I am happy to teach because while teaching I can also hone my own skills. The students are smart and they pick up lessons very soon. I hope that students will learn new skills which they can make use of it in their future. I am doing my best to give the knowledge and skills I have to my students. I am happy to be doing this service”. Currently there are two batches one in the morning, which is for advanced learners the evening batch is for students who have freshly enrolled.



## Beautician Course



The organization decided to launch another vocational training pilot after the impact of the tailoring course. This new 6-month diploma in beauty and hair care is another one of our pioneer one of its kind vocational training courses. With the ever-growing beauty and cosmetics industry, the labour market is always seeking well trained, skilled and professional personnel to provide quality services. Through our collaborative efforts with our education partner, the ROC Mondriaan, the syllabus developed for this course is practical oriented and provides a holistic learning opportunity with access to professional equipment and great peer learning experience.

Mrs. Anitha, our trainer for our course, is professional beautician who has an experience of 10 and owns her own beauty parlour. Talking of her experience she says, "The students' enthusiasm makes it worthwhile and a rewarding experience. Ms Shylaja (student) thanks the organisations by saying "I have been part of the course for about 2 weeks now and I am loving it, I have been learning many different things and with all sorts of people in the class I thoroughly enjoy it. I am very grateful to the organisation, Pooja (coordinator) and Anitha Ma'am for doing all what they are doing for people like us".

The long- term vision of our course is to make our students independent, equipped with skills and knowledge that ultimately make them job ready. The course started in early March and is currently impacting 10 students from difficult backgrounds even in the middle of a pandemic!





## Tassel Making Course (Saree Kucchu)

A small room in the sub urban community of Kogilu, women folk gather with their masks covering their faces, hands lathered in sanitising alcohol. The ritualistic sanitisation has become a part of everyday life. The women come together not to gossip as portrayed in the little TVs but they gather to learn the art of tassel making. This type of tassels embroiders the already elaborate sarees worn by most Indian womenfolk and is a trade that is high on demand. The trade is lucrative and high on demand. "The course is making impact and we hope to start a collective and small business with the students gaining income generating opportunities"  
– Kavya (course coordinator)

The course caters 15 women who are currently doing the intermediate level of tassel making after successfully completing the preliminary level. The goal is to help the women create a business model and social enterprise to support themselves establishing them as skilled tassel makers.





# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Belahalli

Belahalli or the Tablawala community has around 300 people that includes 20 to 30 men and women and 200 children. Marred with numerous problems of poverty and social isolation, they are nomadic and have migrated from the northern states of Uttar Pradesh. Their only source of income being the drums that they make, they receive no social support, housing and other facilities.

Our efforts in the community have been centered around empowerment since the past two years. We have established a good rapport with the community members and initiated programmes for the children. The Planet Hope sports academy and music academy is taken to the community by gathering trainers and resource people and trainers in the community. At Planet Hope, we believe education is the one answer to poverty alleviation and our change model relies on the impact of education so our efforts are centered also on getting the children back to schools. The monthly grocery distribution also help ease the households of their burden to make ends meet.





## Chellikere

In Chellikere, Planet Hope has impacted about 800-1000 individuals directly or indirectly with all the projects throughout the 4 years we have been working in this community.

A suburban neighbourhood, Chellikere is home to many migrant families who are both Tamil and kannada speaking. One such story from a member of the community who also gave her testimony on domestic violence in our webinars. Hers was a story of getting married quite early without her consent. Now she is a victim of domestic violence who is an alcoholic and unemployed. With no skills, she finds it hard to fend for her growing family of five. Our interventions are focused on empowering such women by giving them the skills through our vocational training centres and helping them have a dignified life.

With our regular awareness programs, we have been tackling many social, economic and health issues by educating children and women on various topics. The day care/tuition program conducted in the community has been educating children with all the needed fundamental knowledge on a preschool level.





## Planet Hope Sports Academy

Sport is an important facet of every student's life. Studies suggest that sporting activities enhance children's holistic wellbeing as it increases motor skills coordination and helps them release their energies in a positive manner.

The project's long-term vision is to identify exceptional talents among these students and connect them with various specified coaching programs and government sports schemes (DYES) and by forming and registering as a team and thereby conducting programs.



This program has been started in two communities one is Chellikere and the other Belahalli the former a lower-middle-class community and the latter a community that is below the poverty level. Our team gathers all these children in a playground and engages with them. Given the pandemic, it has been helpful to keep the children occupied as most schools remain closed. All safety precautions and social distancing guidelines are observed during the sessions.

## Planet Hope Music Academy

Music is an essential part of any child's holistic development and we are of the firm belief through music children develop their cognitive abilities. It is proven to increase better concentration, fine-muscle coordination while they learn musical instruments.

The long term goals for the project is to identify talent and provide specialized training for the students and bring the children to performance standard and build a sense of skill in them provide them with music grade certification based on exams and finally conduct various cultural programs/concerts / exchange programs with our other partners.





## Karaikal

In February of this year, the two staff members of Planet Hope travelled to Karaikal, Pondicherry to visit the Little Angels School which has been receiving monetary support from Planet Hope. We signed an MOU with the school to initiate more collaboration and partnerships in the future. The visit saw that Little Angels school and Planet Hope share a common vision to uplift the marginalised through education. Providing elementary education to students from poor backgrounds, Little Angels has been badly affected by the pandemic.

In March, Rohit, our community developer, also visited Kaariakal to visit nearby communities in and around the school. Ravaged by the tsunami, the communities still bear the brunt of the devastation all those years ago. It was a fruitful visit where Rohit further interacted with the school principal about the school and carried out need assesments in the school and the community.

On his visit to the town the community developer says “The objective of the visit was to see the school and the community, the school is a place which has a lot of potential for the organisation to work, and the communities too are very large and various groups like elderly; women and children that we can work with. The community too has a lot of resource people whom we can collaborate with to develop the community. I am relay looking forward to work there”.





## HER-STORY



### Ms. Pooja Sharma

Ms. Pooja Sharma is a staff member of Planet Hope, she is currently managing the Connection Learning Center and coordinating the vocational training programs being conducted there. What many don't know is the inspiring story behind this young lady and how her story has come to be the story of Planet Hope as well. Pooja was born in Bangalore to parents who had migrated from Bihar. Her father is a carpenter by profession and mother a homemaker, she has two elder brothers and a younger sister. Growing up her family's financial condition was not very stable. Her father had serious alcohol addiction and with too many mouths to feed her mother made the hard decision to bring her to a girls home.

The girls home was run by Planet Hope and Ms. Pooja went on to continue her education by doing a Diploma in Hotel Management with Planet Hope and Royal Hotel Management School which led her to get an internship in St. Mark's Hotel (Bangalore) and a job in the Just Truffs chocolate company where she worked for a long time, "The reason I choose this career was because I needed to support my family and this was a field, I had an interest in since childhood" – Pooja.

Upon being offered a job at Planet Hope as a manager of Tulip Café, Pooja left her job at the chocolate factory to be closer to her dream job, but due to COVID 19 Tulip Café has been temporarily closed. "Planet Hope has given me a lot hence I need to give back, I was given many opportunities in my life therefore I was to give others the same opportunities to become independent as I am now".

When asked about what advice would she like to give to children from difficult family situations she responds by saying that they should never lose hope I seek out organization such as Planet Hope that are ever ready to help them out and to be very diligent in studies, and to young women she says to be independent and bold as that is the only way forward.





## Mrs. Sumathy

Mrs. Sumathy is a founder and principal of Little Angels School Karaikal, Pondicherry. Her story is one of a fighter who is persistent in achieving her goals no matter the obstacles. Sumathy was born in Sri Lanka to a Tamil father and Sinhalese mother who are of the Baha'i faith which emphasises a lot of morals, values and in service of humanity. She spent most of her childhood accompanying her father who was part of many projects in the service of humankind, "My father was quite active in volunteering for charity and in doing service, he pampered with attention, care and educated me of the importance of service to fellow humans, he is definitely my role model" says Sumathy.

After spending almost 9 years in Sri Lanka due to the civil war the family had to leave all their wealth and property and flee to Karaikal, India, it was here she continued her studies and went on to do a diploma in teacher training from New Era College in Pune and a Master of Arts in Hindi. She worked in a private school shortly and it was during her time as a teacher in a private school that made her realise that the high fees of private schools in what stops children from underprivileged families to seek out quality education, "I firmly believe that education is a right for all children, children are children no matter their background". In one conference for teachers, she met Mrs. Teena (the principal for Little Angels School, Gwalior) "She blew me away with her excellent management skills and communication skills with the children and parents, she really inspired me" This inspiration led Sumathy to open her own Little Angels School in her hometown Karaikal. When asked about her challenges, she says that it was only her father who supported her in her dream of opening a school. "Challenges have always been there but I work hard and will continue to do my work, Planet Hope has helped me a lot during the toughest years of my career and for that I am grateful. Talking about her long-term goals she says "I dream to make my humble primary school into a high school with all needed infrastructure"

When asked on what advice she would like to give young women she says "Our society is not developed enough to truly practice equality in some families the parents are enlightened like in mine but in most families, boys are given preferences, It is up to the girls in each household to fight for themselves and demand the respect they deserve and to have goals and visions for themselves and achieve them to show the families and society that we too can achieve what we strive for"



# COVID-19 Relief

At the wake of the COVID- 19 Pandemic in India, Planet Hope has been providing food packets to various communities of daily wage workers and migrants, the marginalized and slum dwellers who are affected due to lockdown as their livelihoods are affected. With no jobs and no means to earn they become destitute and struggle to put a square meal on their plates. Moreover, they live in unhygienic conditions and cramped quarters that are sometimes makeshift houses. These vulnerable group of people make up one third of a city's population and here in Bangalore that is no exception. Planet Hope distributes food packets to them so that they can stay at home and get a meal and not venture out in search of food during these dire times.



## COVID 19 Crisis Helpline:

Planet Hope is now engaged in a helpline services in liaison with the government. The helplines provided by the governments are burdened and people often are helpless in times of crisis. Planet Hope bridges the gap attending calls from patient's families and connecting them to resources such as a hospital bed; oxygen cylinders; ventilators or remedesivir injections. The team registers these cases with the local health authorities to allocate these resources.



## COVID 19 Funeral Service

India has seen a surge of deaths and mass burials. In such dire times, the team is helping at burial. In many graveyards, the labour force is getting overwhelmed and vulnerable. Our team equipped with PPE kits have been helping out at cremations and burials and ensuring a dignified send off to all victims of the pandemic which is well deserved by every human being.





## Immunity Pills Distribution

Sai Sadhana Seva Foundation and Planet Hope have been long time goodwill partners. It was during the pandemic that the Sai Sadhana Seva Foundation initiated a project where they manufactured immunity tablets with all the necessary certifications for distribution to enhance their immunity during this health crisis. The foundation provides free tablets to be distributed to communities where Planet Hope works. The community development department distributed these pills to more than three communities locally.

## Sponsorship

Through the pandemic, Planet Hope has continued the sponsorship programmes where selected children from difficult backgrounds are connected to patrons and beneficiaries who support them through the child's education and help them get a better chance at life. The children receiving the are scrutinised by the organization.

At present in order to diversify the donations and increase the number of beneficiaries – group sponsorships have been adopted which meant we now sponsor the education of more children and were able to make impact even during a pandemic.





## FREEDOM GIRLS - The Movie

At Planet Hope, our work has been toward the education and empowerment of underprivileged girls. This year, we are very proud to have been able to premier the movie "Freedom Girls" in the Netherlands. Freedom Girls is a story of strength and courage and is a documentary that was shot here in India with girls who are beneficiaries of Planet Hope. The movie documentary shot by Marlene, a dear friend of Planet Hope captures the journey of girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to independence through the support of Planet Hope. The movie premiered on Youtube for the first time on International Women's Day. The young women featured in the film are proud of themselves for having come a long way in their lives.





## *Celebrating Women* - Women's Day

*"There is no force equal to a woman determined to rise."*  
-W.E.B.Dubois

The 8th of May, 2021 was an important day in Planet Hope. With our organisation's vision and mission focused on women empowerment, the organisation marked the day with low key celebrations constricted due to the pandemic related restrictions.

Planet Hope organised several Awareness & Empowerment Activities for the women. Recreational activities were conducted and the women of our communities had a fun day with the joy of celebrating womanhood.





# OUR NEW PARTNERS

## Little Angels Junior Primary School

The Little Angel School is a preschool in Karaikal, Pondicherry that educates children from lower income backgrounds and it currently has over 60 students. The team of the Planet Hope visited the school and community twice in the first quarter of this year.

The two parties signed an agreement where the organization would support and develop the school and also initiate our community development initiatives in the communities surrounding the school.

By reaching the understanding both parties have already begun working on various projects such as the teacher training program for the staff of the school. The organisation has conducted need-based assessments and have a bunch of programs lined up for the coming months with the school and communities.







## Hayden Hall, Darjeeling

The Planet Hope team represented by Projects Director, Roshini Raj and Senior Project Lead, Saurav Brandon started a week-long trip to Darjeeling to visit potential partners and learn more about their work and find out how Planet Hope can involve in the growth and development of the region. Planet Hope made a visit to Hayden Hall, Darjeeling. Hayden Hall is a registered society that operates in 3 districts in the North Bengal region with 48 centres and 63 community development workers posted through their communities.

The organisation's focus is on the "Mother and Child Care Programme" where they provide Ante and Postnatal Health care to mothers. Other than that, Hayden hall boasts of a successful livelihood training programme, SHGs and market linkages. The Planet Hope team signed an MOU with Hayden Hall and cemented the cooperation by introducing the one-year diploma course in Geriatric caregiving to Hayden Hall. The diploma will be offered by Planet Hope in collaboration with the ROC Mondriaan in Hayden Hall for students from low-income backgrounds. The students from the communities that Hayden Hall works in, will get a brilliant opportunity to be part of The vocational training program offered by Planet Hope.





# INTERNSHIPS



**Ms. Soumya**

"At Planet Hope, Netherlands where I got to intern with the Bangalore team, the overall experience was excellent. I got to see how an NGO works and how various roles were important. As an HR student, I got involved in multiple Administrative functions, from working on leave tracker and job description.

I could not have asked for a more rewarding experience. I am incredibly grateful for the practical experience in the field of HR. This was a great learning experience for me because, after my internship, I concluded that this was something I could see myself doing as a career"

**Ms. Anu Joseph**

"As an internship, my time in Planet Hope has helped me to unlock my potential levels through organisational activities, module development, manual formulation, community engagements etc. and helped me draw valuable insights. The Planet Hope team boasts of a young vibrant inclusive team with a global nature. The team warmly welcomed us with enthusiasm and helped us through the process and also gave us individual freedom in the work arena.

Thank You Planet Hope for this opportunity!"





## Young Innovators Award- Selacian College, Siliguri



Unlike Law, Medicine and Engineering, social work in India has never been recognised as a professional course, and this negative stigma has a big influence on the morale of Social Work trainees aspiring to get into communities and develop them.

The Planet Hope Young innovator's Award is a recognition of the skills and talents that young Social Work trainees have displayed through their excellent proposal writing skills. Conducting the Young Innovators Award in Salesian College was a very good experience for us at Planet Hope as we were able to inspire so many young social work trainees as well as get an opportunity to read several interesting and well-designed proposals of development. The winners for the pilot young innovators award.

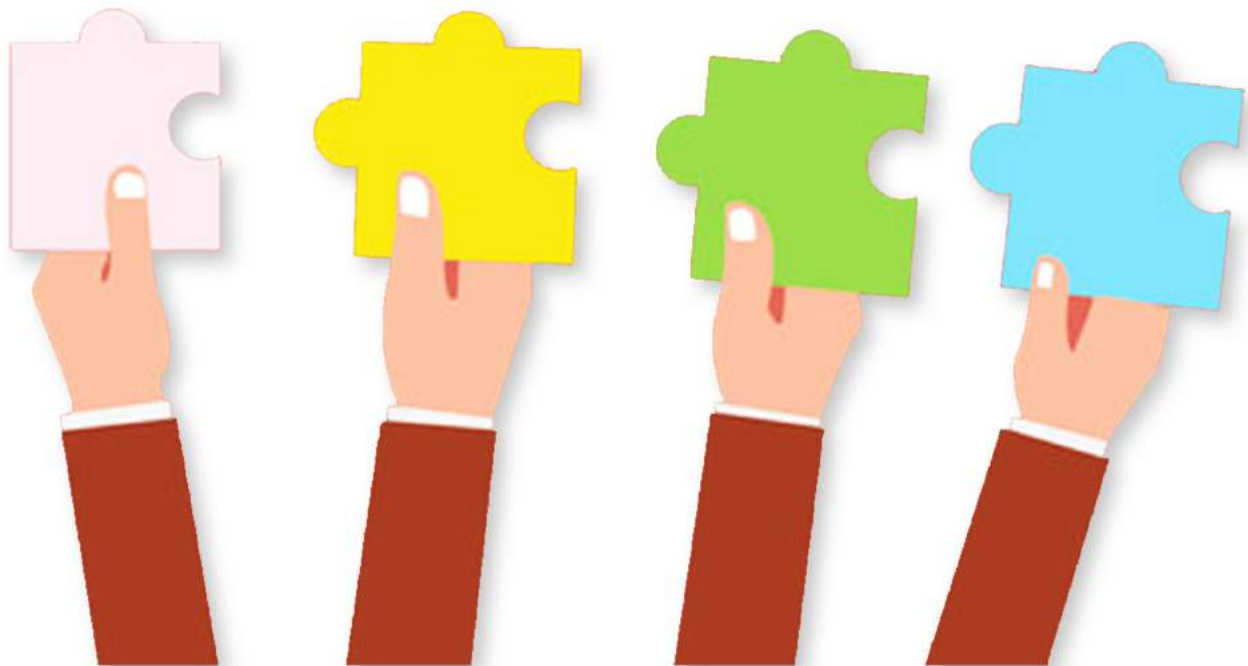




## CONCLUSION

With the pandemic still ravaging like a raging fire, we as an organisation have become first responders to the field. Planet Hope has opened up helplines for covid related support and also bereavement counselling. The team is actively engaged in organising funding efforts across the globe. We have integrated ourselves through our volunteer networks into graveyards and crematoriums. As our vocational training centres remain closed adhering to government guidelines our team has worked to move our vocational training online. We aim at staying relevant to our all too important work. While as an organisation we have faced many challenges before, this one is different. We are surrounded with stories of grief, separation and all too early goodbyes. But we have faith that this too shall pass. Using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal, we will overcome this time. We ask for your continued support and send our thanks and warmest wishes to you all.

Thank you,  
Team Planet Hope.





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# COVID-19 Emergency India Relief Fund

**SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE GREATLY AFFECTED BY THE VIRUS PANDEMIC**

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**Bank Account : NL94TRIO0390369705 [BIC : TRIO NL2U]  
Covid Relief Fund, Planet Hope Foundation**

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