

AINA Trust, Bangalore - Early Child Care Project -Chickballapur, Karnataka, India

“I seem, for my own part, to see the benevolence of the Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young children than in anything in the world.”

- William Paley

Aina is a voluntary organization working for the wellbeing of deprived children and their mothers. It is a committed NGO, working towards ensuring that every child has the basic rights of survival, education, health and every child is empowered to voice their rights and participate in all decisions making with regards to their life and well-being.

Aina's believes in building a strong-hold with the community. And all its interventions are always with the support of the community and Aina feels the need to strengthen its work with govt. departments and other NGOs.

As of today, Aina's work involves encouraging and motivating mothers and caregivers to provide quality care for children and to create a bonding relationship between their biological mothers and also with the care-givers. It works towards building community support, media involvement to promote its work and to be heard at the larger forum. It believes in forming women's group to raise its voice against child labour, child marriage and different forms of child abuses and exploitation. In the recent past Aina did organize rallies and street plays to oppose the social evils and ensure every child is in school, especially it focuses on girl child's education.

ECC Summary

Aina has initiated to intervene on early childhood care (ECC).

With the support from the Gisela and Daydalufoundations, Aina is running 30 early childhood centres (out of which ten are for children of the rag-picking community, here after mentioned as RPs) in Chickballapur district.

These centres, in fact small crèches, are run by women from the community, called "caretakers". Each centre has one caregiver and five children. In total we run 30 centres, in which AINA helps 150 children. The children are in the age from 0 to 4 years old. The centres are open 6 days a week from early morning to early evening.

The mothers of the children are wage-earners and away most of the day.

Caretakers get a small salary from AINA.

AINA controls the centres on a daily basis, trains the caretakers continuously, involves the local community, supply additional nutrition and toys for the centres.

A doctor does regular health checks and supply medication if necessary.

Last year a central building was inaugurated. This facility is used for training-sessions and all the children of the ECC's regularly visit the centre and to play.

From the age of 4 years the children go to a state run pre-school: Anganwadi. AINA also put a lot of effort in improving the, very poor, quality of the local Anganwadi's by training their teachers, and by putting pressure on them via the local community.

Family Situations

In most cases fathers in the families are drunkards and they don't take up the responsibility of the household activities, poor mothers who work as daily wage earners have to manage the family with their little income. Little children are malnourished, they are physically weak and the food they eat has no nutritive value. This has made the children prone to all common ailments and their immunity level is lowered thus stunting their growth and development. The poor mothers' young babies are carried by their

mothers during their day work. They keep their babies on their laps during their working hours, and they make their small babies to sleep in the dirty cloth cradles or on the dirty floors. There is no one to take care of children at home. All these miserable children spend their entire day with their mothers in the working place which is surrounded with smoke and dust and they have to survive in this unhygienic environment. Most of the children are untidy, have untrimmed nails, not combed hair, no oil applied on their scalps, wear dirty and unwashed clothes, and no care given for their personal hygiene. They play in sand and their body is smeared with dust and soil. When the child is hungry the mother has to feed her child with the unwashed hands and no drinking water facility is available hence they are subject to dehydration and urinary infection.

General purpose of the program

- To provide care, guidance and support for 150 children (in 30 ECC centres) from the deprived and marginalized communities, and to care for the children who have no proper shelters, no basic amenities and lack of good sanitation and whose environmental conditions are very bad.
- To facilitate young children to have all-round holistic development; health care, nutritional support and to make the children physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally strong and healthy.
- To educate the caregivers, parents and the community on child care and to ensure that the care-givers have attained qualitative skills in child care.

Objectives of the project are:

- a) To give quality child-care for 150 little children from the Muslim and Dalits community.
- b) To provide good nutrition, health care and to check on the immunization needs for all children.
- c) To train the care-givers on early childhood care and the holistic developmental of children.
- d) To provide proper trainings for the caregivers and give them awareness on their commitment and job responsibilities and also help them to understand their job as a committed work and to cultivate a passion for their jobs as caregivers.
- e) To encourage the crèches in the community and the community people to take up the responsibility and assist in providing safe and secure home environment for every little child.
- f) To train the mothers and caregivers to be aware on child rights and women's rights.
- g) To encourage and form Self Help groups and motivate the group members to become economically independent.
- h) To strengthen the network with the govt. institutions and other NGOs.

Specific Activities:

- a) The day care centres are managed with 5 children in each centre. Aina has appointed community women as child caregivers. The community women who are not otherwise employable, Aina has trained them in child-care. They have acquired skills in child-care, and run the centre in their own homes. Regular salaries are paid and the women members are engaged profitably.
- b) Aina supports the mothers and the women from the community to form core-groups and on weekly basis they are monitoring the community creches.
- c) Based on the age group the children are engaged in various activities with the support of the caregivers.
- d) Health Care: Quality Health care is given to every child to ensure good physical growth and development of children, the programme covers the following; (i) To examine the health status of children and that Aina provides with the low cost rich protein food through this

- programme. (ii) The program includes various awareness and health camps for the community and also ensures that mothers give due importance to immunization schedules.
- e) Care-Givers training: For the regular caregiver training program the following topics are covered: ‘Job responsibilities and specific role as a care-giver’; ‘Commitments, Essentials of childcare and Schedule of Work’; ‘Hygienic ways of taking care of children’; ‘Feeding and Food Preparation’; ‘First Aid’; ‘Common Illness in Children and Prevention of the same ’; ‘Nutrition and Balanced Diet for Children’; ‘Play Needs of Children’ & ‘The importance of play; ‘ Providing good environment and care for the child and child safety’; ‘Caring for sick child’, etc; The caregivers are illiterate’s and so trainings are done by demonstration and Illustrations methods.
 - f) SHGs: Formation of women self help groups to help these poor women to become self reliant and self confident. It will give economic support. It organizes awareness and training programs for women SHGs on child rights, women rights and legal rights and motivates them to raise their voice against the abuses and exploitation. Campaigns and small rallies are held for children and women with the support of the community.
 - g) Net-working: (i) Aina works with the Women and Children development Dept. Officials. It also work with the Institutions which are working for child development. (ii) Here Aina will become a role model and also gives training programme to Anganwadi teachers under the integrated child development programs. Aina further strengthen its ties and network with the govt. and nongovernmental organizations. It also work with media to propagate its program effects to the larger community. (iii) Small publications on child care manuals in the local language is prepared by Aina tis s mainly used for trainings.

Implementation

- All the activities are implemented with Aina’s Monitoring, guidance and support.
- Caregivers are selected from the community. All these women hail from the communities itself .
- Every child’s progress is monitored by keeping individual files and the progress of each child is monitored.
- Child Experts from the various fields and Aina’s staff members are training the care-givers on different child development topics.
- All these 30 centres are run in the homes of the care-givers and no rent is given as this is the contribution from the community towards the services received.
- Aina educates and motivates the community to monitor and see that the centres are running well and the care-givers are taking their jobs seriously.
- Aina provides additional protein food along with the regular meals provided by the families. Aina ensures that the families take responsibility for their children.

Profile of families and the target groups:

- In this ECC programme, Aina has 150 from the marginalized under-privileged families from Nakkalkunte, Darghamohalla, Edghamohalla, Bhaghat Singhnagar and the RPs colony .
- Aina has appointed two full time staff for close monitoring and regular follow up.
- Part-time external professionals are engaged as consultants to train care-givers.
- The mothers and caregivers are formed as the member of women self help groups.

Expected Results:

- The programme is mainly a community based programme and it runs by and for the community.
- The selected 30 community members along with the community mothers are trained in childcare and management of the child care centers.
- The child care centres are catering to the needs of the little toddlers and children between the ages 0-4 yrs from the poorest households.
- The program ensures that 150 children from the age group of 0-4 yrs from the marginalized community are cared and helped with healthy nutritional diet, physical & health care every year.
- The supplementary nutrition support helps them to build up the immunity and increases children's height and weight and decreases the common illnesses like fever, cold, cough, aches and pains. It helps children to become healthy and energetic.
- Doctors intervention and regular follow-up makes children healthier, happier and attain their full potential growth and development
- Children are disciplined, and this childcare centre will become a base for the children's school education

Expected Sustainability Aspects in the long run

- The care-givers would have achieved good skills in child care, they will be motivated and encouraged to start similar independent child-care centres in the town. The salaries of the care-givers will be the responsibility of the community and the mothers who take services from these centres.
- The program will help the poor mothers to start to save some money and to build their self-esteem and self dignity. Many mothers will start small income-generation initiatives and will slowly become self-reliant with economic growth.
- The women self help groups will build up a good rapport with the govt. depts., bank officials and will be encouraged to become economically improved. The groups will be encouraged to take up the public issues and issues of women and children with the support of the community and media.
- Many awareness and training programmes for the mothers and caregivers will help them to groom themselves and also help in parenting, childcare, personal hygiene, clean surroundings, child rights, women rights etc.
- The programme will motivate them to approach the govt. official and become aware of all the welfare measures implemented by the govt.