



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - MARCH 2017



From the Director's Desk

Let me begin by congratulating The Toy Bank team on successfully conducting the panel discussion on 'Aiding Child Development Through Toys and Play'. Discussions on breaking gender stereotypes using toys and role of toys and play in the development of a child with also laying focus on children with Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, other development disabilities etc. were the major issues raised.



It was during the discussions that the realization on how as a society it is important that we go through the process of unlearning hit me. When questions were raised as to how we can ensure that children don't stick to the gender based stereotypes while playing, we ended up questioning ourselves. How easily do we as adults break these stereotypes? Do we still poke fun at a boy/man dressed in pink?

It made me go back to this particular incident which happened to Sudha Murthy, Chairman of Infosys Foundation, was called 'cattle class' at the airport by two women travelling business class only because she happened to be dressed in a simple saree. She had mentioned this incident in her book 'Three Thousand Stitches' where she wrote that class doesn't mean huge possession of money and that the concept that you gain class by acquiring money is an outdated thought process. She was stereotyped only on the basis of her clothes!

I think it is time that we as individuals and as a society try to bring change at both microscopic and macroscopic level.

Vidyun Goel
Director
The Toy Bank

CREATION OF TOY LIBRARIES

10 Toy Libraries In Gurgaon For 506 Children Of Construction Workers

We created 10 Toy Libraries in partnership with SANTOSH impacting 506 children of construction workers. Even though a lot of relevant research has been done to identify the reasons why these children are at construction sites and not in schools, yet the access to education of these children are abysmally low. In order to achieve our mission, we created Toy Libraries for these children in centres run by SANTOSH.

Santosh Jha, Chief Functionary, told us that some of the children were getting to play with toys for the first time and their happiness knew no bounds. The teachers have started using these as a medium of imparting education. They are using these to teach children numbers, colours and alphabets. In fact, children engaging in puzzles and blocks have actually helped better their concentration and grasp on subjects.



Creation of 2 Toy Libraries for 47 Children in Kolkata in Shelter Homes

Even though majority of our work is done in anganwadis and schools/educational centres, we also try and reach out to children in institutions also known as Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP). 'Orphaned, abandoned, destitute children', 'street children', 'working children' etc. are few examples of vulnerable groups that come under the purview of CNCP definition under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000. It was in partnership with CINI that we were able to create 2 Toy Libraries for 47 children in centres run by them.

Roshnee, from CINI told us 'We are grateful to The Toy Bank to have send us these amazing toys. Our children don't get much opportunity to play with such expensive toys. The children were very excited when they got to play such toys. They also got to learn so much while playing with the toys.'

She further added that the children have already picked out their favourite toys. They received a figurine of spiderman which is their favourite character. They are very happy with the story books and regularly involve themselves in reading.



Toy Libraries in Chennai and Karnataka for 543 Underprivileged Children

Striving to uphold our vision and mission, we try and reach out to every underprivileged child to ensure they get their Right to Play. In partnership with El Shaddai, we were able to create 4 Toy Libraries in Chennai and Karnataka.

These Toy Libraries were created for underserved children from a slum area. John Thomas, City Coordinator, tells us that the children were overjoyed at seeing the Toy Kits. He added "Some children have already selected their favourite toys and sometimes it becomes difficult for them to share those toys as well. They are in fact, learning colours too using these toys." Elaborating on the same, he said that, puzzles are also a popular game among the children and they end up learning a lot during the simple process of rearranging according to the pictures/colours.



Creation of a Toy Library for 100 Children Living in Slum Areas in Mumbai

A Toy Library was created in Mumbai in partnership with Aarambh for children of migrant workers. The seasonal migrant labor population of India is estimated by some migration scholars to be as high as 100 million. Labor migrants face barriers in accessing social services and settling permanently in urban areas and often prefer to keep their link with the village, especially during the agricultural season. As a result, they “circulate” between their village and various “destination areas” for labor work, spending significant portions of the year away from home.

While migration can open new economic possibilities for families, it also comes with high risks. These risks are disproportionately felt by the children of migrants who are often compelled to travel to worksites with their parents because of which their education suffers. We were able to create Toy Libraries for migrant children in partnership with Aarambh.

Shobha Murthy, Trustee, told our team that the children jumped with joy when they first saw the toys being unpacked. In fact, it was not only the small kids that were overjoyed but also older kids started spending time with the toys. She continued “Time is being very well managed now. The older kids don’t just loiter around anymore. Once the classes are done, they come in and play. Sometimes, they even refuse to go back with their parents!”



Play Session in Toy Libraries in Noida and Gurgaon

As a part of evaluating and understanding the kind of impact that toys have on children, we visited the Toy Libraries we created in Noida and Gurgaon. The centres in Noida were created in partnership with SADRAG while the centres in Gurgaon were created in partnership with Sakshi and SANTOSH. As a part of the curriculum, we do an action song which loosely translates into "I'm alive, awake, alert and enthusiastic". The children were extremely eager and excited to learn the song and the actions. They mastered the whole song within few minutes!

They also told the team about their favourite toys. The teachers also talked about how they use certain toys to teach colours and numbers. Few teachers also demonstrated how they teach addition and subtraction using the abacus that we had given them. They also expressed that teaching has definitely become easy with the toys/games as children now pay more attention to them. Imparting knowledge using role playing was also one of the advantages.



Creation of a Toy Library in Delhi for Children with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities

At The Toy Bank, we create Toy Libraries for children with psycho-social disabilities and other developmental disabilities. We partnered with Tamanna to create Toy Libraries for children with Autism, Learning Disability etc. This was done partly with the help of students of British Council School who raised funds for us and bought new toys to be given to these children. We were able to impact 70 Children.

Since, we receive lesser donations of toys that can be used for children with learning disabilities, buying of new toys definitely helped us reach out to more children.

Rashmi Wahi, Director – Projects and Programs wrote to us, “Thank you for the lovely gesture. Our children were delighted and enjoy playing with these toys. They love dancing and singing along to the tunes of the musical toys. Tamana will be forever grateful to you for bringing a smile on the faces of these children and spreading joy in their lives.”



Creation of Three Toy Libraries in Schools in Delhi

In partnership with Teach For India, we created three Toy Libraries in collaboration with Teach For India impacting 292 children.

Richa Gupta, a Fellow with Teach for India, wrote to us 'A simple, yet powerful idea which brought a lot of smiles. The kids learnt the value of gratitude and sharing through this initiative. There were a variety of toys and none of the kids felt left out.' She thanked The Toy Bank for creating the Toy Library in her school.



Creation of 49 Toy Libraries for 1004 Underserved Children in Balwadis

The Toy Bank was successfully able to create 49 Toy Libraries for 1004 underserved children in collaboration with Pratham in the Balwadis run by them in Karol Bagh, Civil Lines and South Shahdara.



Presentation and Toy Collection Drive in KR Mangalam World School

Vidyun Goel, Director, had been invited as the Chief Guest for the Annual Presentation in KR Mangalam World School in Gurgaon. Students of Class Fourth and Fifth had put up a presentation on the city of Delhi. They explored the history and politics of Delhi City and also put up a presentation on the famous shopping areas along with popular food in the city.

The Primary School students had also donated toys to us. Vidyun Goel, in her speech, thanked the administration for encouraging children to donate toys for a cause as well as for encouraging them to put up a presentation on the city of Delhi. She also stressed on the fact that it is important for us adults to inculcate these values in our children since they learn from us. And most of the learning happens through children observing us.



Panel Discussion on 'Aiding Child Development Through Toys and Play'

The Toy Bank organized panel to discuss the importance of play and games for a holistic development of children. Discussions were done on gender neutrality and how toys/games can be a medium to reach that. Focus was also laid on how toys/games/sports create an impact on children with psycho-social disabilities.

Roopa Ganguly, MP, Rajya Sabha addressed the audience as the Key Note Speaker stressing on the importance of ensuring that each child gets to experience childhood. She also stressed on how Right to Play needs to be reinforced in our existing institutions.

The panel constituted of Rupa Kapoor, Member National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Dr. Geet Oberoi, Founder, Orkids; Sonal Kapoor, Founder Protsahan; Dr. Nandita Babu, Professor of Psychology, DU; Dr. Neerja Sharma, Managing Trustee, Pratham; Yuman Hussain, Founder, Azad India Foundation and Vidyun Goel, Director, The Toy Bank.

The panelists talked about how toys can play an important role in early childhood development and stimulation as well as how toys are crucial for children with psycho-social disabilities like Autism, Down Syndrome etc. and other developmental disabilities. The panel also shared examples on how toys can lead to empathy and social bonding between children which are as important as teaching them mainstream subjects. Finally, the panel focused on how toys can play an important role in breaking gender barriers and how adults should let them decide the toys for themselves.

Vidyun Goel, Director of The Toy Bank, moderated the session and shared that one of the major reasons she organized this event was because she realized that Rights of Child to play is completely ignored and it is high time we engage in discussions on these. She also talked about how the major focus should be on providing a holistic early childhood development through toys and play since it is during these early years that a child develops social, cognitive, physical and emotional skills that forms the foundation needed to succeed in life. Highlighting their reach, she mentioned that The Toy Bank has impacted the lives of 5 lakh children from the rural and tribal households.



Upcoming Projects

We're happy that we have our presence in 19 states. We will be soon entering our 20th state with creation of Toy Libraries in Ukhrul District, Manipur.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IMPACTED

2499

NUMBERS OF TOYS LIBRARIES

79

NUMBER OF ORGANISATION PARTNERED WITH

7

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS PARTNERED WITH

1