

THE PROJECT OF LIBERATING ACTION-KOLKATA

NAVAJYOTI DAN- KALIGHAT

HISTORY

The Kalighat project started in 2003 with the purpose of welcoming, protecting, empowering women in prostitution with various skills and offering them a dignified life. This project (the contact center) is located in the heart of the red light area, in the city of Kolkata in order to provide alternative livelihoods for women.

The specific objectives are:-

- To provide the young women a formative space for recovering and receiving integral support for their better future through training various job oriented skills.
- Reaching out their young daughters through their mothers, through home visits and facilitate them formal educations.
- Providing opportunities to work in production workshops to meet their needs.
- Follow up of the ex-girls and mothers who has already found another alternative and decent living.

This care for the women in prostitution is based on the following principles:

- Acceptance and respect for a person with all her ethnicity, rights, culture and belief.
- Support, individual attention and personal care.
- Working for the personal liberation and find an alternative livelihood.
- Combating for the dignity of a woman and her right.
- Networking with the other NGOs to rescue many young trafficked girls.

In the year 2002 our province initiated the project just with two to three women. Today many of the women have left the prostitution and also we have rescued many girls from being victims of prostitution and trafficked. In the year 2005 we have opened another contact center at Chetla close to Kalighat with the same objective of reaching out and rescuing young mothers and girls in prostitution.

We find ways and means to rehabilitate our women and girls. We have social workers, medical staff, psychologists and other professionals to support the women in their various needs. We also occasionally invite various professionals to guide women in different topics for their growth and social integration.

Since the center began, we have received support from various financial agencies, such as ManosUnidas from Spain, MISSIO from Germany, etc.

Although the contact center has 3 rooms and 2 corridors, it is insufficient for the number of beneficiaries who attend the Center. Due to lack of space, it is managed with a shift system where each beneficiary receives 2 hours of classes a day, from Monday to Friday. Around 50 girls and women regularly attend this center. Some of the admission criteria are as follows:

- Specifically for the women in prostitution.
- Young girls of the prostitute mother.
- Those who express their desire to get out of that situation and want to live a dignified life.
- Non-formal education for the prostitute women.

Accompanying the women

The center is always opened for women and they can register their names at any time during the class hour within this time the sisters and the team are always available to listen and attend to the women personally. We encourage and motivate women to participate in the tailoring workshops and for the literacy class.

Short term programs: the center is well aware of the situation of the women and girls. Accordingly it has programmed the syllabus for the women to learn. The duration for this term is six months to one year time. It creates necessary condition for the skill learning, inner healing, healthcare and counselling. We are with them on their journey toward new possibilities.

Long term programs: the centre cares for the weakest and most vulnerable. It gives ample time and opportunities for their growth and learning. The duration is one year to three years. We accompany the women in their various aspects, specially rendering them time for personal healing through active listening, yoga, regular few moments of prayer, meditation and counselling. Keeping in mind the objective of the project to rescue the prostitute women and give alternative livelihood and find a new life in their journey towards a new horizon.

Formative Action

The project works with the support of a team made up of sisters, laity and professionals. This team is well committed to the project. We give vital importance to the accompaniment and personal integration of women. Besides the skill training they are provided with classes for value education adult education, health and hygiene, personality development and saving schemes. They are given personal guidance to each beneficiary according to her need. Once a while they gather together for recreation, cultural programs and practice dance and songs. Also they have celebrations both national and religious festivals like Christmas, Foundress' day, Women's day, Diwali and Holi etc. The beneficiaries are given orientation programmes to motivate and animate them to come to the center and learn a skill for them. The center provides time for relaxation and occasional group outings to the nearby places. In a word, the center cares for each of the women who want to look to the future with a new vision of new life.