

## Greetings from Samiksha Foundation!

Our work continues with added fervour in these interesting times with unexpected challenges. For once, almost all children, with or without cancer, are on a more level playing field. School and learning continue to be the anchor for children regardless of their circumstances, and this reinforces our 11-year-old mission statement that “the pursuit of Knowledge is key to their pursuit of Happiness”. We are happy to share this report of our latest achievements with you, notwithstanding the pandemic!

In this newsletter, you will find:

- progress updates from our education program
- a tribute to a brilliant former Samiksha student
- highlights of our COVID-19 response
- the vision of the Samiksha 2.0 project

### Education program

We recorded the following student attendance at the Samiksha Foundation Learning Centres from June 2019 to March 2020:

- At Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore: **971** children attended, of which 540 were from grades 1 to 10, and 2 were in high school.
- At Mazumdar Shaw Cancer Centre, Narayana Health City, Bangalore: **534** children attended, out of which 289 were from grades 1 to 10, and 9 were in high school.

Samiksha teachers and volunteers provided tailored educational support to **9 SSLC students** as they prepared for their 10th standard board exams during lockdown. These children studied in Kannada, English, and Urdu medium, and sat exams for Hindi, English, Maths, Science, and Social Science. The teachers reached out to the students (current students as well as alumni) to understand their current needs, and provided assistance through remote teaching methods, with great results. **All 9 students passed, with 7 scoring 75% or higher.** You can see the results [in this Facebook post](#).

### Tribute

On a more sombre note, we pay loving tribute to Rafika Banu, a brilliant and hardworking Samiksha student and scholarship winner who aspired to be a doctor, and who unfortunately left us on 5 July 2020. Please [read more about Rafika's life and achievements on our website](#).

### COVID-19 response

Since 17 March 2020, we have been working from our offices in Koramangala, Bengaluru, to avoid physical contact with the immunocompromised children at the hospitals.

During the initial months of the pandemic, the Foundation supported medical workers - doctors, nurses, and support staff - by supplying them with Personal Protective Equipment (including shields and face masks) and sanitizers, helping them continue to work safely at KMIO and Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital. The team raised an additional Rs. 1,57,000 for this cause, and spent **Rs. 3,73,800** on these supplies in the first month. Thank you to those of you who contributed to this fund.

Our team then geared up to contribute towards blood donations, food, and shelter for stranded families. A total of **Rs. 12,000** was donated to families in crisis during April and May. After that, **Rs. 6,000-25,000** per month was donated for cancer treatment and extended support in paediatric oncology, either directly or through [Leukemia Crusaders](#). We donated some of the educational and recreational material at the Learning Centre at KMIO to orphanages and the Spastics Society of Karnataka.

## Samiksha 2.0

This project is a technology-based **remote teaching initiative to enhance the formal education of children with life limiting conditions in Difficult Learning Environments**. Work on this project began in November 2019. The primary goals are:

- to improve the accessibility and quality of course content for students across Grades 1 to 10 (Karnataka State, CBSE, and ICSE boards) in English and Kannada, and
- to build on our decade of expertise in this space of delivering quality education to children with life limiting conditions, improve the competencies of our teachers and volunteers, and hence improve the delivery of our teaching.

COVID-19 provided the ideal motivation to return our focus back to this project. We are now working to create an enhanced system to deliver quality education remotely to children with cancer, who are doubly jeopardised due to cancer and COVID-19 circumstances, whether at hospital or at home. We are conducting research into applicable e-learning techniques and exploring options for beneficial educational technology suitable for the delivery of special education.

We have been busier than ever laying the groundwork for this program.

**The Samiksha Yoga-CV Manual is complete.** This is a training guide to enable new instructors to conduct the Yoga and Creative Visualisation program for children with cancer and their families. We will soon begin an online Yoga teacher's training program based on this material.

The team is energetically working on the **Samiksha Education Manual** and upgraded curriculum. This involves **creating and collating resources to ensure a smooth transition from in-person teaching to virtual teaching** - an essential element of Samiksha 2.0. These are being developed in 4 vernacular languages and English. The focus is on grades 1 to 8, along the lines of the recently-announced NEP. Kudos to the externs, volunteers, and coordinators for their amazing enthusiasm.

Samiksha **teachers are undergoing training** programs on computer and English language skills, so that they can cope with the present demand of virtual teaching.

We are also using this time to **document the impact of our work over the last 11 years**, creating a narrative that will reach many more families and increase awareness of the need for non-medical educational support for children with cancer in the country.

The **Samiksha "Centre for Excellence"** is hence evolving for greater impact across the country!

## Trust announcements

The Samiksha Scholarships Program (SSP) will continue to support young cancer survivors who have studied at Samiksha. A new scholarship committee is slated to start the due diligence this October, and we will be raising funds soon for the 5th series of scholarships.

We announce the **retirement of two of our first Trustees, Mrs. Bhavani Nanjundeswaran and Ms. Vijayalakshmi Nanjundeswaran**, who served the Trust since 2009 with dedication and love. They continue to support the core team. We **welcome our new Trustees Mrs. Ranjani Ramesh and Vidushi Barnalee Sarkar** as we forge ahead with Samiksha 2.0!

## Get in touch and support our work

We continue to believe that one can always do something to improve the situation for children with cancer and their families, outside formal medical care. The ultimate aim is to increase the happiness quotient of those affected by cancer, notwithstanding their circumstances. The possibilities are endless. The results would be heartening. We welcome you to be part of this incredible journey.

To learn more about how you can help, please contact:

Dr. Manjari Bhatnagar (Director): [manjari@samikshafoundation.org](mailto:manjari@samikshafoundation.org)

Valli Narasimha (Education and Volunteer Coordinator): [admin@samikskhafoundation.org](mailto:admin@samikskhafoundation.org)

To contribute to our corpus funds, please [donate through our website](#).

With sincere gratitude to all our patrons, volunteers, teachers, doctors, children and their families.

*Together, we can make a real difference!*

Team Samiksha Foundation - Caring for Children with Cancer