

"partnering with the poor for a just world"

100% of your donation reaches the poor



Medipalli Village, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh State



Women participants of the Family Development Program in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh celebrate their strengths and success through song and dance at an Annual Family Gathering.

Towards Equality by: Laura Stinson (staff of SAFP)

"A woman is now raped in India every 20 minutes..." A statistic from the National Crime Records Bureau of India, which made international news this year with relation to the horrific cases of rape and violence towards women in India. Sources show that rape cases in India have doubled between 1990 and 2008 and that 24,206 rape cases were registered in India in 2011. The real situation in India is that the number of cases of gender-based violence is much higher, it just goes unreported.

The issues around why this culture of abuse and violence towards women exists are extremely complex. This is not a recent trend but one that stems from a deeply rooted and inherent preference for boy children and an undervaluing and lack of appreciation of girls and women. These statistics are more than just numbers to Save A Family Plan (SAFP), as the women and girls within our programs face this discrimination on a daily basis. We have seen the faces and heard the stories of those who have very real experiences with acts of emotional, physical and sexual violence.

"Men and women ought to recognize their intrinsic unity and should be able to cherish a life of mutual love, service and respect, togetherness, cooperation, and reciprocity rooted in human dignity and based on equal partnership. Only then will true progress, peace and development be brought about."

— Kerala Catholic Bishops Council of India (gender policy, 2009)

SAFP is committed to the empowerment of the poor and marginalized people of India, and to promoting a society where women, men, boys and girls are valued equally. We recognize the important role that women play within their families and communities. Our programs encourage and support them to become decision makers within the social, political and economic spheres of their lives. As women gain confidence to fully and meaningfully participate within their families and communities, they can no longer be seen as objects of burden.

Our programs also show that women are more likely to give back to their families and communities once they feel they are contributing members. Statistics show that when women can make an independent income they will give 90% of it back to their families and communities. The story of Kavitha shows the personal change and growth that is possible through SAFP's Family Development Program.

When Kavitha was born, she became the youngest of four girls in her family. Her parents were faced with the burden of paying a dowry for all of their daughters. At the age of eighteen Kavitha's marriage was arranged, but after three months they had to separate. If she stayed in the marriage her life would have been in danger. Her husband was an alcoholic who physically and mentally abused and tortured her. After her separation, she became depressed, her community ignored her, and as a result she did not have the confidence to leave her parents' house. She was traumatized by her experience and could not work or speak to anyone.

One day a social worker came to the village and gave an awareness training on the economic and social program available to the community. From this, she was motivated to join her local self-help group where she heard about SAFP. She became excited by being a part of this community of women and attended the meetings regularly. After some time, she was selected by the group to become a participant of SAFP's Family Development Program. Through financial support she



A participant of the Family Development Program from Marthandom, Tamil Nadu co-owns a tailoring business with her husband, which they named after their daughter.

received from SAFP she was able to begin her own clothing sales business, where she went door-to-door in the village to sell clothes. Kavitha explains how these small successes began to motivate her: "From this business I received a good income, which boosted my confidence. I received training in tailoring, and with all of these skills I planned to start up a tailoring unit." Slowly her business grew. Initially, she used her home for a shop but eventually she had saved enough money to rent a store front nearby and purchase two more tailoring machines. She is now running her own small business, continuing to sell clothes within the community, and earning approximately \$140.00 a month.

Kavitha expresses the change in attitude and confidence she has experienced and how she hopes to help others in the community do the same: "I am proud to say that through my small business I'm able to employ another girl from my village from a very poor family background. I am now able to help people who are also in difficult situations. Through my experience, I wish to teach tailoring to other widows and abandoned women in our community, so that they feel the same confidence and pride that I do."

Village members come together for a cleaning day in a community near Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu. By keeping the village tidy, they can reduce the presence of insects and control the spread of diseases, leading to a more healthy community.



Members of SAFP's Family Development Program participate in a Central Level Meeting lead by one of our local staff. Through SAFP families receive knowledge and skills training to help increase their awareness and capacity in addressing poverty-related issues.

SAFP staff members meet with a newly selected family in Golconda near Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. Through SAFP, families like this one are supported in opening bank accounts, developing small businesses, accessing local resources, and building their capacity.



"I alone cannot change the world..." by: **Fatima Gomes (Teacher of St. Edmund Campion)**

On March 1st 2013 our group of fourteen teachers and students from St. Edmund Campion Catholic Secondary School in Brampton, Ontario, Canada embarked on a life changing journey to India, as part of a social justice project with our school. The goal was to raise awareness of the situation of the poor of India, listen and learn from them and their stories, and to be in solidarity with them.

When we arrived we spent the first few days in Kerala where we stayed at SAFP's inspiring headquarters.

"Kochi was beautiful and the SAFP staff were so welcoming. I felt like I was surrounded by family." – Karen

As a school, we took on the commitment of supporting two families for the next six years through the Family Development Program. Both families are located close to the SAFP office, so we were able to organize a day to visit with them. Finally, the day had come for us to meet the families, we couldn't wait.

"Although we were not able to communicate in the same language, we were able to work and get to know each other through smiles, kind gestures and our willingness to learn from one another." -- Chelsea

They were family now and it was hard to know that they are living in these difficult situations. It was a very emotional experience and completely unforgettable.

"The thing that touched me the most was knowing that each day our families were praying for our well-being. They even had us write our names down on a sheet of paper and would pray for us every day. I think this was the most touching moment of my experience." – Zenaida

When we arrived in Kolkata to volunteer with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, we encountered and saw the impact of poverty and inequality that many of us have never seen in our life. We were experiencing culture shock that was forcing us all to reflect on our own lives and privileges which we take for granted everyday back home. Every night of the trip we would all meet up as a group to reflect on our day. That night was a special reflection because we were learning a lot and our own thoughts and perspectives were expanding rapidly. It became evident to us that as shocking as it all was, it was and still is reality to the people living in Kolkata.

"I realized that we complain about minuscule things in comparison to what people in India endure. I appreciated for the first time in a long time, everything and everyone in my life." – Tania

Our final destination was one of SAFP's partner's, the St. Joseph's Service Society - Sanjoepuram Children's Village, in the Northern State of Haryana. Sanjoepuram is a village of schools and homes for children with disabilities. We spent a few days with the children, working alongside them and sharing our gifts with each other. One girl read us a story in braille, another very young girl recited a bible story to us aloud and in sign language at the same time. The children continually impressed us by how much they accomplished despite having disabilities.

"While visiting all of these places in India, they all taught me the same lesson. We must never stop smiling and always believe in a better future." – Reuben

"This experience was a confirmation of what I want to do when I get older which is social work and I recommend it to anyone who is contemplating on going." – Christine

Now that we are home with our new perspectives our mission does not end. We know that we can't keep this life-changing experience to ourselves. It is our hope that we can shape the attitudes and inspire others who will lead the fight for social justice.

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." – Mother Teresa



Save A Family Plan

If you have questions, would like to make a donation, or inquire about

booking a presentation, please contact us!

P.O. Box 3622
London, ON
Canada
N6A 4L4

P.O. Box 610157
Port Huron, MI
USA
48061

Phone: (519) 672-1115 **Fax:** (519) 672-6379
E-mail: safpinfo@safp.org **Website:** www.safp.org

SAFP Charitable Registration Numbers:

BN 11914 1943 RR0001 (Canada) 98-600-4051 (USA)

Read stories and articles about SAFP on our blog at:

www.saveafamilyplan.me



**Help us reach our goal of supporting 2,500 new families this year!
Contact us for more information.**

**SAVE A FAMILY PLAN IS COMMITTED TO SEEKING JUSTICE AND WORKING WITH THE MARGINALIZED AND POOR OF INDIA
REGARDLESS OF CASTE, CREED, GENDER OR POLITICAL AFFILIATION**