



Proposal to work together to provide support to children with multiple disabilities at the Samerth Talim Kendra (STK), Ahmedabad

A Quest Towards Collective Action for Freedom & Development

Our vision is to build a humane, sustainable & equitable society

Summary of our Plan

Samerth Charitable Trust is one of the only registered NGO providing specialised services for children and young adults with intellectual disabilities such as mentally challenged, down syndrome, autistic, children with cerebral palsy etc. in Juhapura area of Ahmedabad.

Geographically Juhapura is a neighbourhood in new west zone of Ahmedabad, the area was developed in 1973 for the people who lost their homes in the flood that year. Juhapura was a small suburb with a small population until the mid-1980s, but after the communal riots of Gujarat from 1985 until 2002, many Muslims migrated from the Muslim and Hindu-dominated areas of Ahmedabad and the surrounding cities to Juhapura, causing a great influx of population. Juhapura is an area that broadly encompasses areas of Sarkhej, Vejalpur & Makarba and is the densest concentration (above 4 lakh people) of Muslims in a single area in Gujarat. Thus giving rise to a unique socio-economic environment.

Samerth Charitable Trust (SCT) is working with children and young adults with development and intellectual disabilities to provide services that help develop their basic communication and independent living at the Samerth Talim Kendra (STK) in Juhapura area.

The centre is currently helping 86 children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to receive therapies by trained and qualified professionals. Along with support for these children, Samerth is also ensuring access to education and rehabilitation training where these children and young adults can learn to live independent. The impact of the existing project has begun to bring change in the lives of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and also their families thus providing for a strong foundation for the proposed project interventions.

Under this project, children & young adults with disabilities will be trained at the centre and homes also to learn communication and daily-living skills, and receive basic education, access to need based therapies. Under these new circumstances we have had to change the entire structure of the programme keeping in mind the social distancing norms, threat to health and especially the danger of Covid-19 being contracted by children and young adults with disabilities. For the next three years, or till the threat to life from Covid 19 decreases, each child will come to the centre once a week to begin with. Rest of the days parents will be trained to work hands on with them at their homes during a sessions where the special educator will be connected with them via an audio/ video call to help them and also monitor and ensure the curriculum is being followed as per guidelines.

The project will cost **Rs. 34.90 Lakh** in Year 1

Background to Samerth Talim Kendra (STK)

It is estimated that there are about 10.92 lakh persons with disabilities in Gujarat alone. From its establishment in 2007, today we have been instrumental in bringing hope in the lives of more than 300 children & young adults along with their families .

Samerth Talim Kendra (STK) – was established in 2007, 5 years after Samerth Trust started its operations in Ahmedabad. There had been a long standing demand for the kendra in the operational area covering Juhapura (encompassing Makarba Vejalpur & Sarkhej areas). It is a ghettoized area with poor civil amenities and lack of infrastructure. Samerth works with marginalized and disadvantaged communities living in slums and shanties.

While working with children and young adults with disabilities in the community, the Samerth team recognised that girls face a double disability! They not only have to cope with the development or intellectual disabilities they have but also face a major socio-cultural barrier. Parents are reluctant to send these girls outside of the fear of abuse, plus there is very little motivation to invest in time and resources to ensure they receive the appropriate services. Thus the ratio of girls to boys availing such services is always low. Therefore Samerth has made a conscious move through its work to bridge this gap, ensure that these girls are provided the services that will bring a positive impact in their lives.

Over the years the program has been supported by various small donors for short periods of time. Though thoroughly underfunded, the program has survived and even flourished because of the need from the community to have the one of a kind centre in this area. Samerth trains women from within the community as teachers and equips them with knowledge through training on available courses on disability from professional institutes that helps them gain not only professional training but also in depth knowledge on working with children and young adults with disabilities.

Our USP: Samerth works with the local community to develop sustainable services for children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and also collaborates with the government at centre and state levels.

Our Head office is in Ahmedabad, and we also have field offices in Kutch, Gujarat and Raipur, Chhattisgarh. We provide direct high quality education and other services in these 2 states; as well we organise skills training and livelihood support to a young adults. We also provide training for families to understand and integrate with their differently-abled family members; and we provide training of professionals to provide quality support.

We are registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act and hold a 50% tax exemption certificate from Income Tax u/s 80G of Income Tax Act, 1961.

Please see the Attached Annexure 1 which provides details of Samerth Charitable Trust, Management and Credibility.



Arhaan Sheikh a 9-year-old boy was born with Down Syndrome and later developed speech and hearing impairments at the age of 3. He came to Samerth Talim Kendra (STK) when he was 4 years old and at that time he was unable to walk by himself and needed to be carried everywhere. Arhaan currently lives with his parents and two siblings in Sarkhej, Ahmedabad. His father works as mechanic in a garage and his mother is a housewife.

When he joined STK he was unable to communicate his basic needs and only managed through simple gestures and actions that only his mother understood thus making him completely dependent on her. As he started coming to the centre he underwent regular speech and physio therapy. Special educators worked with

him to independently perform daily living activities. A specific goal-based action plan was developed for him, which was reviewed every quarter.

Today Arhaan can walk independently and can even sit comfortably without support. He is able to say complete sentences and can independently go to the neighbourhood grocer alone where he is able to identify different denominations while paying. He enjoys playing with his siblings and has great interest in cars. He loves going with his father to the garage and likes to lend him a helping hand.

"I never dreamt that one day I will be able to see Arhaan walk and talk like my other children. That not only will he become self-sufficient, but will be able to help me in my chores! This gives me great hope that Arhaan will be able to lead a life of dignity"- Tasleema Banu Sheikh, Arhaan's mother- (her quote has been translated from Gujarati, her native tongue).

Why establish a programme in Juhapura, Ahmedabad?

There are an estimated 8,000 children and adults with disabilities living in Juhapura, Vejalpur, Sarkhej & Makarba areas of Ahmedabad. There is a paucity of organisations that are working in the area and even fewer still that are working with children and young adults with disabilities. Samerth has uniquely positioned itself as one of the pioneer organisation that has taken the lead in working for a population that not only is marginalised but also belongs to one of the largest ghetto's in Gujarat by setting up the STK within the community.

Samerth Charitable Trust over the last 13 years has successfully supported more than 300 children with various disabilities to gain access to need based facilities such Individualized Education Programme (IEP), speech, occupational and sensory therapies along with regular visits by paediatric neurologists and other specialists. Samerth also ensures that each child receives the nutritional food requirement, an essential part for their growth and development.

Our experience of working with children and young adults with disabilities has provided us with a good understanding of their priority needs which has culminated in the option to provide a range of services to the marginalised population rather than focus on just one aspect. Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and various needs of persons with disabilities at different stages of their life, this project will work with all the stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, their families, teachers and govt. officials, etc. to bring the meaningful changes in their lives.

Children and adults with disabilities will be provided with educational, therapeutic and independent living by trained and qualified professionals. These services will be offered through our centre based programme. We will also build capacity of the community and special educators/ Government teachers to further extend the benefit to children and adults with in inclusive education set-up. This project is therefore designed to meet the needs of children with disabilities and living across Juhapura- Makarba, Sarkhej & Vejalpur area of Ahmedabad.

COVID and its impact on the programme:

Impact of Covid on the current program : The centre and the children have suffered greatly due to Covid pandemic. The lockdown was abruptly initiated and caught the entire organisation and the communities in which SCT is working unaware as it did globally. After the initial week of mayhem, Samerth immediately went into relief mode and started providing essential ration supplies to the families who had lost all means of livelihood & any source of income and even exhausted their meager savings. Samerth then went ahead and provided nutrition kits for the children from STK, as we could see regression like certain children had shown progress in communication for example acquiring language went back to just gestures. The therapists confirmed that one of the factors for the same was poor diet. We also began reaching out to them through one on one video calls for physio & speech therapy as well as extracurricular activities by the special educators.

Now, as the unlocking begins in phases we plan to start calling 16 children per day (Monday-Friday) to the centre and work with them on an individual level (each child will come to the centre once a week for educational intervention, receive therapy twice a week along with exposure to extra curricular activities through online learning. In total we will be reaching out to 100 children and young adults through this programme. The current facility has four rooms, each room can accommodate upto four children while maintaining social distancing norms and following other preventive guidelines by WHO on Covid -19 .This will ensure social distancing, everyone's temperatures will be checked before entering the premises, and any one with symptoms of cough, cold or tiredness will be asked to take rest till the symptoms subside. People with higher symptoms will be tested for Covid. We can reach out to 20 children (who have severe disability and cannot come to the centre) whom we will reach out through home based interventions. One special educator will be assigned per room, who will dedicatedly work with each child.

What we plan to do:

This new project will provide a variety of support and educational services to **100** children and young adults with disabilities including their identification and provision of educational support over a period of three years.

	Objectives of the project	Activities	Outcome by the end of the 3rd Year
1	Continue to support children & young adults with disability in the community with special focus on girl child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Survey to be conducted by trained field workers in private & government hospitals, paediatrician etc to understand the number of children born/ identified with a disability and later contacting the families one on one.● Sensitisation of health professionals, Aanganwadi workers and local government authorities through communication material and leveraging technology such as short films, video messaging, posters , hosting webinars which can be conveyed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Collecting data from private and government health centre/ hospitals catering to a population of 8000 house holds.● Across 3 years we shall reach out to 30 additional children and young adults (we shall aim to ensure that at least 30% of this number shall be girls) will be identified and enrolled to avail services at the centre – on daily basis, once a week or home based services for very severe cases.

		<p>maintaining social distancing norms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Samerth team will work towards creating awareness on preventive measures on various causes (physical, social-cultural) in the area that lead to an increase in number of children born with disabilities with a focus on women within the community who are made aware of impact of consanguineous marriages, poor diet before, during and post pregnancy of mothers, early pregnancy etc. 	
2	Ensure the identified children receive Centre-based and/ or Home-based services by leveraging technology .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical & functional assessment & therapies to be provided using technology to provide home based services to children coming to the centre as per the timetable/ schedule developed keeping the new norms in place • Development of an ‘individual education plan’ (IEP) for each individual, based on which therapies are designed and implemented – speech /physio and psychotherapy. • Provision of aids and appliances, • Training in daily-living skills, social and functional skills. • Regular nutrition to be provided to all children coming to the Kendra • Health checkups to be conducted regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 130 children and young adults shall receive goal based therapies which will be monitored and have measurable impact. • Regular clinical assessments shall be undertaken for all children at the centre by neuro paediatrician, Neuro ENT specialists etc • Weekly meetings and home visits with parents /care takers on issues such as nutrition, training on sexual & hygiene issues, and therapies to be undertaken at home. • Impact based Individual plan targeting the children to become independent to the extent possible.
3	Build capacity of staff to work with children disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular training through webinars & online training on issues such as adolescent sexual health & behaviors, Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC – where children with speech difficulties find it difficult in communicating with the caretaker and family members) from experts in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a team of local people and exposing them to various training and experts from the field leading to capacity building of the community that has high incidence of disability. • Creating experts in an under represented area of the community. • Ensure cross learning of local practices with scientific methods of the team members.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two additional mentors in our mentor-ship program from experienced organisation to handhold the team on a monthly basis • Exposure visits are an ideal method to learn from an organisation with good practices for the team to learn & execute- however given the current situation these will be limited to one session in an organisation where its safe for our team to travel and visit. • Teachers given an opportunity to a attend online training organised by reputed organisation to build networks, promote cross learning if and when possible. 	
4	Build capacity of government teachers on disability issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of government school teachers on the RPwD Act, 2016. Capacity building of teachers to help them better understand the causes of various disabilities, approach required to work with children with disabilities will be done through webinars by experts. • Training teachers and through them even children to be more empathetic, accepting and inclusive towards children with disabilities • Training and supporting the the School Development Committee to create infrastructure more accessible to special children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 government school teachers from 10 schools sensitized on disability hoping that this will reduce the dropout of children with disabilities that have enrolled. The same 20 teachers would be hand held through the year by the team to build their perspective and understanding on working with children with disabilities. • Capacity building of other teachers in each of these schools by Samerth trained teachers through quarterly meetings on importance and impact of inclusion. • At least 60 teachers in trained directly by the end of the project period.
5	Create awareness regarding COVID pandemic and develop a strategy to support the therapies/and use of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating awareness on Covid - 19 Myths & facts, health risks and preventive measures to be taken by the teachers, Parents, family members and the community. • Emphasis on ensuring that the children continue to receive services & therapies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained the special educators to take up activities with the use of technology • Work with the therapist to conduct online sessions • Work with parents to support children at home

The collaboration we envisage with a Corporate Donor

Engagement: Samerth Charitable Trust is working towards bringing about awareness with regard to disabilities especially within marginalised communities. To this end, we recommend the following engagement steps.

We would appreciate if you could take a policy decision to financially support the STK, as we are currently not in a position to take on this responsibility. Following a policy decision we recommend:

- Select a team of up to four persons to visit our centre. This enables the group to really see what we do. Employees are frequently moved by this experience. Social Distancing norms shall be followed.
- Samerth would submit reports on a six-month basis.
- Samerth would provide a copy of our Annual Report to designated individuals, which provides a summary overview of programme achievements, along with summary financial.
- Samerth would love if your team members and their families would celebrate their birthdays, anniversaries, etc with our children virtually or by making a donation in kind that will support the nutritional needs, medical needs of the children.
- Can even host a virtual event or run an online campaign for us or even participate on behalf of Samerth in virtual runs/ events/ marathons/ cyclothons to help raise awareness and additional funds for the project.

This project would make a substantial contribution towards improving the lives of children & young adults with disabilities and their families living in Juhapura- Sarkhej, Vejalpur & Makarba areas and shall be an extension to the work previously supported by other Corporate. Through the project, services would be provided to enable these children live full and active lives.

On this project:

- **Lead Contact:** Programme Director: Rajul Bharti- rajul@samerth.org
- **Project Manager for this Project:** Programme Manager: Afroz Baig- afroz@samerth.org

For general communication with Samerth Charitable Trust

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Please see the Attached Annexure 1 which provides details of Samerth's Governance, Management and Credibility.

General Information about Samerth Charitable Trust

1	Our USP: Samerth works with unreached and marginalised communities by ensuring their entitlements are met through education opportunities, natural resource management and promoting livelihoods. We believe in collaborating with government programmes for wider reach and impact.
2	Samerth's major programs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Ground Water Management • Education • Livelihood • Disability
3	Samerth currently works in two districts in Gujarat and 8 districts in Chhattisgarh

Legal Status (details available on request)

4	Registered as a Public Charitable Trust under the Bombay Public Trusts Act in 1950. Registration no: E-9150
5	12A Income Tax Registration
6	Samerth Charitable Trust is a legally registered charity in the USA and has tax exemption under section 501(c)
7	No court case has ever been taken out against Samerth Charitable Trust; neither has Samerth Charitable Trust ever taken a case against a third party.

Financial (details available on request)

8	Income for FY 2019-20: Rs 6.55 Crores
9	Audited Accounts passed for the past 3 Financial Years
10	Annual Report 2018-19: Developed for public distribution
11	Statutory Auditors: H. Rustom & Co., A.S. Shaikh & Co., Ahmedabad
12	Bankers: Bank of India, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank & State Bank of India – Ahmedabad

Governance & Management

13	<p><u>Board</u>: Samerth Charitable Trust is governed by a Board which meets twice a year. The Board members are elected and serve a term of three years only. Current Board members are :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ms. Gazala Paul- Managing Trustee & Founder Member, Samerth Charitable Trust2. Dr. Yogendrasinh Jadeja- Trustee Director of Arid Communities & Technologies3. Ms. Chinmayi Desai,- Programme Manager at Saath Charitable Trust4. Dr. Sara Ahmed,- Centre For Heritage Management Ahmedabad University Adjunct Professor& Founder Of Living Water Museum5. Mr. Gaurang Raval- Suahard Founder Trustee/theatre Person6. Ms. Nafeeza Pavri -Director, Ashoi Consultancy -Non Profit strategist,Resource mobilisation and communication specialist.
14	<p><u>Samerth's Executive Director</u>: Gazala Paul is the founding member and Managing trustee of Samerth Charitable Trust. She brings with her over 30 years of experience of working in the development sector with organisations like Oxfam UK and Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK. She has been the recipient of several awards and accolades and is known for her expertise in the areas of gender based issues and water management and conservation.</p>

Individual giving

15	<p>Samerth has begun and made a small effort in raising funds from Individuals through various events and online campaigns. Samerth is working on an Individual Giving strategy .</p>
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Corporate support - Examples

16	<p>GRUH Finance-supporting Samerth's Talim Kendra, centre since FY 2014 and have supported our programmes be it the Samerth Talim Kendra for Mentally Challenged children and the community Centres for School dropouts in Ahmedabad. The total amount of support received is Rs 1.34 Cr</p>
17	<p>PPG Asian Paints-support grant of Rs. 40 lakh per annum for our work in setting up community centres and our work with government schools in Ahmedabad district.</p>

Grant-making Foundation support – Examples

18	<p>APPI- project grant sanctioned of Rs 3 Crore for three years (FY 2019-23); support towards Water Resource Management for leveraging Govt funds in Rapar, Kutch district.</p>
19	<p>India Development Relief Fund, USA- has supported our work since 2009 onwards towards creating water assets in extreme arid areas of Kutch Dist., Gujarat & in Kwardha Dist., Chhattisgarh. The total grant amount received across 10 years has been approx. Rs 5 Crore till date.</p>
20	<p>WIPRO Foundation- grant to support our work in improving teaching & learning methods (TLM) in government schools in Ahmedabad Dist. The project period is FY 2017-23 with a</p>

	grant of Rs 12 lakh per annum.
21	WaterHarvest, UK- has been supporting Samerth from FY 2017 with a grant amount of Rs 25 lakh per annum towards building rain roof water harvesting structures in schools and households of Kutch Dist., Gujarat.
22	PPG Asian Paints supporting Education Programme in Ahmedabad with a grant amount of Rs 65 Lakh

Awards (few examples)

22	<u>GuideStar India Transparency Awards 2020</u> awarded Platinum certification by GuideStar India. The award recognises organisations that practise and voluntarily demonstrate their transparency and accountability in the public domain.
23	<u>Gujarat NGO Leadership Award</u> by World CSR Congress, Mumbai in 2017
24	<u>International Women's meet on Nonviolence and Peace</u> , Peace Leader Award by Gandhi Research Foundation, 2016
25	<u>Samman Patra</u> , on 15 th August 2015 for our work with the poor first generation toilet users by the Collector & District Magistrate, Bhuj -Kutch, Government of Gujarat
26	Ms Gazala Paul, Managing Trustee of Samerth awarded Phoenix Leading Lady Award 2019 in the category of 'Social Change'.

Endorsements (few examples)

27	We are registered with Give India, the most respected national online payment portal which promotes individual and employee giving.
28	Charities Aid Foundation India Validated Charity in 2015.
29	Empanelment of Organisations by National CSR Hub, Tata Institute of Social Science, National CSR HUB- 2015.
30	Certificate of Accreditation on Desirable Norms by Credibility Alliance an organisation established to set high standards of Governance and Public Transparency for the nonprofit sector in India.
31	Samerth has been rated 5 Stars for its Accountability by Help Your NGO, an organisation that standardises and analyses NGOs in India.