





Restoring Smiles...

A Report on the Psycho Social Support programmes through Muppet Shows; Phase-II

Conducted by,
Myrtle Social welfare network

Funded by,
UNICEF

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Restoring Smiles...

A Report on the Psycho Social Support programmes through Muppet Shows

1. The Introduction - One year on...

The MYRTLE SOCIAL WELFARE NETWORK with the support of UNICEF had organized 100 Muppet shows for the children in Nagapattinam, Cuddalore and Kanyakumari Districts who are affected by tsunami. These shows are designed so as to help the children combat stress and depression. The show aims to restore normalcy in the lives of the children. The Muppets were used as effective medium to enable the children to voice out their feelings and to restore their hopes that was washed away by the Tsunami.

Muppets on the move to restore smiles...

In the year 2005...

- 50 shows were conducted in Nagapattinam - The district most affected by the tsunami
- 25 shows were conducted in Cuddalore District
- In Kanyakumari District 25 Muppet shows were organized
- One special show was organized for the children residing in one of the temporary shelter of Chennai

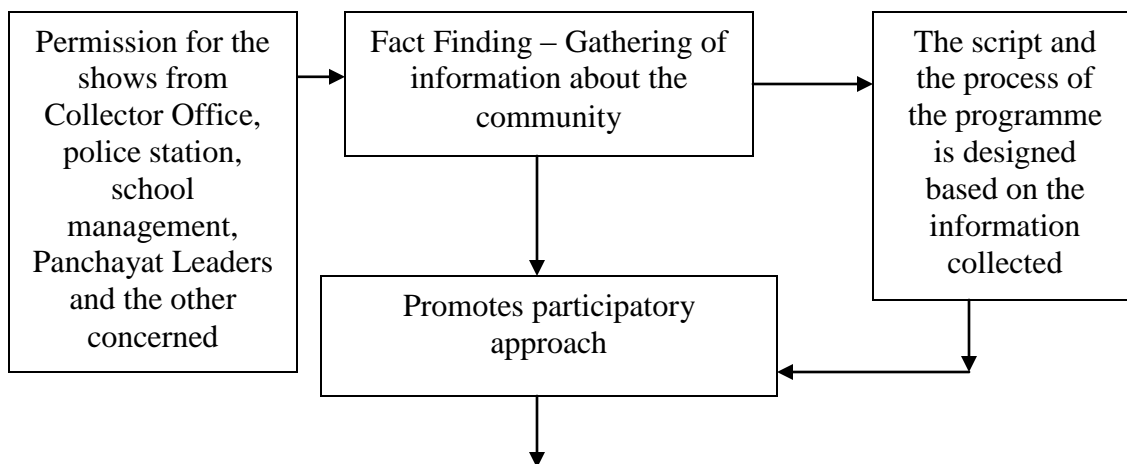
There were many children who were left out in the process... Myrtle and UNICEF engaged in yet another attempt to reach out to the children in the tsunami affected villages in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam Districts. 20 shows were conducted in the first quarter of the year 2006. It was yet another successful endeavor as it resulted in further transformation of the lives of the children who had less scope to overcome their traumatic experience. Rosy and her Muppet team engaged in acts of miracle to help the children restore their forgotten smiles...

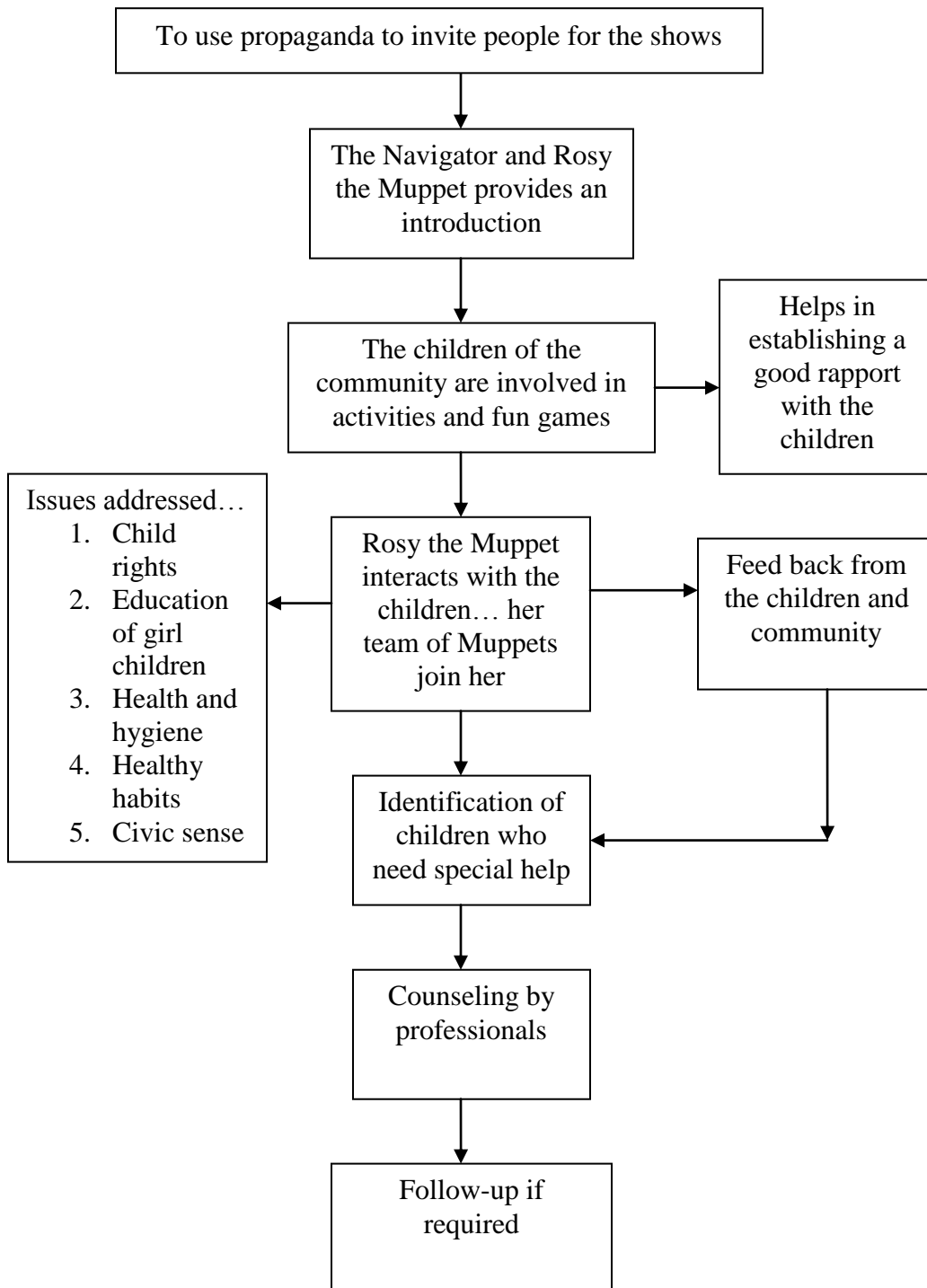
2. Objectives - Reaching out...

- To reach out to the children affected by tsunami to overcome fear and depression through Muppet shows
- To enable the children ventilate their suppressed feelings and emotions
- To restore normalcy in the lives of the children affected by the tsunami
- To prepare the children to face any future disaster – Impart awareness on disaster preparedness
- To use the children as catalyst of change in the community
- To impart education on health and hygiene
- To bring back the forgotten smiles in the face of the children...



3. The process





4. The Muppets in action...

The Myrtle Muppets made a difference in the lives of the children residing in the various villages affected by tsunami...

The Muppet's Miracle were extended to

1. Temporary shelters
2. Tsunami affected villages
3. Orphanages for the tsunami affected children
4. Schools in the tsunami affected areas

Performance in temporary shelters -

The Muppets performed in 11 temporary shelters, there were 2220 children participants and 1495 adults also enjoyed the performance. The children in temporary shelters were subjected to a lot of misery. There were lack of privacy, health and hygiene related issues. The programmes were designed in such a way so as to address the issues specific for the children residing in the cramped up, dingy and unhygienic temporary shelters.

The issues addressed specifically for the children in the temporary shelters were...

- Importance of Education,
- Child Rights,
- Personal Health and Hygiene
- Need for cleanliness
- Child labour
- Awareness on access to child line help services

Name of the temporary shelter	Number of participants		District
	Children	Adults	
Akkaraipettai temporary shelter	300	150	Nagapattinam
Kadambadi temporary shelter	250	300	Nagapattinam
Chillady Nagar	230	150	Nagapattinam
vedanayagam chetty street shelter	350	150	Nagapattinam
Nambiar Nagar	120	80	Nagapattinam
Nagoor Bridge	120	150	Nagapattinam
Oosi Madha Koil houses	75	70	Nagapattinam
Kallar village	250	150	Nagapattinam
Thirumullaivasal	100	25	Nagapattinam
Tharangambadi	150	70	Nagapattinam
Keechankuppam	275	200	Nagapattinam
Total	2220	1495	Nagapattinam

Mr. Saji Thomas, UNICEF, Program officer for Child Rights and Protection Participated in the show that was conducted in Nambiar Nagar (Railway Gate) vedanayagam chetty street shelter on 22nd December 2005. About 350 children and 150 adults



participated in this programme. On this day Mr.Kannayiram, UNICEF consultant for Child Protection Participated in the show that was conducted at Keechankuppam on 18th December 2005. These people were entertained through puppet shows and inputs were given on Personal Hygiene and Cleanliness; importance of education as well as the need for higher studies.

Performance in villages-

Performance was conducted in 5 villages of Cuddalore District. 770 children and 440 adults participated in this programme.

Name of the village	Number of participants		District
	Children	Adults	
Singarathoppu	100	80	Cuddalore
Pudukuppam	120	90	Cuddalore
Sothikuppam	150	100	Cuddalore
Muzukuthurai	150	70	Cuddalore
C.Pudupet	250	100	Cuddalore
	770	440	Cuddalore

Performance in orphanages for the children affected by the tsunami -

For the children in Annai Sathya Government Orphanage Rosy brought forth a lot of good tidings. These children residing in the orphanage had lost their parents during the tsunami. They had undergone untold misery but Rosy's performance was a soothing balm for their pain. These children were taught the values of being a good and clean child, child rights, personal health and hygiene etc. Rosy performed for the 100 children in the orphanages. When the children were asked they said "We love Rosy and we would love to meet her again..."

Performance in the schools in the tsunami affected areas-

In a warm afternoon the children of Chinmaya Vidhyalaya School were enthralled to witness the puppet show performed by myrtle network. 570 students and 40 teachers enjoyed Rosy's performance.



The most appreciated factor according to a teacher was “It was very informative especially the students were sensitized about the child line number... the children were glad and we all enjoyed the show...”

Cultural Exhibition...

A two day cultural exhibition was organized by NCRC (NGO Coordination and Resource Centre) at Vellipalayam Bus Depot. On behalf of UNICEF, Myrtle has conducted a puppet show for school children and the visitors of the exhibition. Around 500 children and 150 adults participated. Mr.Saji Thomas, UNICEF, Program officer for



Child Rights and Protection, Ms. Pramila Manoharan, UNICEF, Program Officer for Education and the District Consultants for UNICEF- Nagapattinam graced the occasion with their presence. Mr. Godson Mohandas, UNICEF's Consultant for Education coordinated towards implementation of the programme.

5. Making a difference...



Rosy had made a remarkable change in the behaviour of 12 years old Sandhya. The day Rosy came to their village and emphasized on personal hygiene Sandhya was determined to follow Rosy's Advice. She was found brushing her teeth in the night after the Muppet show in Nambiar Nagar shelter.

The Myrtle team witnessed the scene and interacted with Sandhya and her family. Rosy has indeed made a difference in the life of Sandhya

In the photograph are Vinita (12), Pradeep (10) and Santhosh (7), brushing their teeth during the night immediately after the show. All three of them are siblings. Rajesh (10) (The green checked shirt), was a school drop out, and he shared with the Myrtle team his dreams, “I like Rosy I will try to do what she tells me.... I will try to go to school... I like Rosy...”



Kabilan (2) lost his mother when the Tsunami struck his village. He was one year old and he developed the habit of cry in the nights. He used to crave for his mother’s love and cry out for her every night. The family in order to curtail his crying used to give him the feeding bottle, at times with milk and most of the times without it. Rosy had performed a miracle in the life of Little Kabilan. The Myrtle team

in the proceedings of their programme understood the child’s problem and intervened with the help of their puppets.

The child was made to understand that it was not good to drink from an unclean bottle and from the next day little Kabilan had given up the habit of using the feeding bottle. Rosy had indeed made a difference in the life of the little child who had lost a lot with the tsunami.

6. Conclusion

Myrtle believes in making a difference in the lives of the children who lost so much in the tsunami... The plan for the future is to strive to achieve a bright future for the children, to equip the children of certain skills that will empower them to help themselves and also their fellow brethren in distress. Myrtle's vision for the future is to train the children affected by Tsunami to perform puppetry, to provide leadership and communications training for the children, to empower the children to perform shows in front of audience and to facilitate the children to reach out to other affected children by means of puppetry. Myrtle aims to bring about a change in the lives of the children and equip them to become better citizens of the country...

- Report Submitted by

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Myrtle Social Welfare Network

28/04/06

Chennai

"It may be that we are puppets-puppets controlled by the strings of society. But at least we are puppets with perception, with awareness. And perhaps our awareness is the first step to our liberation."

– Stanley Milgram