Communication DEALL - An indigenous model for Autism intervention

Bangalore, India
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Year Founded:
2000
Organization type:
nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Project Stage:
Scaling
Budget:
$1 million - $5 million
Website:
http://www.communicationdeall.org

- Disability
- Early childhood development
- Education reform

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

The Communication DEALL program was developed by Dr. Karanth, as a self-sustaining model to bridge the gap between the large numbers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and the near total lack of services for the same, in the context of an emerging economy.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The specifics of the model were developed to address the challenges of intervention in the Indian context - the child to trained therapist ratio, high costs of intervention, lack of facilities for sustained care, families often having to uproot themselves in search of interventionists who are primarily available only in the cities and the burden of traveling with a special needs child in order to access services.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

The program provides intensive early intervention so as to optimize the child's potential to join mainstream society, thereby reducing the demands for sustained care. The program is well documented and can be replicated wherever there is a need for services. Families do not have to travel large distances to access services. Multidisciplinary inputs ensure a holistic perspective of the child. It is a group intervention program, with a therapist to child ratio of 1:4, thereby optimizing the scant resources available.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Aryan was three years old when he joined the Com DEALL program. He had all the classic symptoms of Autism. He could communicate only by crying, there were massive tantrums, he could not sit in a place for more than a few minutes. Aryan did not respond to his name, had no meaningful play. Post intensive intervention at Com DEALL, Aryan joined mainstream school. Today Aryan is in Grade 8 in a mainstream school, loves to play chess, cricket with friends in his building and is amongst the top five students of his class.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

A follow up study of all the children enrolled in the Com DEALL program at Bangalore from 2000-2009 was undertaken. Results of the study show that 76.5% of the children who completed the program were continuing in mainstream schools. We have set up nine units of ComDEALL in six
Indian cities. There is a demand for more from within the countries and neighboring countries as well. Our Post graduate Diploma course has got University Accreditation and recognition from the Rehabilitation Council of India. 25 trained interventionists will be passing out each year starting from 2014. A continuous effort is made to update the program and improve the result. Over 50 awareness programs have been conducted to enhance early identification leading to early intervention, and to the development of a less intensive Pre DEALL program for children below the age of three years.

### Sustainability

**Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution’s plan to ensure financial sustainability?**

Each unit of Com DEALL works on a self sustaining model. We are currently receiving requests from NGOs that are committed but lacking in financial backing. We need to generate funds to help such NGOs in the initial period of setting up. We need a strong organizational base as we increase our clinical, training and research activities. We are currently functioning out of rented space in a residential area. We are raising funds for our building.

**Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

Our biggest strength is that each unit of Com DEALL is a self sustaining unit. The model is well documented and can be replicated easily. The multidisciplinary team works as a “real” team and not individuals working in their own departments. This provides a much needed holistic perspective of the child. The aim is to mainstream the child. Towards this there is an adherence to strict timelines. For e.g. pre-learning behaviors and toilet training are achieved first three months into the program. Time lines are critical since Indian schools do not admit unless children are ready by 6 yrs.

### Team

**Founding Story**

As Dr. Karanth's work with Autism got to be known, the number of families seeking her help spiraled. Returning to the country (after her Fulbright Professorship) she found 23 families waiting for her. There was no way she could help them single handed. Her model for intervention called for intensive, multidisciplinary inputs. A model for delivering her idea had to be worked out. Com DEALL was born!

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