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FREE CLASSES CONDUCTED ON THE STREET FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN NEW DELHI



With many schools still closed due to COVID, an Indian couple has been conducting free classes for children who do not have access to digital learning tools

Spotted: When India imposed a nationwide lockdown in late March to slow the spread of COVID-19, all schools were shut and had switched to digital learning. As most of the schools still remain closed, problems have arisen for children from low-income families who do not have access to the internet or the means to purchase digital learning tools. In an effort to help these children from falling behind in school, singer Veena Gupta and her former diplomat husband, Virendra Gupta, have been conducting free lessons on the streets of New Delhi for children aged four to 14.

The idea for the impromptu street-side classes came when the Guptas' maid complained that children in her impoverished community were running amok because they haven't had the means to learn during the lockdown. With the goal of keeping these children engaged, the couple bought all the necessary teaching materials and set up the open-air classrooms, offering free lessons in maths, science, English and physical education. After each lesson, Veena treats the children to her homemade lemonade and cookies.

The initiative has been very well received in the community, with many of these students walking for over a mile to attend the classes, which continue to grow in popularity. The Guptas have now also employed the help of their driver Heera, and together they teach three different groups, three times a week, twice a day. Moving forward, they are hoping to recruit more volunteers to help to teach the students.

Written By: Serafina Basciano

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28th September 2020

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Takeaway:

For the children in New Delhi to receive free classes during these unprecedented times could make a major difference in their lives. In a world that favours the educated, these street-side classes will hopefully boost the children's confidence and keep them engaged with their studies, while schools remain shut for the foreseeable future.