



ANNUAL BRIDGE COURSE REPORT



April 2021-March 2022



“Preparing tomorrow’s generation builders through the products of the Bridge Course”

[Based on the report prepared by Sr. Crescence’s staff, revised and reformatted by Saskia Raevouri]

General Information of the Organization

Title of the Project	Bridge Course Program
Name of the organization	Fakirana Sisters Society
Address of the organization	Fakirana Sisters' Society Banuchappar, Bettiah, West Champaran - 845438 Bihar, India.
Phone	91-8862844435,9661447535
Email	sr.crescence@gmail.com niteshsingh75@gmail.com
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Contact Person	Sr. Crescence, Nitesh Kumar
Location of the project	Bridge Course Sacred Heart Convent, Bettiah of West Champaran districts of Bihar
Project Duration	Ongoing
Reporting Period	1 st April 2021 to 31 st March 2022

Location of the project



The Bridge Course program is operated in a separate building and offices on the grounds of the Sacred Heart Convent in Bettiah, Bihar. Sr. Crescence allowed the girls to select the colors of both the exterior and the interior walls.

Introduction and Background

The Bridge Course is a free residential program for poor girls with in-born talents and capacity for leadership. A survey of the FreeSchools World Literacy program (www.freeschools.org) carried out by us in 2010 showed that after class 4th or 5th 95% of the female students were deprived of further education. One reason was that the schools were at a great distance from their villages, but more was the society thinking: “Girls do not need education more than class five.” The Bridge Course is a one-year remedial program to counteract the wrong thinking of society. It is a unique type of education conducted in Bettiah, Bihar; there is no program similar to it.

Only intellectual young and poor girls can be candidates for this program. These girls are chosen after class five. In a very short period of two years they are given quality of education up to class 7th with modern meth-

ods and techniques. The Bridge Course focuses on developing their inborn talents and preparing them as confident, responsible, knowledgeable and vocal female leaders in today's society. Its aim is not only to prepare them for exams but also to develop their all-round personalities.

Each year, members of the Bridge Course staff travel to the various villages where FreeSchools operate, and from those students girls are selected through intellectual testing. After obtaining their parents' written permission, the girls are admitted into the Bridge Course program where they live in a dormitory with a maximum capacity of 18-20. All the necessities, such as bedding, food, books and study materials, are provided free of charge.

The designed and developed process of identification, selection and enrollment to find the right girls has enhanced the authenticity of the candidates. Parents and their daughters are also oriented and counseled at every stage about the Bridge Course Program—its rules, regulations, its objectives and mission.

After completing one year of Bridge Course, the girls find positive changes within themselves and feel inspired to be active instruments for the change of their society. Bridge Course completes in one year the requirements of class 7th. Girls who would go for normal education are sent home to continue their education through local schools, and definitely 99% pass 10th in 1st division. Girls having extraordinary talents and capabilities are screened and kept for a second year of Bridge Course, being given class 8th and 9th courses and leadership training.

Summary of 2021-2022

Twenty-one girls altogether successfully completed the 2021-2022 Bridge Course program. Four girls passing from Bridge Course joined class 9th, eight girls took admission in class 8th, and the rest went for class 7th—the first time for such a creditable result! The girls, too, feel grateful at the end of the year by seeing themselves changed for the better. Thanks to God and thanks to all the staff, and also to all of our financial benefactors.



No	Name	Parent's Name	Address	Current status
1	Beauty Kumari	Mahesh Baitha	Lakhnipur	Studying in class 8 th
2	Rima Kumari	Bharat Ram	Lakhnipur	Studying in class 8 th
3	Ranjana Kumari	Densaran Baitha	Lakhnipur	Studying in class 8 th
4	Sanjogita Kumari	Ghuman Baitha	Lakhnipur	Studying in class 8 th
5	Lucky Kumari	Ramji Ram	Bhanachak	Studying in class 7 th
6	Anjali Kumari	Rabhibhusan Ram	Bhanachak	Studying in class 7 th
7	Muskan Kumari	Billu Ram	Paharpur	Studying in class 7 th
8	Khusboo Kumari	Sanbhu Ram	Paharpur	Studying in class 8 th
9	Priya Kumari	Mewalal Gupta	Mahabir Nagar	Studying in class 7 th
10	Sabankhatun	Aslam Alam	Santhghat	Studying in class 7 th
11	Sobha Kumari	Rabinder Das	Gogha	Studying in class 7 th
12	Ranjana Kumari	Manohar Das	Purbi Gogha	Studying in class 8 th
13	Dilkhushi	Vijay Baitha	Inarbharmauje	Studying in class 8 th
14	Anchal Kumari	Munna Ram	Motihari	Studying in class 7 th
15	Anshu Kumari	Ramesh Sharma	Belwa	Studying in class 7 th
16	Karuna Kumari	Binay Sharma	Belwa	Studying in class 8 th
17	Asha Kumari	Vijay Ram	Baswariya	Studying in class 7 th
18	Chulbul Kumari	Sureshchaudhari	Tirhutiya	Studying in class 9 th
19	Pooja Kumari	Birendarasahni	Teluwatola	Studying in class 9 th
20	Rupani Kumari	Harendarsah	Teluwa	Studying in class 9 th
21	Sabita Kumari	Rajendarsah	Belwaawariya	Studying in class 9 th

Selection of the Candidates



ABOVE: Girls being tested. BELOW: Girls say farewell to their mothers as they prepare to enter the Bridge Course



Teaching



ABOVE: Sr. Crescence teaching a class. BELOW: An English lesson



Games and Exercise



Eating and Sleeping



ABOVE: The girls having a meal in the Indian fashion. BELOW: Saying a nightly prayer before bedtime



Teacher's Day



Teacher's Day, September 5, 2021, was wonderful event. In the presence of FreeSchools Bettiah teachers and the the Bridge Course guardian, our Bridge Course girls presented a variety of programs—song, dance, caricature, speech, poems, and reflections on teachers. The audience, especially the parents, were amazed at the progress of the girls, who had joined just two months earlier.

At the end of the program, Director Sr. Crescence gave a short speech on the difficult task of the teachers and stressed the parents' responsibility to cooperate with the teachers and to avoid sensitive attachment with their wards, which hinders the children in their studies.

One young man came to the stage and declared his admiration for the Bridge Course and its training. Another said that it is hard to believe that these accomplished girls are our village children. Towards the end one village gentleman came up and said, "You keep the children only for one year and do such marvels, then return the girls to their villages to join the same inferior type of school, so what you have achieved is lost to a great extent. Can you not keep the girls more than one year, to bring about lasting changes?"



ABOVE and BELOW: Bridge Course girls performing



Certificate Distribution ...



ABOVE and BELOW: The girls receiving their certificates according to merit at the completion of the year



... on Annual Day



New Direction, New Goal!

The four second-year Bridge Course girls think this way

“Fly high my balloons! I will fly high with maths just like you.”

“O, our lovely balloons! How sweet they are, like lovely children of our class. We will teach them and make them grow ever lovely and ever wise.”

“My balloons go to the sky! I will learn about the world with my English.”



Nightly Prayer

Thank you, God, for this day. Thank you for our food and our study. Thank you for everything you gave us today. We are going to sleep. Now kindly protect us from thieves, from fire, flood, earthquakes and severe cold. Protect our parents and our teachers, our benefactors and poor people. Save us all from Covid-19. Give us good sleep so that we can pray your name again tomorrow.
Good night, God Uncle.¹

¹ “God Uncle” refers to the story of a little girl who was told by the doctor in a hospital that only God could save her critically ill mother. Thinking God would be a doctor in the village, the girl went into the streets calling for God’s help. An old gentleman responded, followed her to her mother’s sickbed, laid his hands on the mother’s head and gave her some hot tea. The mother opened her eyes and recovered. When the doctor returned he was surprised and told the nurse, “‘God Uncle’ came at the prayer of this innocent child.” Since hearing this story, the Bridge Course girls have adopted “God Uncle” as their protector. A few of the older girls composed this prayer themselves.



Director: Sr. Crescence
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www.servicetohumanity.org
www.freeschools.org