



Every once in a while, a child raised in one of the Child Care Institutions we partner with grows up to become a Student Ambassador – someone who gives back to society by helping our mission. In this newsletter, we share the story of Maria, one such Miracle Student Ambassador.

When Maria was just eight, her father – the family's primary breadwinner – left home, never to return. Maria and her mother were left to fend for themselves. The neighbours and community blamed the mother for the father's desertion, leaving Maria's mother feeling completely alienated. Added to this was the enormous pressure to earn a livelihood. Life had taken on a distinctly sorrowful turn.

Over the years, money became so tight that her grandfather suggested that the girl be sent to be raised at the local Child Care Institution in Tamil Nadu. At the time, Maria was twelve.

For the young girl, joining the CCI presented a ray of hope. For the first time, someone was paying attention to her needs -- her education, health and overall well-being.

All our work with CCIs focuses on ensuring that children receive life skills education that boosts confidence and self-esteem, shapes personalities, and enables healthy, productive lifestyles. In this way, our work empowers each child to become helpful citizens and active contributors to the community.

With sessions and the counselling she underwent with CCI staff and Miracle Foundation India, Maria gradually became stronger and more determined, ready to deal with life's challenges. She also benefited from the care and support of her loving extended family – the many brothers and sisters she had at the CCI.

Today, Maria is 21 years old. With the support of her CCI and Miracle Foundation India, she has completed a Bachelor's degree in English Literature. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work and remains passionate about giving back to society. Maria enjoys reading motivational books and having meaningful conversations with the elderly in her free time.

She is constantly looking for new ideas and alternatives to foster social development and positively impact other children who have had tough lives. Her ultimate goal is to ensure that no child suffers the way she did. Maria wants to play an active part in ensuring that every child is raised with love, care, and affection in a happy family environment.

Today, Maria helps Miracle Foundation by sharing her thoughts on how adults can help smooth a child's transition from a Child Care Institution to a family. With other Student Ambassadors, Maria captured her inputs on videos presented at a Safe and Permanent Child Reintegration webinar organized by the Miracle team. She has participated in a radio interview and submitted her social development idea for a national-level development project for youth.

**Do you or your organisation want to invest in nurturing vulnerable children to become active and helpful citizens of the country?**

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"Every child has a right to participate in the decisions taken for them. The decisions taken need to be in the best interest of the child. Children have the right to participate and discuss such decisions."

– Brahmadev – Youth Ambassador, Miracle Foundation India



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