

Times of India 27.07.2009 **They are engineering slummers' rehabilitation** CHANDIGARH:

Dollar power was not able to lure these

[computer
engineer](#)

graduates to keep them off the happiness they went on to derive from social responsibility. These alumni of the prestigious Thapar University of Engineering and Technology decided to settle in the city and work for slum children. In their mid-thirties, the couple, Liza and Amit Tandon, initiated an NGO called Chhoti Si Asha in 2007 and since then, they have been [working](#) to rehabilitate slum-dwellers through education and vocational skills.

Liza and her husband were on an assignment in California and had the option of staying back, for they were US green card-holders. What made them work for the deprived in the slums was a realization. "I had seen some children begging in the Sector-17 plaza. This moved me and I discussed with my husband how to go about working for them," Liza said.

Since then, the NGO has been teaching these slum [kids](#) to give up begging and become self-reliant. "The younger kids are working on making pen-stands and we have plans to expand the product base, including coasters, paper shopping bags and jewellery," Liza added.

Recently, Chhoti Si Asha was able to convince the slum children to take up education instead of begging. "We had four children admitted in Carmel Convent School. It is not easy to instil in them the benefits of education. It is challenging to persuade these children and their family with regard to education. Last year, there were some who fled when we tried and encouraged them to study," Liza noted.

The NGO has also been working for slum-women who are illiterate. Sewing machines have been arranged by the NGO, which are used by poor women in stitching and selling clothes. The organization has roped in volunteers who have been delivering to children lessons in personal hygiene. "We had held exhibitions of the handiworks made by these slum-dwellers. This has been able to make them earn some decent amount for livelihood," Liza noted.