



asha kiran



2004 ANNUAL REPORT

THE YEAR 2004 marked ten years of a long and fruitful journey for the Seattle chapter of Asha for Education. Starting out as a fledgling group of a few committed individuals, our volunteer base has deepened considerably over the years to a nonprofit organization with diverse goals. The flat, non-hierarchical structure of Asha bonds all the volunteers on a common ideological platform. Through constant interaction and feedbacks from our closely-associated partner groups in India, we have been able to make a positive impact by working on socioeconomic issues mainly in rural and economically backward areas. Innumerable "site-visits" to actual projects in India by Asha volunteers and interactions with our Indian partners have helped us hone our perspective, strengthen our grassroots involvement and also to assess our shortcomings. Through all this, we have tried to uphold our mission of bringing about socioeconomic change in India mainly through the medium of education.

Throughout this decade of existence, Asha's role has not only been that of a fund-raiser but also a more diversified one of shaping and moulding local awareness about issues prevalent in India. Asha's role as a fund-raising organization extends to organizing popular programs locally like AllGoRhythms, Geetanjali, special events like Chhoti Si Asha and screening documentaries. A major success event this year, apart from individual and corporate donation drives, has been the overwhelming response of our volunteers and supporters who ran the Seattle marathon as well as donated for our cause. The proceeds from this event went mostly to two projects, Avehi Abacus and MICDA. A big hand to all of you out there who made this effort such a resounding success.

As always, we try to maintain our policy of being a zero overhead organization, meaning that 100% of your donation goes straight to the project you donated for. By having a merchandise team which sells cards, calendars and handicraft items and sets up tea stalls at local events in the

Greater Seattle area as well as popularizing the Safeway gift card, we have been able to take care of organizational expenses. We do look forward to your support in continuing this tradition.

Our chapter also works towards raising awareness in appropriate forums about various issues affecting the people of India. This is accomplished by organizing discussion series, invited talks and focus groups. We gained a lot of insight into the actual grassroots issues from talks by Balaji Sampath & Kalpana Karunakaran from Tamil Nadu Science Forum (TNSF), P. Chennaiah from Sahanivasa, Vanaja Ramprasad from Green Foundation and Sujit Sinha from Swanirvar. Among the different focus groups, the textbook review and the learning aids groups have been actively engaged in researching and analyzing different issues.

In this annual report, we summarize our financial details of the past year with brief description of all our on-going projects and partner groups we have worked with in 2004. For more detailed information, you can visit <http://www.ashanet.org/seattle/partners.php>. The accompanying article by Jayashree will take us down the memory lane and revive her recollections of the journey that Asha Seattle is. As a founding member of Asha Seattle, this article spans the growth of our organization, with all its teething problems to the rich, diverse group that we are today.

Again, thank you all for your continued support in sustaining our efforts and best wishes for a productive year ahead.

- ASHA SEATTLE TEAM

A TEN YEAR JOURNEY

1994.1995.1996.1997.1998.1999.2000.2001.2002.2003.2004

As I reflect on what ten years have meant for Asha Seattle - a lot of different memories flood in. I wonder if I can truly capture the spirit of our work over ten years and what it has meant to all of us personally. One way perhaps to describe this is to talk about what it has been like for me - as I have grown with Asha.

My husband Ashok and I started Asha here in 1994 along with a fellow volunteer Siva Athreya. A chance meeting with Siva really changed all our lives. We were all very passionate about working with children. We talked about how we could work together to make a difference. None of us really wanted to be just raising funds. We wanted personal involvement with the children and communities we work with. We wanted to be more than a traditional funding agency - to go beyond receiving annual reports and to interact with our community partners in India personally as often as we could. We looked around and found out about Asha at Stanford.

Asha encouraged a non-hierarchical structure that facilitated all volunteers (experienced and new) to participate in decision making about who we partner with. It also ensured that administrative costs were completely borne by volunteers - forcing us to keep our costs the minimum possible. Sounded interesting enough? We thought we will give it a try. In the beginning we figured we could work with a couple of schools over many years. We wanted to make sure that we stay committed and never slip up in our support. Little did we even think that ideas sometimes have wings of their own? And sometimes end up owning you!

The non-hierarchical nature of Asha had the same appeal to several community members. Soon volunteers started coming and participating whenever they could and on whatever captured their heart. After the first couple of years - we realized the need for a co-coordinator to help track and smooth operations on a day to day basis. And these days we have a team of them! From the one partner group we started with - today we work with more than forty five. We have maintained steady relationships and have been deeply involved in our partnerships. We still work with our first partner Champa Mahila Society and have evolved our partnership to adjust to changing needs. And I can never cease to marvel at how much Asha has given every one of us in terms of personal growth thanks to this involvement. Over 250 volunteers have contributed to what Asha Seattle is today.

In the early years, we took one conscious decision that really made a difference to the organization and how it grew. We decided that any fund-raising we do

will be consciously integrated with the core of our work - our relationships with partners in India and understanding the realities there. I think this motivated many new volunteers to take on roles that inspired them to get more deeply involved. We would visit often and even volunteer with some of our partners. Deeper involvement has meant tremendous growth in understanding and volunteer commitment. From an organization that primarily looked at education as schooling, we have now realized that education is much richer and more powerful than schooling alone. We realized the interconnected nature of things - health care, food, water, powerful social structures and many other community issues. For us - education has taken on a new meaning. It means looking holistically at what causes lasting change and empowering children and the community. We really want social change mainly using the medium of education from a broad sense. We address connected issues to ensure that our work has real impact in their lives.

We have known so many children and their lives have touched us in so many ways. For many of us - volunteering for Asha has meant putting ourselves in the shoes of what it is like for a child on the streets, a child with disabilities, working children, the girl child who cannot make her own choices - which so many of us take for granted. We have tried to connect with the circumstances faced by communities that work on stone quarry's and suffer from atrocities that none of us can even dream of. It has meant receiving inspiration and guidance from people who have faced and continue to face incredibly difficult lives. We have constantly questioned ourselves and tried to keep ourselves flexible so that we can meet the needs of the communities we strive to serve. We want to cause real change - social and economic. And our commitment to this only grows stronger every year.

To me personally, Asha is a serious organization - where we are fully conscious of the responsibility we have in ensuring that our work is effective. Major fund-raising events organized by us volunteers are the music and dance programs - we, however, never forget that our responsibility is over and beyond these fun events. We work for the children and communities to experience real change. We strive to partner with some of the best and most inspiring grass-roots leaders in India. We work with people who work because of their passion for change. And this is what I think has helped us grow and stay committed. Our inspiration today continues to be the deep lasting change we hope to see in the lives of so many of India's poor.

By
Jayashree
Janardban

TSUNAMI RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

On December 26th 2004, a giant Tsunami hit the South Asian Countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and the far eastern African nation of Somalia. The death toll from the disaster has exceeded 200,000 and many more are still unaccounted for. Asha has launched an appeal to support relief efforts in response to this disaster. Asha plans to provide **immediate relief** in the form of food, clothing, blankets, temporary shelter, medicines and health camps for emergencies and epidemics. An **intermediate level relief** plan will soon be underway with the construction of huts and houses and provision of health care facilities. There will be long term **rehabilitation work** that will emphasize on livelihood needs, forming cooperatives and providing livelihood support like boats, fishing nets etc. to the families affected. Please help us reach out to the victims of this disaster in India. For more information on our work and how the funds are utilized please visit:

<http://www.ashanet.org/seattle/tsunamirelief.php>

You can donate online at the above link or send us a check in favor of “Asha” with “Tsunami Relief” in the memo to our organization address.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

Asha Seattle has been supporting, financially and otherwise, a number of projects in India through the years. Here we summarize details about our project partners for the year 2004.

I. ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION:

a) **Sumavanam:** The Neel Baugh Trust was started in 1982 with a rural school in Andhra Pradesh outside Madanapalli. All children come from neighboring villages & their parents usually work as seasonal workers in agriculture. None of the families have had education beyond 2-3 years in schools, & are all below the poverty level. None of the children here will normally go to school given the financial constraints of the families.

b) **Swanirvar:** This project provides support for operating few primary schools & creation of new/effective curriculum, text books, teaching methods, class management & evaluation systems for these schools in rural West Bengal.

c) **Vikasana** is a rural centre for education near Bangalore that provides free education to children of landless farmers hailing from the neighboring villages. The children of immigrant parents who cannot fit into other institutions also join the centre. Providing holistic and quality education, the class size is restricted to about twenty-five. Emphasis is laid on self-learning. Vikasana also takes services of resourceful people in the field of crafts, health and cultural activities.

d) **Suvidya:** Place value is considered a difficult mathematical concept, which, in a cascading effect, leads to other problems in mathematics learning. Children do not get hands-on experience in learning about place values, resulting in a much-felt need for such a kit, as ascertained during our interactions with teachers, trainers and children. Suvidya intends to design, produce and test a kit consisting of 10 aids, 20 worksheets/charts and a handbook with additional information, which Asha-Seattle has

supported. This is seed money, which will enable Suvidya to get subsequent full funding from other sources.

2. CHILD HOMES:

a) Champa Mahila Society (CMS): This is our longest-running partnership started since 1994. CMS works in the Basanti area of Sundarban, West Bengal, catering to a population mainly dependent on agriculture. On its way to build a self-reliant community, CMS had added several wings to their activities last year. It started a new school in Amlamethi in the remote Gosaba island & has incorporated special children in two existing programs/facilities - the Boys' Home & Sarada Balika Bidyalaya (SBB). Also SBB - a bridge school started in 2002 - was featured in a widely-circulated Bengali daily & as a result the enrollment grew from sixty to more than a hundred.

b) Odanadi Seva Samsthe: Odanadi runs a relentless campaign to expose and curb the flesh trade. Odanadi has emerged as a leading and powerful voice advocating the cause of prostituted women in India. They have rescued over 400 girls, most of them minors, from the clutches of the flesh traffickers in various parts of Karnataka. As many as 350 women have been rehabilitated with an alternative livelihood into mainstream society. The younger children (usually children of sex workers and orphans picked off the streets) are provided informal education from 1st through the 6th standards and formal education at government schools nearby. These children also reside at the center and are provided food and other facilities.

3. COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROGRAMS:

a) Appropriate learning: The Spastic Society of Karnataka: See section on disabilities & special needs.

b) Aralu (Co-Sponsored by Asha Chicago): This project involves preschool & day-care centers for children of working women in Bidar District of Karnataka. The goal is to also provide non-formal education at these centers.

c) MICDA: Mathamma Eradication Project: This project aims at eradicating the Mathamma practice in the Madiga community through community education & awareness programs. Mathammas are girl children who have been dedicated to Goddess Mathamma due to variety of reasons including strong religious beliefs,

ignorance & encouragement.

d) SUPPORT is located in Mumbai, and is a group dedicated to fighting AIDS and drug abuse among street children in Mumbai. Asha Seattle has supported SUPPORT's vocational training programs since June 2000.

4. COMMUNITY BASED INTERVENTIONS:

a) Anawim: Anawim is an organization that functions in villages around the town of Tiruchendur in the Tuticorin district of Tamil Nadu. The group works for socio-economic development of Dalit villages. Asha's work with them is two-fold - various Asha chapters across the US have adopted villages where we have funded experimental micro-credit groups for the women. We have also helped build after-school study centers for the children. Larger target group for the Eco-villages Project consists of Dalits, about 12,000 landless in 40 villages. While the initial focus was on women, the project now includes components for helping the children of the villages.

b) Urmul Marusthali Bunkar Vikas Samiti (UMBVS): UMBVS is running 10 schools in the Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan with the support from Asha. These schools are being run in remote areas of Rajasthan where there is little government infrastructure or facilities. The schools serve the community that has been relocated here and provided land. The water from Indira Gandhi Canal is sustaining the people who occupy this very barren and dry region of the state. In addition, UMBVS is has implemented a number of initiatives in the area including women's empowerment program as well as an integrated rural development program the villages of the Jodhpur & Jaisalmer Districts.

c) CMS: Community Health Project: CMS has started a community health program with emphasis on prenatal and post-natal care, proper hygiene and nutrition practices and immunization in the Sunderbans area. The hospital has an outdoor as well as an indoor clinic with surgical facilities for performing minor operations. The community health program under CMS is being expanded recently, with help from Asha.

5. DISABILITIES & SPECIAL NEEDS:

a) Appropriate Learning: This project is being run by the Spastics society of Karnataka. The project was conceived with a view to providing

educational & literacy services to (1) children with disabilities including cerebral palsy, (2) children from poorer sections of society with disabilities, (3) Integrating more capable spastic children into regular schools, (4) spread awareness of the different problems faced by children with cerebral palsy into the community, and (5) educate the general public on prevention of cerebral palsy.

b) Jeevan Gnanodaya: This is a school for the hearing impaired near Chennai. Asha provided funds for a science lab & hearing aids in addition to teachers' salaries.

c) Shastri School for the hearing impaired: Shastri School in Bangalore was started by the parents of hearing-impaired children because their locality lacked such a special education school. This school is run entirely on donations & their needs were construction of buildings, raising teachers' salaries & buying educational equipment.

d) Udavum Karangal: is an organization based in Chennai that has been involved in rescuing mentally sick people found wandering on the streets. They also support several mentally retarded children who are being provided special education & treatment. In addition, Asha is also supporting orphans at Udavum Karangal through the Support A Child program.

e) Astha - Alternative Strategies for the Handicapped: runs an outreach program in the slum villages of Govindpuri in South Delhi. The center works with children with mental retardation and multiple disabilities such as Cerebral Palsy and Autism. The Information and Communication Unit of Astha produces materials - both audio-visual and printed - in the field of disability.

f) Each One Teach One (EOTO):
(see later, 8b)

g) Asha fellowship-Ravi Aluganti: Asha supports a fellowship program that supports individuals of the highest quality & dedication. Support is given to those whose work over time will have a large positive impact by creating a new institution or a methodology. Fellowships are reviewed after a nominator actively working in India has nominated the potential fellow. Ravi works in Madanapalle (Chittoor district), AP. His

projects include training government school teachers in multi-grade teaching, developing a resource center for teachers' training, organizing art & craft activities for teachers, helping children to develop creative skills, initiating parental involvement in the school etc. He has also started mobile library project to promote reading habits among the children. This is the third year of his fellowship.

6. FORMAL SCHOOLS:

a) Bhoomiheen Seva Samiti: This project aims to provide education to the children of the landless & extremely poor kids in Banda, Uttar Pradesh. Asha is supporting the recurring expenses for this project as well as construction costs. Has been funded since 1998.

b) Shanti Sadhana Ashram (SSA): Shanti Sadhana Ashram is one of the pioneer organizations in championing the cause of literacy in the backward districts of Assam. They are running schools in 4 districts of Assam located in rural backward areas covering children from at least 3-4 nearby villages.

c) Institute for Socially Disadvantaged Groups' Educational Improvement (ISDGEI): ISDGEI currently operates a crèche unit, a primary School, an 'Open' school, a vocational center & a community service unit in the slums of Rajendranagar near Kolhapur, Maharashtra.

7) NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTERS & VOCATIONAL TRAINING:

a) Aralu, CMS & Anawim (see earlier; 3b, 2a and 4a respectively)

b) Bharathi Trust: Bharathi Trust has been working with Irula tribals in Northern Tamil Nadu since 1990. Asha helps to facilitate Irula children to go to government schools through motivation centers in a number of the Irula hamlets. This is a project that is funded by multiple Asha chapters.

c) Rural Health & Environment Development Trust (RHEDT): RHEDT is based in the Karamadai tribal block of the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. The aim is to provide education, environmental awareness, cultural programs, gardening, sports etc to the children in three small tribal villages. The project runs throughout the academic year & educates about

50 children. Additionally, about 300 more children benefit from the extra-curricular activities.

d) Uthnau: This partner group works for the uthnau (“upliftment” in Santhali) of the Santhals in 2 block of Birbhum, West Bengal. They strive to find alternative livelihoods for these people whose lives & habitat has been destroyed by stone quarrying. To help the children cope with education, Uthnau utilizes their mother tongue (Santhali) & local teachers. Towards the end of 2004, a malaria epidemic broke out in that area claiming many lives. Uthnau went beyond their work area into Jharkhand to help the people. We joined hands with them (Uthnau) to combat the epidemic taking both preventive & curative measures.

e) Vigyan Ashram: This NGO is running a vocational training center in Pabal near Pune, Maharashtra. Students get skills in various areas from agriculture to fabrication to development of diesel engines. Many students start their own enterprise after completing the course. Vigyan Ashram is working with Maharashtra government to incorporate their curriculum into other government schools. It is being partially funded by Asha Seattle and by Asha Redlands.

8. AFTER SCHOOL SUPPORT CENTERS: UTHNAU (see earlier; 7d)

a) Chetanaa: Chetanaa is a training center located in Kurukshetra (near Delhi). The children attend the government school in the area. The facility at Chetanaa provides them additional help so that the children feel motivated to learn and stay in school. They are provided extra coaching and help in homework. They are taught manners, moral values, and cleanliness concepts.

b) EOTO: EOTO was started in the year 1983 with 5 children from Sion school. It works with children from socio-economically deprived sections of the society. The organization envisages its role as being responsible for overall personality development i.e. physical, emotional and intellectual development of each child, in addition to providing daily necessities like uniforms, books, stationary, mid-day snack. Over the years, the organization has diversified its outreach through appropriate programs. Among these is a new project to support a group of students from the special school. This group is also working with mentally retarded children.

9. RESOURCE CENTERS & SHARED RESOURCES:

Learning Network: This is Asha’s major initiative to build up a network between several institutes of Alternative Education. The goal is to form a virtual educational center & to help arrange conference & workshops among network members & other interested organizations.

10. SUPPORT A CHILD (SAC) SCHEMES:

Amongst one of Asha’s most popular projects, donors are matched with individual kids of their choice. If the project concerned is willing, the donor can even have a personal communication with the sponsored child. This usually means the sponsor spends between \$10-20 a month for the child. The present projects being supported under this are: CMS, EOTO, Overcoming Hemophilia, Prasanna Jyothi, Shastri School, Udavum Karangal (see earlier).

a) Donate-a-meal: (Annalakshmi) program allows Udavum Karangal (see earlier; 5d) to feed about 1200 children an afternoon lunch. The children come from nearby villages to attend the Ramakrishna Vidya Niketan School. The program allows donors to choose the number of meals to donate and the number of destitute children they wish to feed.

11) WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Asha Seattle is working with groups trying to improve government school curriculum, especially Avehi Abacus. This project deals with both Mumbai Municipal Corporation schools as well as non-formal education centers run by other NGOs (non-government organizations) on the pavements & slums of Mumbai. Avehi Abacus works within the existing educational structure to make the school experience more relevant, meaningful and enjoyable for children and teachers. The program has designed and developed a foundation course to enrich and supplement the existing curriculum in schools and NFE centers and in teacher training colleges.

In addition to all the projects described above, there are few donor specific projects that Asha Seattle has supported in 2004. These are projects where the support amount does not come from Asha Seattle’s General fund. A donor donates specifically for a project and that amount is sent to the project. Regular Asha project criteria apply to these projects too.

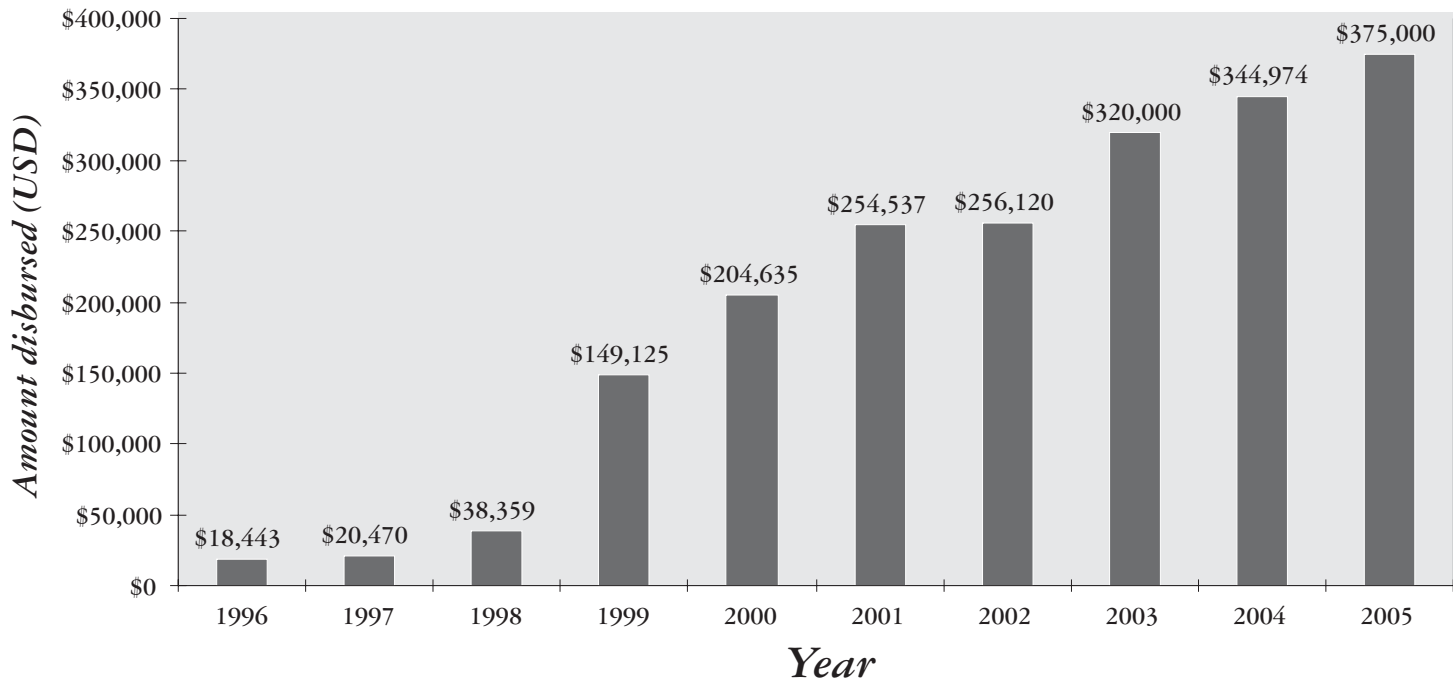
FINANCIAL DETAILS*

The following table shows Asha Seattle's finance numbers for the year 2004.

| DESCRIPTION | INCOME | EXPENSE | NET |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Donations | \$583,178 | \$0.0 | \$583,178 |
| Bank Interest | \$949 | \$0.0 | \$949 |
| Grocery Coupon Scheme | \$10,500 | \$9,500 | \$,1000 |
| Merchandise | \$91 | \$256 | (\$165) |
| Project Support | \$0.0 | \$344,974 | (\$344,974) |
| Special Events | \$42,373 | \$12,845 | \$29,528 |
| Total | \$637,091 | \$367,575 | \$269,516 |

Our current project commitment for 2005 is approximately \$375,000. The following graph shows how we have grown as an organization over the past few years in terms of amounts disbursed.

AMOUNT DISBURSED 1996-2004, 2005 (ESTIMATED)



* The income and expense amounts for the financial year 2004 are approximate.

Asha for Education
PO Box 2407
Redmond, WA 98073-2407



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ASHA CONTRIBUTION SLIP

~ I am enclosing:
 25\$ 50\$ 100\$

~ I would like to make a quarterly contribution of \$_____

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
email: _____

Please make your checks payable to 'ASHA FOR EDUCATION'.
You can mail your contribution to:

Asha for Education
PO Box 2407
Redmond, WA 98073-2407

100% of your contributions go towards Asha's projects in India.
Your contributions are Tax deductible.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

All are welcome to join us at our bi-monthly meetings. For information, please see www.ashanet.org/seattle/resources/meetings/

Jan 6- Stevens Court, UW
Jan 19 - Microsoft Campus
Feb 3 - Stevens Court, UW
Feb 16 - Redmond Library
Mar 3 - Stevens Court, UW
Mar 16- Redmond Library

For specific requests and queries, please contact us at
Email: seattle@ashanet.org
Phone: 425 890 8515

Donations are welcome, and will go a long way in changing many lives in India.

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