



# Asha Kiran

Asha-Seattle's quarterly Newsletter

ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2006



*Greetings Everyone,  
On behalf of Asha-Seattle we wish you all a Very Happy & Prosperous New Year.  
We are pleased to share with you another edition of Asha Kiran highlighting our  
activities and accomplishments in 2006. We thank you all from the bottom of our  
hearts for your continued help and support.*

## Summary of 2006 Accomplishments

Asha-Seattle continued to see all around growth in 2006.

Highlights include:

- **Significant Growth in Projects:** We increased the total number of projects supported to 42 with the addition of thirteen new projects.
- **Cultural & Community Events:** We organized cultural events AllGoRhythms and Geetanjali which continue to be hugely popular and successful. We participated in Seattle to Portland (STP) bicycle event and Seattle Marathon - "Miles for Smiles". These events continue to draw visibility to Asha's cause and raise funds.
- **Workshops & Talks:** We remain dedicated to increasing our awareness of socio economic issues. We organized four one-day workshops and also invited several social experts and government officials for talks and discussions.
- **Campaigning for Rights:** Asha-Seattle supported two significant rights campaign or initiative (a) Demand for justice of Bhopal gas tragedy victims and (b) the Right to Education (RTE) bill. Please see details below.
- **A Milestone in Finances:** We crossed the half million mark in funds allocated to projects. We disbursed approximately \$550,000, an 18% increase over 2005. Your generosity made this possible. Thank you.

**Growth in Projects:** We continued to see vibrant growth in number of volunteers, supported projects, donations and activities we undertook. We added support for thirteen new projects run by non-profits in India bringing our total to forty two projects.

A few examples of new projects added are:

- Betsy Elizabeth Trust, Tamil Nadu – a crèche
- Support for government run schools by Sikshana in Karnataka,
- Support for project Why, New Delhi - schools catering to slums
- A simple water tank for a school in Achrol, Rajasthan
- A home for girls in Orissa - Adruta
- And more!

**Workshops & Talks:** Workshops have become a great place for interaction and learning between peer volunteers and to help us better understand socio-economic issues. We organized four one-day workshops last year on topics ranging from Slums, Bhopal Gas Disaster to soul searching on how Asha-Seattle can make a bigger impact.

In our effort to raise awareness on issues and initiatives in India, we have hosted several social activists and government employees for talks and discussion sessions. Noteworthy sessions include:

- Mr. E. S. Ramamurthy visited Seattle in May to talk about Sikshana; an effort at a breakthrough in the public education system.
- Mr. Harsh Mander is a strong voice in India for social justice, pluralism and communal harmony. During his visit to Seattle in 2006 we had a lively discussion on his latest initiative, "Every Child", an organization to bring food, shelter and education to some 35 million homeless children in India.
- Mr. Arvind Kejriwal talked about the Right to Information (RTI) bill recently passed in India and the effects it was able to have. RTI is

a big step towards a more participatory democracy making our government more transparent and accountable.

- Mr. Sudeep Jain, an IAS officer, talked about his experiences in dealing with various governance issues including communal violence, political interference and bureaucratic reform.
- Partnering with Tasveer, an organization bringing independent progressive films from South Asia to Seattle area, we co-presented an interactive session with Seattle Superintendent Raj Manhas on education in South Asia and abroad.

**Cultural & Community Events:** As before, we organized cultural events to raise funds for our projects in India – both AllGoRhythms and Geetanjali turned out to be hugely popular music concerts this year. We thank them both for their dedication to Asha's cause. We also want to thank our donors who sponsored



Asha volunteers managing a Seattle Marathon Gu and water station

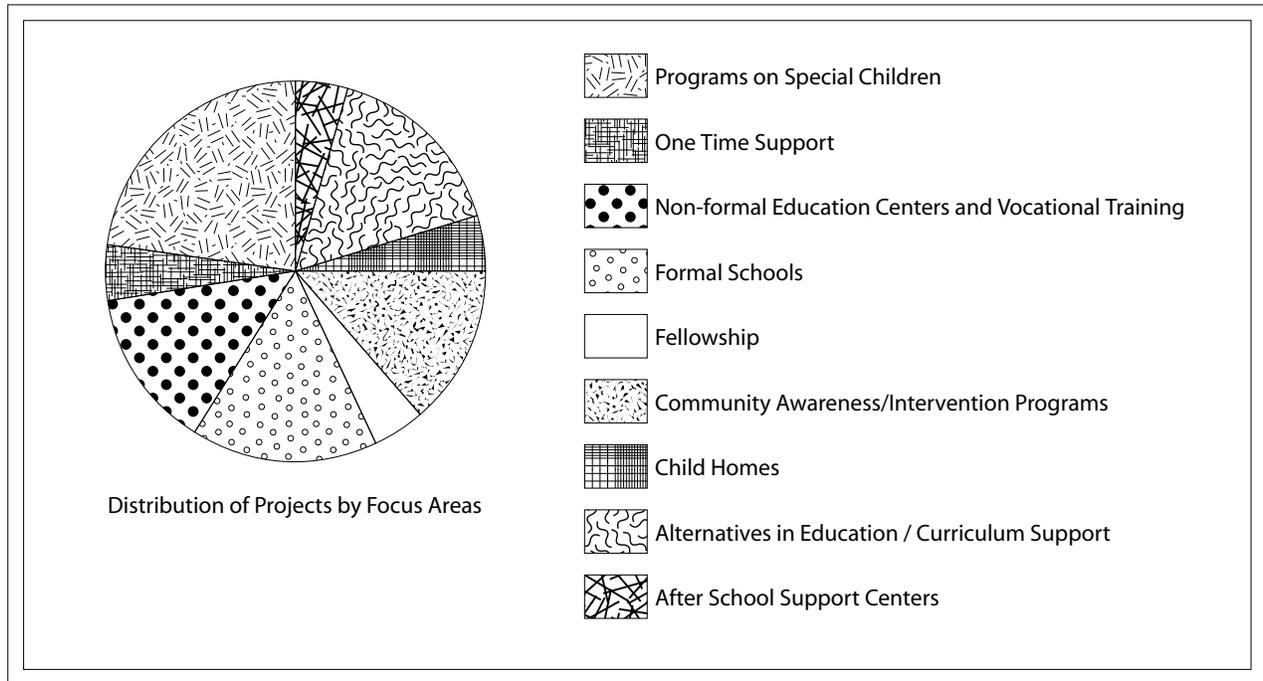
Asha Seattle bikers and runners in "Seattle to Portland" (STP) biking and the "Miles for Smiles" marathon event. This year we had 7 bikers who completed STP and 44 runners in our "Miles for Smiles" program. This year Asha got publicity as an official partner of Seattle Marathon Association and our volunteered one water and Gu booth along the route.

**Fighting for Justice:** 2006 marked a significant milestone in the continuing struggle for justice in Bhopal. More than 22 years after the world's worst industrial disaster at a Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, Bhopalis finally made Government of India accept some of their demands for justice and a life of dignity. It was a long fought and well deserved victory that came after a month-long 800 km march on foot from Bhopal to Delhi followed by an indefinite hunger strike by the padayatri. Asha Seattle showed support for their demands and helped with some of the expenses during their march.

**Campaigning for Right to Education:** Indian constitution recognizes education as a fundamental right for all children between the age of 6 and 14. However, after almost 60 years of independence nearly 14 million children are still out of school in India (ASER report 2005). The central government came up with a draft bill in 2005 to enact this fundamental right to education (RTE). With all its shortcomings, the RTE bill still has the potential to significantly change the elementary education system in India. However, the central government is backing out from their constitutional obligation and trying to pushing a model bill to the states citing lack of funds. On the other hand, the states are now objecting to the model bill. Asha, partnering with many other like-minded organizations, is campaigning for this bill to be legislated at the center. Asha Seattle volunteers have gone through the entire bill and have come up with a detailed report pointing out the limitations and suggesting recommendations. This is an ongoing effort and we will have to make sure Indian government takes appropriate steps to make Right to Education a reality in India.

**You Made this possible:** Once again we are grateful to all of you for your support and encouragement. We extend kudos to all volunteers for their time, effort and dedication towards Asha's cause. We are looking forward to an exciting new year and your comments are, as always, most welcome and valued. Thank you, Asha Seattle Team

# PROJECT NOTES



*Asha Seattle has been supporting, financially and otherwise, a number of partner groups in India through the years. Here is a brief overview of our partner groups in the year 2006.*

## 1) Alternatives in Education / Curriculum Support

**AVEHI (Audio Visual Education Resource Center)** is a voluntary, non-profit organization based in Mumbai that acts as a resource center for development and dissemination of material that will contribute to the cause of education. The ABACUS project provides supplementary curriculum for economically deprived Mumbai schools that helps children make a connection between what they are taught in school and what they experience in their daily lives. Having successfully worked with more than 190 schools for several years, Avehi is now in the process of introducing the Sangati curriculum in all the municipal schools in Mumbai. Teachers training and other details are being worked on with the government.

**Learning Network** is an initiative started by a few volunteers in Asha Seattle that explores various approaches towards holistic learning. It has now grown in to a separate entity by itself. The 4th Annual Conference of the Learning Network was held at Ahmedabad from Jan 27-29, 2006. Over 100 participants from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, New Delhi, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan participated in the conference and the renowned Gandhian educationist Shri Jyotibhai Desai gave a keynote address. Revive 2006, the network's yearly magazine, was also released at the conference. The network also facilitated a series of mathematics workshop by Jodo Gyan in Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad in February. Chiguru, the network newsletter was published in September 2006. New member profiles have also been added to the website and summaries of various sessions at the conference are also available at <http://www.learningnet-india.org>.

**Puvudham** is a small school started (in 1999) and run by Ms. Meenakshi Umesh. It is located in Puvudham village in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu. The school currently has about sixty students and five teachers. The school uses Montessori and other experimental teaching methods. Both English and Tamil are used as mediums for

education. Recently, Puvudham started the construction of a new school building, necessitated by an increase in the number of students. Asha Seattle funded this construction.

**Senchiamma School** in Uthukkottai, Tamil Nadu provides well rounded education, health care and nutrition to the Irula children, coming from extremely disadvantaged section of the society. The school is composed of 2 buildings houses, around 35 children in the age group 0-6, one teacher and a cook. They continue to excel in Early Childhood Education using a "Learning-by-Doing" approach using flash cards, storytelling, and song and dance. Several Irula tribal children who graduated from the school are now doing very well in the government schools. Ajith, who graduated from this school, is a rank holder in the government school. Bharathi trust, which runs this school, has made rapid strides in the upliftment of the Irula people by releasing bonded laborers and providing post-tsunami relief work for the affected tribals.



**Sumavanam**: In a remote part of AP the school provides quality education to 20 children who come from economically deprived neighboring villages. The system is based on the teaching methodologies of David Horsburgh of Rishi Valley. The older children take part in teaching the younger ones. Students are also engaged in extra-curricular activities and are taught to have concern for the environment. They have taken part in putting out forest fires and have saved small animals in and around the school.

**Vigyan Vijay Foundation (VVF)** strives to work with communities, individuals and organizations; developing, evaluating and implementing sustainable programs for empowerment. VVF works on pre-school preparation for pupil. Activity based teaching methodology with games and teaching aids makes learning fun for the kids. They also hold parent teacher meetings, parent visits to school and vocational training classes. Asha Delhi is actively engaged in this project, Sakshar, and Seattle chapter started supporting VVF from 2006.

**Vikasana, Bangalore:** Located in rural Karnataka, Vikasana is a rural center that provides free education to children of all ages. Besides the children of landless farmers of neighboring villages, children of migrated parents who cannot fit into other institutions also join the center. The number of students in this school now is 32 with 2 full time staff and 2 assistant teachers. There are also some ex-students of the school who are helping out both in teaching and financially. During 2006, 7 students appeared for the National Open School (NOS) 10th standard exams. Of these, 3 students all girls passed the exams and now joined college. Of the other 4 students, 1 has joined a main stream school to write his SSLC exam and 3 are trying again for the NOS, 1 studying full time. The school also has 5 students studying for their 7th standard exams, 17 in the mixed age group and 9 children in the 4-6 yr group. The school started giving the students a nutritional drink and a seasonal fruit everyday with additional funds that Asha Seattle approved.

## 2) Child Homes

**Adruta Children Home** is a new project with Asha Seattle which we started supporting in 2006. About 40 girls live in this home and are sent to local schools for education. Special emphasis is given to extra-curricular activities such as dance, music, meditation, painting, etc so that the children can develop themselves to become well-rounded individuals. The children have won several dance competitions in several parts of India. Purnima is an acclaimed child artiste for Doordarshan. Child artistes perform awareness program on child labor, female infanticide, dowry drug addiction etc. in local slums & other target areas. This group received excellence award for social action on 29th August, 2006 and also a memento of Recognition from the Women's and child welfare Dept. Govt. of Orissa. The most exciting thing to look forward this year is their plans for entrepreneurial ventures in the home (example Tiffin Service) and strive towards self-sufficiency.

**Udavum Karangal:** The Chennai based team serves to abandoned orphans for over 15 years. Asha Seattle and Udavum Karangal have had a long relationship. Asha Seattle partnered with Udavum Karangal from its early humble beginnings. Asha Seattle supports 119 children as part of the Support-A-Child Program. Over the past few years Udavum Karangal has grown and established itself as a reputed NGO in India and also in the USA. Udavum Karangal runs a similar Support a child program and has several US-based chapters. It now is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the US. We felt confident that the time was right and Udavum Karangal was in a comfortable position to sustain itself. It was also felt necessary that Asha Seattle should focus efforts on the smaller NGOs that are still struggling in the community. For further information on Udavum Karangal or to donate directly to UK, visit: <http://www.udavumkarangal.org>.

## 3) Community Awareness/Intervention Programs

**Aralu** was started in 1993 with main focus on education of children belonging to repressed groups such as dalits. Long term objectives also include integrated rural development, social and environmental awareness, education facilities, and develop depressed sections of the society. Their activities include education of children, child rights education; self help groups for the mahila sangha, watershed and agricultural development program. This Project funds for residential school for children called prashanthi Kutir, which has 20 orphan children as well as children of laborers. It's a residential centre where food, living

and some vocational training is provided. The teacher / caretaker helps the children with their studies and all the children go to the nearby government school.

The premises are also used to conduct bridge school for dropouts in the area and help them get back into the government school. Aralu also runs pre primary centers in the same area.

**Bhopal March:** The Bhopal gas crime happened on the midnight of Dec 2, 1984. 20000 people have died since and many more continue to die owing to the toxic waste lying around at the factory premises that has even contaminated the ground water in the area. In early 2006, the Bhopalis walked from Bhopal to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister and press their demands that included a cleanup of the factory site and provision of clean drinking water (yes, after 22 years, the survivors do not even have access to this basic amenity). The Prime Minister consistently avoided meeting them and the survivors had to declare an indefinite fast to get him to meet them. He was forced to concede to 4 out of the 6 demands made including provisioning clean water from the Kolar water reservoir. The Government of India has made some advance in meeting these demands for example by sanctioning money for the supply of clean water. Asha Seattle extended support for the Bhopalis' food and other living expenses during their stay in Delhi.

**Champa Mahila Society (CMS)** works to build a self-reliant community with focus on women's groups in the Basanti area of Sundarban, West Bengal. Asha's partnership with them includes many schools (mostly pre-primary), a child-home & a hospital. This year in addition we helped them in the relief efforts following a storm in September.

**Mallarpur Uthnau** is an effort to raise community awareness towards sustainable development in several tribal villages in Birbhum, West Bengal. Asha's partnership with Uthnau includes several early childhood education centers, two after school tuition centers and a crèche. The crèche is a new experiment taken up in 2006 to accommodate children that had to stay home to take care of their siblings. These education centers try to make education meaningful and effective by using student's mother tongue Santhali instead of Bengali as medium of instruction and focuses on inculcating their rich cultural tradition. We also support health-care for these children and mass education on various issues relevant to the area.

**Mathamma project:** Asha-Seattle's two year project with MICDA for the eradication of the Mathamma practice in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, extending to health and education campaigns amongst the Madiga community (an extremely economically backward scheduled caste in this region) came to an end this year. Mathammas are girl children who have been dedicated to Goddess Mathamma due to variety of reasons including strong religious beliefs, ignorance and encouragement. These girls are sexually abused from very young age (early teens). Almost all of them take to prostitution to survive and feed their children. Many of them are infected by sexually transmitted diseases and die very early (only 1% are above 45 years in the region). Through this project, hundreds of families benefited, with access to medical attention, provision of benefits (stipulated by the government, but not implemented till now), special support for the handicapped, etc. The project has had a substantial impact in the region. However, the health awareness and problems remain severe. A smaller proposal from MICDA intends to focus only on health issues, particularly HIV and sexually transmitted disease in the community.

Asha-Seattle has now also continued to support the MICDA School near Puttur, and this year about 24 students (all first generation learners from poor, illiterate families) took their 10<sup>th</sup> grade exams (SSLC), and all of them passed. A few of them passed in their second attempt, while a few even managed to pass in the "first-class". Many of these students are now going on to higher classes or college.

**Rishi Valley Rural Health Project: Rishi Valley Education Center (RVEC)** is actively involved in the welfare of the local population in Chittoor District – a drought prone part of Andhra Pradesh. They have successfully implemented innovative rural education programs, developed ecologically sound methods of conserving water, and developed hardy varieties of rice suitable to grow in the area. The health center, supported by Asha-Seattle starting in 2006, is responsible for providing quality care to the surrounding villages.

#### 4) Programs on Special Children

**AHEAD** is an organization working for education and rehabilitation of the mentally, autistic severely disabled children coupled with economic handicap as well. Asha-Seattle helped in the construction of the new building which will increase the capacity of the organization.



AHEAD: Swati, a Seattle volunteer, with the children in their new building.

**ASTHA**, Alternative Strategies for the Handicapped, is an outreach project in the slum communities of Govindpuri, New Delhi. Supported by Asha since 1998, the project is aimed at providing rehabilitation services and education to children with disabilities including Polio, Blindness, Speech and Hearing impairments, Epilepsy, Autism, and Cerebral Palsy. Transitioning from their "one center" operation, as of 2006, ASTHA is now focusing their attention on developing community based service centers, where community specific rehabilitators go out within their own communities to work with the designated children. In 2007, ASTHA aims to inaugurate the ASTHA Helpline, a telephone service designed to provide medical information and education to families with questions or comments regarding specific disabilities and/or use of medical equipments and medicine.

**Jeevan Gnanodaya** is a residential school for speech and hearing impaired children from villages around Chennai. The school is located in Chengalpattu in Kancheepuram district and currently caters to 130 students. The school also has a day care center that has around 170 students and an Industrial Training Institute for vocational training of young disabled students. In addition, the school has a wing for mentally challenged children that currently has 18 students. In the year 2006, the school added 20 more students to speech and hearing impaired school and 30 more children to day care center. They also opened a new hostel in Feb 2006 (funded by Asha Seattle) to provide boarding for its students and Nursery and Primary schools for children in the day care center.

**Mamata Vidyalaya:** Dr. Kuber (Appa) Vaidya started the school in 1981 to help their mentally challenged daughter; it is the first school in Jalgaon district, Maharashtra for mentally challenged and disabled children. The Savali Project proposed to engage these mentally challenged and economically backward children to be productive by engaging in agricultural activities and the income is given to the participating children. 450 plants were planted and student interest is increased by giving a name plate of the student to his/her plant. A platform and shed has also been constructed and bore pipeline supplies water to the plants.

**Overcoming Hemophilia:** Hemophilia is a rare genetic blood disorder that primarily affects the male population. People with this disorder suffer from the lack of ability of their blood to clot. They have a tendency for excessive bleeding, mainly internal, in the joints and muscles and this can cause crippling disabilities. For the past four years, we have been supporting five children from two families in Chitradurga district of Karnataka. The ongoing expenses for these two families are for the expensive factor injections, which assists blood to clot. These children's health has considerably improved due to these injections and also physiotherapy. A couple of years ago, we also helped set up a restaurant and grocery store for one family of three children and a three-wheeled motorcycle for the other family of two children.

**Samatha Prathisthan** run Mayaboli School for hearing impaired houses around 80 speech or hearing impaired kids. Most (around 70) stay in the school. The school is currently on a rental property which is doubled as a hostel. They do follow the curriculum of state board. It takes about a year and half or more to teach a normal school year curriculum to these kids. Of course, preschool is much elongated. The staff is around 20 people, including teachers, cooks and other workers.

The goal of this project is to have a self sustainable school up to 10th grade at least, making sure that the students which it trains are able to stand up for themselves for the rest of their life. With help of \$10000 from Asha Seattle in 2006 the school was able to make a substantial progress towards getting about Rs. 40 lakhs to buy their own land. The rent of the school property forms a big portion of the current financial obligations of the institute. Asha Seattle is working further with the school in suggesting various vocational training options especially computer related and also in providing guidance on getting donations in form of group hearing aids from various institutes.

**Shastri School** is for children who are hearing impaired. Most children come from under privileged or low income families and cannot provide basic schooling. Many students are orphans with no support for basic necessities. The School had undergone many changes over the last few years. The building is complete and construction is over. The school is running smoothly with a dormitory and remodeled kitchenette. There are currently 76 children in the school, most of whom are supported by sponsors. This includes 18 new students, many of which are pre-primary children. Apart from the students, there are also 18 teachers and 2 cooks who work full time. The teachers are all trained to work with these children in speech and auditory training.

For the past few years, the school has looked forward to the graduation of 11 students who passed their 10<sup>th</sup> grade examination. In spite of the student's impairment, they are not given much concession from the state. They are exempted from taking the English and Hindi exams, however they do need to pass all the other subjects and attain at least a



Children performing in a cultural program at Shastri school

40%. All 11 of these students have successfully graduated and there are a couple of students who are currently undergoing vocational training. For Shastri School, 50% of the funding still comes from Asha and the Sahana Education Welfare Association.

### **Society Undertaking Poor People's Onus for Rehabilitation**

**(SUPPORT)** is an NGO working in the field of Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention amongst street children, homeless youth and the families that live on the street. Their focus has been drug treatment of street children and their vision is to give children better access to education, recreation and an environment conducive to health and well being of the individual. Their goals are education, health and rehabilitation of child addicts. The rehabilitation program forms the foundation of all of their work. The rehabilitation works consists of detoxification through medical treatment, economic and social development of the street populace to promote a healthy lifestyle, vocational training for productive jobs in society, reunification of runaway street children with their families as and when. Asha Seattle funds the vocational training programs at SUPPORT.

**Spastics Society:** Asha-Seattle continued its support (\$3000) for the outreach program of the Spastics Society of Karnataka. These were the centers at Kempapura agrahara, kaddirappa and krishnayanna palya slums. These centers cater to children with mild to serious disabilities who live in these slums, and cannot afford expensive special treatment. The children received constant support and monitoring, and a few children were also admitted to "mainstream" schools.

**Tomorrow's Foundation (Street to School)** works with the children living in the street, slums & red light areas of Kolkata. The organization provides complete support to each child, including but not limited to, education, health, nutrition, counseling (psychological & career), vocational training & co-curricular activities. Asha-Seattle supported parts of these expenses.

## **5) Formal Schools**

**Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha** - Patha Bhavan (BTS-PB) is a non-governmental primary school run by BTS located in Kultali Island in the Sunderbans. The school runs classes up to standard V, and has about 250 students taught by 8 teachers. It follows the West-Bengal state board syllabus, augmented with a variety of extra-curricular learning activities. Kultali is a poor, remote island, until recently accessible only by a boat, and lacks electricity and basic health services. BTS-PB is an Asha-Cornell project; In 2006, Asha-Seattle provided one-time funding to cover a portion of the 2005-2006 expenses of BTS-PB, since Asha-Cornell was unable to fund all the expenses.

**Bhoomiheen Seva Samiti** is located in Aau, U.P., and aims to provide basic education and skills to children of the landless and extremely poor kids of the Banda District in UP state of India. We have been supporting this project since 1998. We supported the construction of the middle school which is now almost complete. The group has also taken to organic farming recently. They are buying only organic fertilizers, and are also using gobar (manure based on cow dung) for making their own fertilizer. So far they are satisfied with the paddy thus produced.

The students of Class V and VI went to Allahabad for their study excursion this year in August. The highlights were, first, a paid cruise on the river Jamuna for over an hour, and secondly, a special free lunch for the children organized in their Banquet Hall by the best Restaurant of Allahabad called El Chico. The proprietors themselves served the children in the spirit of kar sewa (personal service). It was a very moving experience for the students. Bhoomiheen has also been using solar energy on a fair scale now – they have 5 solar street lights and have a solar power generation system with a solar charge inverter.

**ISDGEI:** The Institute for Socially Disadvantaged Groups' Educational Improvement (ISDGEI), currently operates a Crèche Unit, a Primary

School, an 'Open' school, a Vocational Center and a Community Service Unit in the slums of Rajendranagar near Kolhapur, Maharashtra. This project is jointly supported with Asha MSU. The project was status quo in comparison to last year. This year the goals are focused on increased community/parents involvement, other activities like medical and dental checkups, and introducing some extracurricular activities.

**Muskaan**, in 1997, started out as an effort to provide meaningful education to 20 children from deprived backgrounds in Bhopal. Beginning with 20 children, Muskaan grew to incorporate 400 children into its programs. Muskaan works extensively in six slum areas of Bhopal, providing education, community, and health care programs. In 2006, Muskaan started a meal program. Freshly prepared food is distributed to all the children in the learning center. For now, all 4 Baldwadis receive biweekly snacks. Muskaan's staff has grown over the last year, adding an additional two-room office in a neighboring building. At year's end, Muskaan was gearing up for a massive two-day Bal Mela of 250 children from 15 schools that took place January 5-6 in Bhopal.

**Sikshana**, run by Sivasri Trust, currently has 18 government schools from rural Bangalore under its adoption umbrella. Sikshana focuses on applying a definite and characteristic approach to learning in these schools. Sikshana works with foundations like Azim Premji's and Akshara in providing multimedia learning aids to the adopted schools.



Children in front of a Sikshana supported school

Sikshana has faculty and non-faculty volunteers who act as a medium between the students and the learning aids. Sikshana recognizes the academic performance of students from these adopted schools, sending exceptional ones on 5 day educational trips to places outside Bangalore, such as New Delhi.

The students ranging from 4 years to 14 years in age, come from low-income and large families. In 2006, Asha Seattle met the desired financial needs of this organization and continues to provide any needed support.

**Rural Development Trust (RDT)** runs a school for the children of migrant Andhra workers in Tamil Nadu. Asha Seattle has supported this project since its inception in June 2005. The project started as a single school in Navalur. In the past year Asha has funded for expansion which included building toilets, providing vehicles, sheds, learning materials. Now there are schools in Thirupurur, Chemmancherry, Egatooor, Kelambakkam and Vanniyanchavadi.

The schools have successfully weaned children away from construction labor jobs and juvenile delinquency by providing them with formal education opportunities, noon meals, daycare, books and learning materials, uniforms and health clinics. This initiative has gained the help and support of the local leaders due to its support to the community.

The schools have a floating attendance due to the migrant nature of the occupation of the parents. Therefore the effort to keep the children in school is an ongoing process. Asha Seattle also helps them with teachers training and other resources.

**Rural Health and Education Development Trust (RHEDT)** is a nonprofit group working for the upliftment of tribals in the Nilgiris district of Tamilnadu. Asha Seattle has supported the running of one residential school and three primary schools for the tribal children. There are several areas in the Nilgiris region where children have to walk many miles to get to a government school. Three schools are being run by RHEDT in very remote tribal areas where there is not even road access and an outsider

has to trek anywhere from 3-5 kms to get to the school. The residential school was started in 2001, close to Coimbatore with the intention of motivating the children to stay in school and attracting good teachers to school the children. There are currently 50 children in the residential school and 35 children total in the three primary schools. One of the schools has been adopted by the government in 2006 under the SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) scheme. They are currently trying to self-sustain the school since it has been supported by us for many years.

## 6) Non-formal Education Centers and Vocational Training

**Betsy Elizabeth Trust** provides small schools, or crèches, for children under 5 years of age, in the bottom economic rung. Situated in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, the schools rescue children who are neglected, left on the street to fend for themselves, and bring them to a safe place which provides shelter, 3 meals per day, education by trained teachers, health care and lots of affection.

By establishing crèches in the villages, they are able to give the children education, which is the key to breaking the relentless cycle of poverty, and to develop a meaningful relationship with the community from which we can initiate other programs, such as parent education seminars in life-sustaining health issues that will impact the whole village.

**Door Step School (DSS)** is a registered non-profit organization working in Mumbai and Pune, India. Asha Seattle focused on the Pune projects and specifically Laman Tanda in the Pashan/Baner area. DSS runs non-formal education classes for out of school and working children (7 to 18 years of age) residing in slums and pavements. The focus is mainly on children of construction laborers. Apart from Lama Tanda 5 other NFE classes in Pune were supported by Asha Seattle.

**Jagruti Bal Vikas Samiti** operates in the Kanpur District in UP and runs the Swami Vivekananda Vidyalaya at Lodhar. The central idea of the project is to evolve a "Children Education Package", concentrating on economically disadvantaged migrant sections of the society. Activities include generating educational material, conduction science experiment workshops in neighborhoods and providing practical vocational training.

**Nitya Seva Society**, established in 1999, serves the railway and underprivileged children of Bhopal by providing education, vocational training, housing, and clothing. At the beginning of the year, 155 children lived in Nitya Seva Society's two homes. By year's end, 174 children resided in the homes. In addition to covering all of the educational expenses and transportation to neighboring schools, Nitya Seva offers in-house literary, sewing, computer, and carpentry classes for the children.

**Vigyan Ashram** located in Pabal near Khed is about 80 km and a 2 hr drive from Pune. Vigyan Ashram was started about 25 years ago by Dr. Kalbag with the intention of creating an education system that is relevant to rural needs. The methodology for teaching was to be based on hands on learning and the use of scientific thinking. The culmination of his and Vigyan Ashram's efforts are an NIOS approved 1-year course, DBRT (Diploma for Basic Rural Technology) as well as a 3 year school curriculum for 8th, 9th and 10th standard students, IBT (Introduction to Basic Technology). Asha has been supporting the project for past two years. This last year through Asha's encouragement Vigyan Ashram renewed its efforts to spread the IBT program in schools. Till now around 80 schools across Maharashtra have launched the program and Vigyan Ashram is in advance talks with Maharashtra Government to make it part of secondary school curriculum.

**Vikasana bridge school** is a project that Asha Seattle has inherited from Asha Melbourne in 2006, when that chapter ran out of funds. This is a bridge school in the Bhadravati taluk, Shimoga district, Karnataka which aims at eradication of child labor and re-orienting children of migrant laborers to go back to mainstream schooling. The school has fulltime strength of 25 students, 1 teacher and 1 cook and is fully

residential. Students are trained here for 1 full year so that they get the needed education to join the government schools. It has been a successful project with low dropout rates and good percentage of students taking up mainstream schooling.

## 7) After School Support Centers

**Each One Teach One (EOTO) Charitable Foundation** is a development organization working towards overall development of municipal school going children. It works with children from socio-economically deprived sections of the society in Mumbai, Bangalore and Bhopal. EOTO provides for one-to-one sponsorship of children up to 12th grade. Students are tutored by older students. Children are supported until they graduate from High School, University or Vocational Schools, and are expected to contribute to EOTO either monetarily, or by tutoring other students. They also run an effort to support a group of students from the mentally challenged school located in the same premise as Sion municipal school. Support also includes medical help with regular check-ups and subsidized prescriptions, professional counseling for dropouts and their families, and a computer room with interactive learning tools that the children enjoy a lot.

**Project WHY** is an after-school support center targeted at arresting drop-out rates of slum kids in industrial areas around Govindpuri, Kalkaji and Okhla in south Delhi. Project WHY reaches out to over 600 children and runs an early education program, primary and secondary after school support, a day care and life skills program for 20 children with disabilities as well as a computer center in 9 different locations.

In addition to school curricula, the children are taught their basic rights, health and hygiene, social skills, vocational training and civic awareness. The kids from Project WHY are required to be enrolled in government schools and have 100% pass rate at school. ASHA-Seattle supported Project WHY in Oct 2006 and this already has enabled Project WHY to open 2 new centers, serving 50 additional families.

## 8) Fellowship

**Dr. Subbaramaiah Fellowship:** Dr. Subbaramaiah, the founder of MICDA, has for over 25 years been fighting a tireless battle for the rights of landless laborers and their right to land near Puttur. This land (about 700 acres) was grabbed by rich and powerful land grabbers in the area, while it was intended for nearly 400 landless families. Dr. Subbaramaiah and MICDA took it upon themselves to fight their cases in court, and also established a school in the area, and (with the assistance of other agencies) improved the land, built irrigation facilities, and improved the habitations. Finally, this year (in November) all cases filed by the land grabbers were dismissed, and land pattas (rights to land) were issued for all the landless farmers. This work of Dr. Subbaramaiah was widely recognized in Andhra Pradesh.

**Ravi Aluganti Fellowship:** Ravi Aluganti is an Asha Fellow working in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh. He is working in fifteen government schools in Madanapalle mandal. His main focus is to improve the quality of education and make the process of learning more fun with activity based learning. He started a mobile library program (Gramina Vidya Vahini) in 2003 to inculcate reading habits among children and is very popular.

Last year Ravi started a new program to identify and train village youth who can then be designated to a school to work with children on a daily basis. This was mainly triggered by the fact that Ravi can only visit 2 schools in any given day which limits his capacity to improve the effectiveness of his program. 5 schools are currently part of this program.

Ravi also conducts teacher training workshops for various other Asha projects and also is a key contributor to Learning Network Initiative. Asha

Seattle has been supporting his fellowship program since 2001.

## 9) One Time Support

**Harek Rakam Ba (Bal Vividha)** is the adaptation of Bal Vividha for eastern India. It was an education mela in Kolkata for children, parents & teachers in govt. (aided) schools & NGOs. Asha-Seattle supported the teachers' workshops & the interactive corners for children.

**Vatsalya Project:** The Udayan School is located in rural Rajasthan (Achrol) about 40 kms from Jaipur. The school provides high school education and vocational training to abandoned and orphaned children (ages 3-18). The purpose is to prepare these high-risk children for an



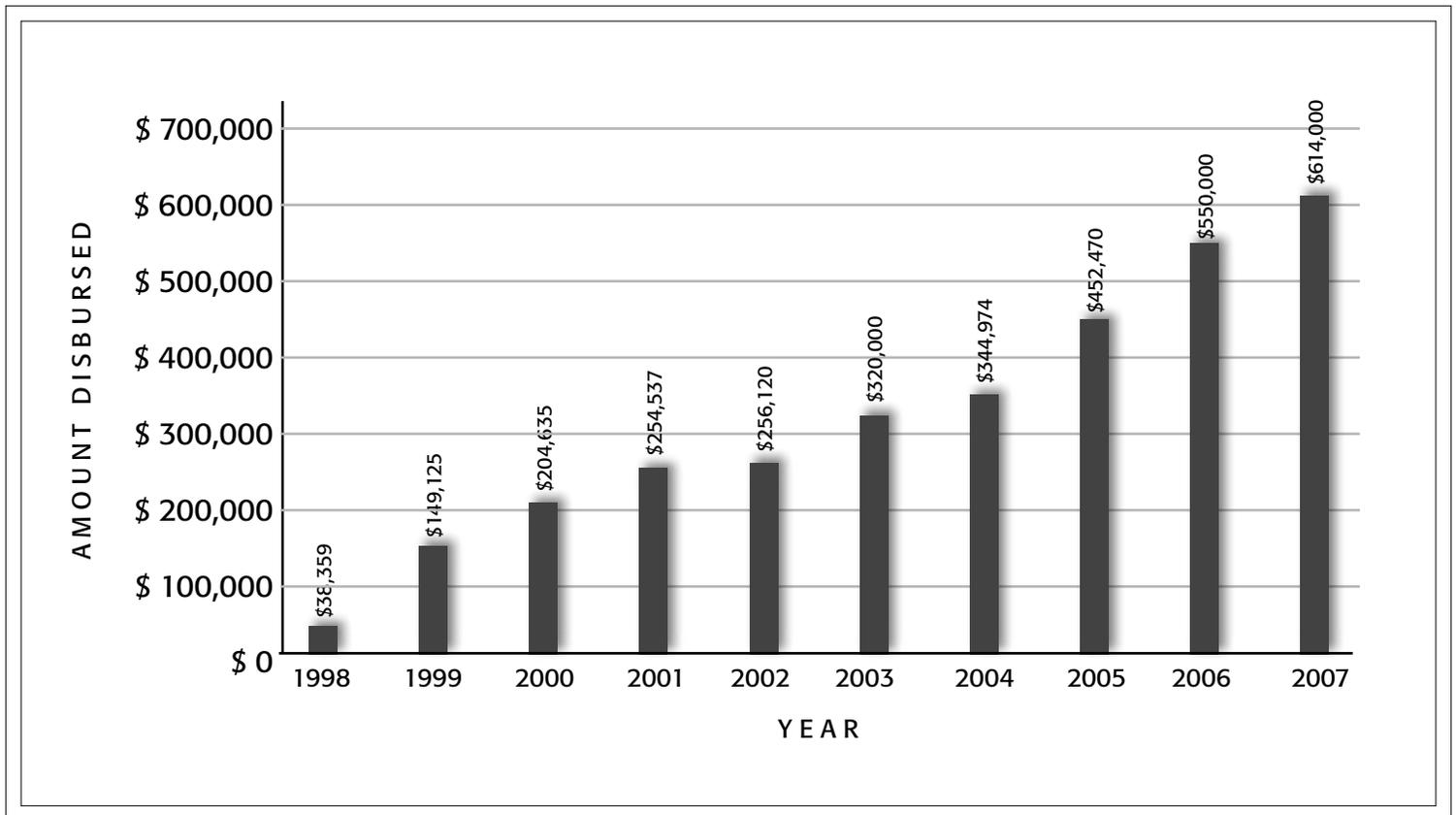
The Water tank constructed in Achrol for the Udayan School

honest life. Since Achrol is arid and the school is literally on desert land, water is an issue. There is no direct water supply to the school. They have a bore well on the school premises and requested funds to build an overhead tank. Asha

Seattle sponsored the construction of a water tank that enables water storage and supply to all school facilities.

# FINANCE SUMMARY

In 2006 Asha Seattle's support amount crossed the half a million mark! We have disbursed approximately \$550,000 in 2006. The following graph shows amount disbursed by Asha Seattle over the years (2006 and 2007 numbers are approximate).



Asha-Seattle presents

# Geetanjali

A Tamil Music Concert

Join us for a evening full of Tamil music - performed by a nonprofit orchestra with a generous heart helping charities and associations in India, Sri Lanka and the Pacific Northwest. Geetanjali's mission is "Music for Charity".

March 17th 2007, Saturday

Northshore Performing Arts Center (NPAC)  
18125 92nd Ave. NE , Bothell, WA 98011