



Asha Kiran

Asha-Seattle's quarterly Newsletter

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editorial

Dear Asha Patrons,

Another year has gone by, and what a year it has been! The economic downturn has impacted people all over the world, including our project partners in India. Huge inflation in India, especially for food prices has made it difficult for our already cash-strapped partners. In these trying times, it's particularly crucial to our partners that we continue to support them. Our support depends on your help - all our patrons. Thanks to your continued support we disbursed more than a million dollars to our partners in 2008. All the credit goes to you and our exceptional volunteers who keep Asha running completely voluntarily to ensure 100% of your donations make it to our partners in India.

Highlights for 2008

A Milestone in Finances: The Asha Seattle chapter disbursed more than a million dollars in 2008 to all our partners. This is the first time we crossed the million-dollar mark!

Exciting New Partners: We started engaging with new partner groups in India this year working with under-privileged sections of society in different parts of India.

Workshops and Talks: We hosted workshops and talks for volunteers and the local community to expand our knowledge and awareness of current socioeconomic issues in India. In two day-long workshops, volunteers discussed and debated many topics related to social change and how Asha makes a difference.

Fundraising Events: Both of our signature cultural events, Geetanjali and AllGoRhythms, were huge successful due to your patronage. We had more than 25 runners who participated in our, now yearlong, Marathon programs and 15 bikers who biked 202 miles from Seattle to Portland to raise funds for Asha Seattle.

New Partners

We supported many new projects this year and are proud to be partnering with these organizations, including the following:

GRAVIS (Rajasthan) – Self-empowers rural communities with focus on water security, health, education and gender equality.

India Sponsorship Committee (Maharashtra) - works with children of migrant workers and from slum communities to empower them with educational and vocational resources.

Sai Seva Sadan (Andhra Pradesh) – provides services to children and adolescents with emotional, developmental and educational impairments.

Raising Awareness

Asha Seattle was proud to host many distinguished speakers from India in 2008:

Harsha spoke about his experiences using IT and social networking initiative for socio-economic change. Harsha cofounded Ek Gaav Ek Sanganak ("One Village, One Computer") in Maharashtra which has received international acclaim from the Ashoka fellowship. Harsha started India 700k activities in more than 65 villages, developing an information base for developmental issues by means of communication, knowledge-transfer, and networking between communities. He is a current Asha fellow.

Father Cedric Prakash is a Jesuit priest and founder of PRASHANT, a Gujarat

based Jesuit Center for Human Rights, Justice and Peace. He questioned the definition of development and it's implication for people in different strata of society. He brought out a different picture of Gujarat that most of the mainstream national media continues to ignore. While a section of Gujarat benefits from "development", many times it is at the cost of human rights violation. A parallel world exists which is largely kept out of this "development" and they are the ones who are bearing the brunt of this lopsided growth.

Madhu Kishwar talked about the issue of economic freedom with two very specific case studies – cycle rickshaw pullers and the street vendors, specifically in Delhi. She spoke of the "vast, arbitrary powers" in the hands of the state that are often abused to the detriment of the weak and vulnerable sections of society, their livelihood options. She is the founder editor of Manushi and Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS).

Dr Ravishankar Arunachalam's talk was co-hosted with Association for India's Development (AID), Seattle Chapter in June. The topic of his talk was the Eureka Child initiative, an AID India initiative in Tamilnadu, focusing on creating innovative and lasting interventions in the area of education. Over the past decade, this initiative covering 7000 schools was successful in improving the reading skills of 5th grade children by a whopping 30%!

Krishnammal Jagannathan is a Gandhian Activist, 2008 finalist of Opus Prize Award and winner of Right Livelihood Award, also known as the Alternate Nobel Prize. We hosted her in November in partnership with Seattle University. Krishnammal shared many personal stories of her struggle starting from the early days of Indian Independence. She is the founder of seven organizations including LAFTI (Land for Tillers' Freedom). Her work has focused on people's rights through redistribution of land, rebuilding housing to withstand harsh rains, and advocating against corporatization of aquaculture along the seacoast of southern India.

With many challenges, we look forward to an exciting new year. We are confident that with your support and the unwavering dedication of our growing number of volunteers we will be able to not only continue our existing work, but expand out reaches to many other communities who really need our help. Drop us a line at seattle@ashanet.org if you have any feedback or comments – we would love to hear from you.

*Thank you,
Asha Seattle Team*

In 2008 Asha Seattle partnered with in India, sending more than \$1 million.

45 NGOs

These are tough times. We need to raise \$925,000 in 2009 to continue supporting all our partners. Without your help many of these partners will be forced to discontinue the critical work they do in their communities.

Please consider increasing your donation to us to help us meet our target.

PROJECT NOTES

1. Child homes

Adruta Children's Home

Asha Seattle has been supporting Adruta Children's Home since 2006. About 50 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. Anjali is an accomplished all-rounder who excels in several areas like academics, singing, dancing and sports. Child artistes perform awareness programs on child labor, female infanticide, dowry, drug addiction etc. in local slums & other target areas. Over the past year, the home has expanded to reach out to impoverished children from the most drought-prone areas of Orissa like Bolangir and Kalahandi, where child trafficking is rampant and the living conditions are extremely harsh. With the help of many activists, they have been able to rescue and rehabilitate victims from this area.

Jan Seva Mandal

Janseva operates lodging and boarding facilities for tribal boys in Nandurbar, which is 10 hours by road from Mumbai. Jan Seva has been operating this facility for 15 years and currently houses 60 adivasi boys. They collaborate with Jeevan Vidya which is a sister organization (run independently of Jan Seva) providing similar facilities for adivasi girls. The children who avail the benefits of these facilities come from villages located around 50-60 kms away. Most of the children study in the 6th or 7th grade and belong to very poor families. Most of the parents in this area are farm workers. The children attend a local missionary school for which they are not charged any fee. Asha Seattle started supporting this project from 2008.

2. Programs on special education

Astha

ASTHA, a non-profit organization located and operated out of the dilapidated areas of urban New Delhi, focuses on educational services to the mentally and physically disabled children and youth and their families coming from impoverished socioeconomic backgrounds who are often neglected by the larger society. In understanding that all people deserve access to quality education, regardless of physical/mental ability, the Seattle Chapter of Asha for Education financially support's ASTHA's Center for Children with Special Needs in the slum of Giri Nagar. This center provides services for children with "severe and multiple" disabilities, accommodating approximately 25 children. Under supervision of trained teachers and staff, enrolled children receive a sound education, inclusive of physiotherapy, medical intervention, provision of aids & appliances, speech therapy, art & craft, music, theatre. A recent site visit of this center conducted in December 2008, reports excellent student-to-teacher ratios, a well-qualified teaching staff, ASTHA's positive impact and rapport within the surrounding community, along with engaged, happy, and satisfied students.

AHEAD

Project Ahead is a special school for mainly mentally challenged and autistic children in Kolkata, West Bengal. Asha has been supporting Project Ahead since 2004. Originally partly funded by Asha Berkeley, Asha Seattle started partially funding Ahead in 2005.

Over the years the Project Ahead has made considerable progress in expanding its services by investing in infrastructural improvements. In the recent year this has included additional rooms for physiotherapy, vocational training, separate office room, separate rooms for working with Austistic children, among others. Ahead also appointed new qualified special educators/helper teachers which has enabled the school to admit more students. The present student strength is about forty. The school has also been successful in securing funds from several sources apart from Asha. Some of these sources include Gas Authority of India Ltd, Rotary Club of U.K., some NGOs from USA and other one time gifts from various other organizations. In 2007, Government of India Coconut Board conducted a

two-week vocational training course at Ahead school for students and one parent/guardian from each family. They taught how to make artwork from coconut shells.

The good work done by Ahead has been acknowledged by the local society. On 4th September, 2008 The Telegraph, a popular Calcutta based English newspaper published an article titled "Marching Ahead" on Ahead. The article highlights several students of the Ahead school who all suffer from various kinds of disabilities including autism. The article commended on the progress that these children have been making through their engagements in various activities like drawing, designed particularly to counter the problems of hyper-activism and hypo-activities amongst the autistic children. The article particularly noted the ambience of joy and easy camaraderie shared amongst the students at Ahead, which is indeed "heart-warming".

Jeevan Gnanodaya

Jeevan Gnanodaya School for the Deaf is a wing of the Jeevan Gnanodaya Charitable Trust. It has been functioning in Chengalpattu since 1989. The school shelters and educates speech and hearing impaired kids from poor, rural backgrounds. When children are admitted their hearing level is determined and they are given the hearing aid equipment necessary for them. They are provided special speech therapy classes in addition to the regular curriculum. The school has also started an ITI for hearing-impaired children where they will acquire technical and industry-based skills such as fitting, turning, carpentry etc. Some vocational skills like chalk making are also being imparted to the children. All the facilities provided by the school are free, including food and lodging. They started with 5 students (in 1989) and the school now has 130 (about 90 stay in the hostel and about 40 day scholars) students and classes up to X std. Asha Seattle has supported the project since 2002 and has funded the teacher's salary for the school.

Shastri School

Shastri School is a school for speech and hearing impaired children located in the outskirts of Bangalore, India. The school provides free education for about 140 students from K to 10th grade following the Karnataka Board State syllabus. About 60 of these children are orphans and live in the school itself. The school not only funds the educational expenses of these children but also provides free boarding and lodging for them. Shastri School does not depend on any government grants and is funded by non profit organizations. Asha for Education through its Support a Child program sends seventy percent of the funding that the program needs. Sponsors commit to support a child for at least a year for only \$20 a month.

Sri Sai Seva Sadan

Sri Sai Seva Sadan, a non-profit organization, is committed to provide services to persons with emotional, developmental and educational disabilities and to provide highest quality service to children and adolescents with special needs. Services are provided in a caring environment to foster human potential and to contribute to the person's health, social, psychological and educational well-being to enable them lead a normal life and / or carry their occupational jobs. The Trust is targeting primarily adolescents from rural and poor families.

Support

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 streets of Mumbai. 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 for a well rounded rehabilitation. The rehabilitation program forms the foundation of all of their work. This 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, and re-unification of runaway street children with their families as well. Asha Seattle funds the vocational training programs at SUPPORT.

Malti, a volunteer from Asha Seattle has visited SUPPORT twice in 2008 - April & September. The building that SUPPORT rents in Vakola, Mumbai is



under renovation to expand to a mall and consequently they have been squeezed into a much smaller temporary accommodation. They are hoping to get back the original amount of space when the shopping centre is completed. At the same time, they have been working on obtaining alternate and permanent premises/land to consolidate most of their activities in one place. With this in mind, they have purchased a 1 acre virgin plot of land - but they are severely lacking in funds to proceed with building design and construction, getting the plumbing and electricity facilities added etc. They are also battling inflation in providing for the food, residential and medical needs of the kids - which went up by a staggering 68%. Plus, they are facing the need to provide salary increases for the staff - who are also impacted by the inflation.

3. Alternatives in Education/Curriculum Support

Avehi Abacus

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 called Sangati for grades 5th to 7th of Mumbai municipal schools that help children make a connection between what they are taught in school and what they experience in their daily lives. Avehi is completing, in April 2009, the rollout of 3 year long first phase expansion to all 905 upper primary municipal schools in Mumbai. Advocacy to integrate the Sangati curriculum in State curriculum is under way. Extensive planning for phase two from 2009 to 2012 is in progress. The main focus during this period will be to further improve the impact of this curriculum through better teacher training, continued project representative school visits and finer changes to course material.

<http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=845>

Bharathi Trust (Senjiagam School)

Bharathi Trust is a Chennai-based NGO that is engaged in empowering the Irulars, an oppressed tribal community in Tamil Nadu, for the past 10 years. The trust has an active presence over 300 villages spread in Cuddalore and Vellore districts of Tamil Nadu. The Irular children come from poor families and are extremely disadvantaged when it comes to all-round development during childhood. The hope from this project is to provide these children nutritional food and early childhood education that stimulates learning by doing. The school consists of 2 buildings which houses around 35 children, one teacher and a cook. The trained school teacher encourages creativity in children through storytelling, song and dance. The children have access to educational aids like flash cards and blocks that promotes motor and sensory skills.

Center for Learning (CFL)

CFL has been successful in helping children acquire academic skills, a zest for learning and self-confidence. Serious educationists have recognized the quality of work done by Centre for Learning in the field of education - particularly in equipping socially and economically under-privileged children to join the mainstream as equal and active members. CFL is an alternative, quality education centre that seeks to discover, impart and share its understanding of quality education with all interested. Asha Seattle has started engaging with CFL starting in 2008. We are supporting part of teachers' salaries and some health and nutrition component for the children.

Learning Network

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 network creates a forum for learning through sharing experiences and challenges in the area of education. The activities of the network include - annual conferences, mini-conferences and workshops, publication of an annual magazine called Revive and bi-annual newsletters, Chiguru. The 6th Annual Conference of the Learning Network was held at Swarnivar, Andharmanik Village, North 24 Paragnas, West Bengal from December 27-30, 2008. The agenda included two keynote addresses and several interesting presentations and workshops in the areas of arts, theatre, educational approaches for holistic learning, child behavior, adivasi education, math, science, language teaching, social studies and open discussion groups on several topics. Delegates from across India including multiple Asha projects participated in the conference. Revive 2008, the network's yearly magazine, was also released at the conference. Chiguru, the network newsletter was published in July 2008. All the details including summaries of conference and soft copy of Chiguru and Revive is are also available at <http://www.learningnet-india.org>.

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

Sakshaar is an initiative of Vigyan Vijay Foundation. The aim of the project is to provide non formal education to the children living in Nasirpur and Manglapuri slums. Most of the residents of this area are labourers. The mothers usually work as housemaids. Many of the children do not attend school due to lack of information, economic hardships or because they have to look after their younger siblings. Even those children who begin school end up dropping out because of the above-mentioned factors. Therefore, Sakshaar has started Non-formal education centers where they teach out-of-school children. Once the children learn acquire basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills they are encouraged to enroll into the government school.

Vikasana

Located in rural Karnataka Vikasana is a rural center that provides free education to children of all ages. Children of landless farmers in neighboring villages and 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.

4. Non-formal Education Centers & Vocational Training

Door Step School

Door Step School is a registered non-profit organization working in Mumbai and Pune, India. They conduct non-formal education classes for out of school and working children (7 to 18 years of age) residing in slums, on pavements, docks etc. With the introduction of the "School on Wheels" bus, Door Step has come closer to fulfilling one of its major objectives - making basic education easily accessible to a larger number of children. The bus drops off the children to school and also acts as a classroom for 5 sessions during the day.

Tomorrow's Foundation

Tomorrow's Foundation CBEP's (Community Based Educational Project) goal is to improve the quality of life of the deprived children at different slum areas of Kolkata . In 2005, TF started CBEP to reach the kids who do not go to school. Most of these kids are from the streets and the slums, children of sex workers, refugees and migrant families. Under CBEP there are currently 14 centers running in 9 Municipal wards of Kolkata. Out of which Asha supports 8 centers, rest are being supported by Calcutta De La Rue A' L' Ecole, the French Association. The students are 4 to 9 years in age. The

intention here is to train the kids for formal schooling system within a span of 2 years. The kids will be placed in the formal schools according to their targeted classes and performances. Schooling is available free of cost and free meals are also provided. The schools usually run for 4 hours, 5 days per week. The average teacher and student ratio is 1:25. Teachers have already gone through formal school training and are from within the community. The classes take place within the community mostly inside the local youth clubs. Amenities like water, toilet, electricity and meal arrangement are provided by the community. By the end of August 2008 there were 346 students attending the centers and 181 students were mainstreamed to formal schools. <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=904>

GRAVIS

GRAVIS, based in Jodhpur (Rajasthan), works to improve the life of villagers in the Thar Desert of Western Rajasthan. To provide the most benefits to these communities, GRAVIS organizes rural reconstruction projects that encourage self empowerment. The organization works on various issues including water security, health and gender equality.

GRAVIS currently works in 850 rural communities throughout five districts of Western Rajasthan. With the funds provided by Asha, GRAVIS will expand



its influence to include six new villages in Jodhpur District. The project will last for two years and has 4 distinct goals: provide initial funding for two new schools, build 18 rainwater collection/storage tanks (taankas), schedule 12 medical camps and facilitate the organization of self help groups to economically empower women.

Asha stewards Sandeep and Rekha recently visited the site and found the initial results very encouraging. GRAVIS has begun its work in the six target villages (Minno Ki Dhani, Khabra Khurda, Khabra Kala, Dabri, Ekal Khari) with the funding Asha Seattle has provided. An initial baseline report has been completed in all six villages and has been submitted to Asha. Construction has started on the first of the taankas, women's self help groups have begun meeting and classes are now being held in a temporary structure in one village.

Betsy Elizabeth Trust

The Betsy Elizabeth Trust runs crèches for children under 5 years of age. Situated in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, the schools rescue children who are neglected and left on the street to fend for themselves, and brings them to a safe place which provides shelter, 3 meals per day, education by trained teachers, health care and lots of affection. Asha funds the Grace Kids' Centre (GKC), which is the biggest crèche run by the Betsy Elizabeth Trust.

In 2008, Asha funded constructing a permanent building for GKC. This building provides a big relief from having to move the crèches from one rented building to another. They had to move about 4 times in a single year before Asha helped with the funding for a permanent building! The building was constructed using a modest budget of INR 155064, all of which Asha funded. The building is basic (2 toilets, a kitchen and a hall) but well constructed with adequate facilities and good ventilation. There is also a nice outdoor play area for the kids.

They have regular meetings with the parents and conduct classes to educate them on multiple aspects like alcoholism, child labor and health. Other initiatives, like installing smokeless stoves help promote a healthy environment at homes, which have no rooms and little ventilation.

Nitya Seva Society

Nitya Seva Society, established in 1999, serves the railway and underprivileged children of Bhopal by providing education, vocational training,

housing, and clothing. Around 174 children reside 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

Vigyan Ashram located in Pabal near Khed is about 80 km and a 2 hour 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 three years. Last year through Asha's encouragement and with Lead-a-Hand-India's (LAHI) support, Vigyan Ashram renewed its efforts to spread the IBT program in schools. until now more than 100 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

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 a 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

Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti

Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti operates in the Kanpur District in UP and runs the Swami Vivekananda Vidyalyaya at Lodhar as well as 17 schools for children of migrant laborers, 5 rural computer clubs and a mobile library. Jagriti currently comprises of IIT Kanpur faculty and students, social workers, youth in the neighborhood, 9 teachers and 240 children. They also run a very good library (with 6000 books), a science lab and a computer lab at Lodhar.

India Sponsorship Committee (ISC) Pune

ISC was established in Mumbai in 1967. Initially it started to assist destitute and orphaned children in institutions, later broadening their work to more family based programs. In 1979 it was established in Pune to work with children of migrant workers in brick kilns and from slum communities in and around the Yerawada district. Asha Seattle is supporting ISC's children education and gender education programs. They have about 334 kids in 6 centers around Yerawada Area. Gender education component support for workshops, Sabhas which let children especially girl children know about their rights and talk about gender education issues.

5. Formal Schools

Bhoomi Heen Sewa Samithi

Bhoomiheen Seva Samithi is located in a very remote village of Uttar Pradesh (UP) called Aau which is a highly feudal village with prevalent cast system. Most of the villagers are low-caste landless laborers and there are only a handful of Brahmin (high-caste) landlords who own most of the lands in the village. The goal of this organization is to empower and uplift the landless Dalits in this village. Among other initiatives, Bhoomiheen runs a school with the aim to provide good quality education and vocational skills to the children of this area. Asha Seattle has been supporting this school since 1998. The school has some agricultural land and many of them are used for growing vegetables. They have plans of getting more land and starting proper organic farming where they will be able to train the students. Starting a vocational high school is one of the future plans and organic farming will be one such vocation taught.

The school has also added two more grades, 9th and 10th, last year. In doing so, the school is now complete, and this enables students, especially girls, to be able to complete 10th grade without having to go far. In the past, girls were dropping out of education system post 8th, while boys were able to carry forward in schools in other towns.

Gandhi Kasturibhai Village Development Society (GKVDS)

GKVDS is an NGO established with mission of rehabilitating dropout children of deprived sections of the society (small farmers, agricultural, landless laborers, dalits and people with disabilities). The organization conducts non-formal education, vocational training, health care and recreation programs for these children in the villages of Chengam Taluk, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamil Nadu. Currently, 150 dropout children (63 boys and 87 girls) of ages 7 to 11 years are enrolled in the Non Formal Education (NFE) centers run by GKVDS. The children are trained by a staff consisting of a project coordinator experienced in non-formal education and five animators (one per village) with SSLC qualifications. A one hour monthly meeting is held with parents of the children to apprise them of the children's performance, announce incentives for children with regular attendance, encourage participation in health camps, educate them about health care and hygiene and children's rights. GKVDS is also currently motivating the parents to create a credit union to save for children's education.

MICDA

MICDA school project continued to run smoothly through the year. There were some significant milestones. 14 students took the public exam for the 10th grade, of whom 13 passed in the first attempt, including 10 students who secured a "first class". The 14th student passed on the second attempt. The more promising story however came from the students of the 7th grade (who also take a public state board exam in Andhra Pradesh). 24 students took the seventh grade exam, and 23 out of the 24 students secured a "first class" grade, including one student who stood second in the entire Mandal, a commendable achievement. MICDA is trying its best to keep up academic standards, though the task proves to be challenging due to a high teacher turnover, and a difficulty in recruiting and retaining good teachers (due to the relatively remote location of the school). In addition, the situation in the habitation itself has improved since a lot of legal issues were resolved, and the chief minister and local MLA finally allotted land "pattas" to the laborers. Minor issues remain to be resolved, but this has taken off a lot of strain from Dr. Subbaramaiah, who is now able to focus on the functioning of the school much more. Asha-Seattle continues to support the entire recurring expense for the 2008-09 academic year and has also supported the construction of a new permanent kitchen for the mid day meals <http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/111/kitchen.pdf>.

Muskaan

Muskaan extensively works within six slum areas of Bhopal, implementing education, community, and health care programs. In 1997, Muskaan started out as an effort to provide meaningful education to 20 children. Over the last couple of years, Muskaan has grown from 400 to 550 children and their families.

Educationally, the children are making huge strides. One of Muskaan's girls is in the 11th standard, with three more in the 10th. Muskaan shifted the girls hostel away from Center and into a larger house that accommodates more girls, which also provide a quieter place to study. In the income generation program, Muskaan focuses on increasing the quality and marketability of their broom making program, beginning to make and market paper bags to a few NGOs, and continuing sewing classes for women.

Muskaan's health care program has increased tremendously over the last year. Selected basti women were trained in health issues related to the human body, children's health, hygiene, and pregnancy. Monthly meetings in the bastis have led to greater awareness and problem solving of health problems emerging within the women's families

Parijat Academy

Parijat Academy is a school started (in 2003) and run by Uttam Teron. It is located in Pamohi village in Kamrup district, Assam in the outskirts of Guwahati. It currently has about two hundred students and fifteen teachers. Parijat Academy follows the State Education Board of Assam curriculum with instruction in Assamese, Hindi, and English. Teachers of Parijat Academy also try to improve younger children's handwriting, recitation, and physical exercise through activities like drill, coloring-drawing, cutting and pasting, and custom-created learning tools so that they learn to imagine and dream. In 2008, Parijat started the construction of a new school building, necessitated by an increase in the number of students and to meet state board requirements to offer secondary education classes. Asha Seattle funded this construction and it is progressing well.

Rural Development Trust

Rural Development Trust (RDT): RDT runs a school for the children of migrant Andhra and Oriya workers in the IT corridor area in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The school aims to wean children away from construction labor jobs and juvenile delinquency by enabling them to study classes 1-8 using Telugu as a medium of instruction. The state run schools are unable to sustain these children as they are unable to read in Tamil.

Asha Seattle has supported this project since its inception in June 2005. The project started as a single school and has expanded to 9 schools with over 700 enrolled children. Asha supports the funding for the teacher's salary, noon meals, learning materials and teacher's training.

Over the last year RDT has been persuading the local education department officials and the local construction industries to take ownership and fund part of the schooling initiative. They have received an AIE (Alternative Innovative Schooling) grant from the state that will be implemented in academic year 2009-2010. They were able to get land and building space for the functioning of the 9 schools from several of the industries. Additionally they also persuaded the government to provide support for day care centers through the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

Sikshana

Sikshana is a project started in 2002 by ES Ramamurthy to improve the learning levels in government run schools in the state of Karnataka. It aims to improve the quality of education in the schools it adopts by keeping



the teachers and students motivated in learning. It works with the existing system – the government, schools, teachers and the children to bring about the changes with quantitative targets and time schedules. It is based on a sustainable model which can be replicated at a larger scale. Sikshana started with around 15 schools and, currently in its phase III has successfully adopted around 134 schools most of which are in Kanakapura district near Bangalore. Sikshana supports the schools through mentors, local teachers, teaching supplies, teacher's training, notebooks, diaries, annual days, expeditions etc. Each school under Sikshana sets its own goals for the year. Sikshana provides the necessary resources and mentorship throughout the year to facilitate the schools to achieve their goals and evaluates them at the end of the academic year.

Gyandeeep Vidhyalaya

Gyandeeep vidyalaya works within Musaha and Natjati communities in Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh. These people live below the poverty line and hunger is widely prevalent. The group aims at leaving behind castism and religious fervor and make progress towards social reform, economic development, and self-sufficiency. They run schools for the children in these communities. Right now they have 5 centers and about 140 students. Asha Seattle started supporting this project from 2008.

6. After School Support Centers

Each One Teach One

Each One Teach One (EOTO) was started in Bombay in Dec '83 with five students and the purpose of educating children from the economically backward sections of urban society. The trust now assists 350 children who are widely praised for their academic scholarship and social responsibility. The children all attend municipal schools. EOTO provides them with daily necessities like milk, food, uniforms, stationery, books - everything a school going child needs. In return, the student accepts the responsibility for a child from a lower grade, in the same school or family. The older student helps



the younger one with his studies and ensures his/her welfare. The teachers at EOTO constantly monitor and keep an eye on the older children to make sure they are caring for and tutoring their younger dependents. Also, all the children are given medical examinations and social and family counseling is given for those who need it. A big achievement of EOTO is making the parents aware that in education lies the key to their children's success - they are putting children through school who would otherwise have been fodder for the child labor exploitation machine in India. EOTO also provides the kids a sense of community with other school going children by sending them to inter school competitions, organizing social activities like picnics and sponsoring them for vocational training seminars. The success of EOTO in kindling the desire for education in these children can be seen from the fact that the pass rate of EOTO children has risen from 60% to a stunning 84%. The average pass rate at these schools is 54%.

If you would like to make a difference in a child's life, all it takes is \$12.50 a month. You can pick the child you want from the biographies we get from EOTO. You can have one to one correspondence and interaction with the child and your money will sponsor her/his education from the 7th to 10th standard. Most of your money will go directly to the service of the child because EOTO has very low overheads. There are no offices to be maintained - each school where EOTO is active provides a room for them. The midday meal provided is cooked by one of the children's parents. The staff consists entirely of volunteers.

Project WHY

Project Why is an initiative that provides after school education for children from the Govindpuri, Okhla and Sarika suburbs of New Delhi. They also run crèches and, a center for physically and mentally challenged children. The organization has constantly tried to engage with the community that it lives in: they have sponsored open heart surgeries, workshops on health and RTI awareness, legal aid as requested, teacher recruitment for their programs etc. They have also started to work towards building a guest house, Planet Why, which will eventually provide the income to run Project Why. Land for Planet Why was purchased (Asha Seattle contributed towards this purchase) in 2008 and fund raising is ongoing for construction. A component of Planet Why is the foster home for children, who may be abandoned or come from families that are so poor that they can't afford to keep the children at home. In 2008, 5 such children were adopted into the foster home and sent to private school in order to prepare them for mainstream education. Due to the withdrawal of aid from the sponsors of these children fund raising is on ongoing to send them to a residential school. Asha-Seattle is supporting this initiative as a donor specific project. Project Why is a dynamic, pragmatic yet flexible program that operates with compassion, love and care in the slums of New Delhi and will continue to be an exciting project for Asha-Seattle to be involved with.

7. Fellowships

Ravi Aluganti

Ravi Aluganti Fellowship: Ravi Aluganti is an Asha Fellow working in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh. He is working with fifteen government schools in Madanapalle mandal. His main focus is to improve the quality of education and make the process of learning fun by making it activity based. But the number of times he can visit any given school is greatly limited by the fact that he can only visit 2 schools per day. To address this, he started a new program in 2005 to identify and train village youth who can work with the school in their respective village on a daily basis. The program is still limited to 3 schools. Finding & retaining education facilitators and Ravi's bandwidth

are the primary factors affecting our ability to scale this program to more schools. Ravi started a mobile library program (Gramina Vidya Vahini) in 2003 to inculcate reading habits among children which continues to remain popular. 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.

8. Community Awareness/Intervention Programs

Balvihar

Balavihar project is designed for providing holistic education and improving quality of English language learning for urban lower middle class children enrolled in poorly equipped urban schools. Many government schools lack trained staff for teaching English language. In many of these schools children are often subject to 'rote learning' and the learning process is confined to the memorizing the material present in the textbooks. In addition to degrading the quality of education, such a process allows no room for children to explore their curiosity and express their creativity. As a result children tend to lose interest in learning. The project attempts to address some of these issues through activity based non-formal learning programs. The learning programs in all of the schools are supplemented and supported by small libraries.

The project currently covers six schools. The English language training program is conducted in four government schools. The program consists of exercises in reading comprehension, writing, speaking, conversations, listening to stories and songs. Non formal learning activities are regularly conducted in two private schools. Examples of such activities include songs, chants and yoga, creative writing, poetry writing, art and craft, drama and theatre activities and clay work.

The project is staffed by two full time teachers, two part time teachers and five part time volunteers. Although the project covers more than six hundred students all of the programs are conducted for small groups of 20-30 students to allow the instructors to provide individualized attention and care.

Champa Mahila Society

Champa Mahila Society (CMS) works to build a self-reliant community with a 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 children's home, and a health clinic. Through CMS, Asha supports the education of over 2,000 boys and girls in the region. 2008 saw the completion of and start of full operations in a new, larger school building that accommodates over 200 students in a remote part of the area

Delhi 10% Reservation Clause

Delhi 10% Reservation Clause Project: Asha Seattle assisted in the funding of this Asha Delhi project that aims to ensure the effective implementation of the 10% clause so that the children coming from the economically backward section get their rightful place in the private schools in Delhi.

EQUIP

Krishnagiri is one of the poorest and worst districts in terms of education standards in Tamil Nadu. AID India has been able to carry out programs such as reading, science and library in the Krishnagiri district with the support of Asha Seattle.

The Tamil reading program involves the use of attractive story posters and graded story cards that excite children and make them 'want to read'. Intensive reading program is started in 610 schools out of the total 1060 schools in Krishnagiri district where the teachers showed lot of interest in this program. Resource material is provided to all the schools and over 1000 government teachers were trained in using the material. "Reading fairs" were conducted in 20 villages in February and 1127 villages in May to generate excitement about reading. Evaluation of this Tamil reading program is carried out at the beginning and at the end of 2008. The results showed that there is a significant improvement in the reading levels.

Through the science program students learn and demonstrate several science experiments. This year, it was decided to extend it to all middle, high and higher secondary schools and hence it was increased to 508 schools from last year's number 453. New experiment kits were given and training was completed in February for all teachers.

The library program involves a volunteer from each village, carrying a bag

of books. The story cards are added each month keeps which keeps the library fresh and growing. Every few months, state wide learning festivals - story writing, drawing, drama festivals are organized - start with children participating in every library village and culminate with a state level fun event. The winners at block-level festival took part in a state-level festival held at German hall (T.Nagar) Chennai on 29th and 30th March'08. Children shared that they really enjoyed their participation and felt it as a different experience.

Uthnau

Mallapur Uthnau is an effort to raise community awareness towards sustainable development in several tribal villages in Birbhum district of West Bengal.

Asha's partnership with Uthnau includes early childhood education centers and a Mocha Ora. The Mocha Ora provides a flexible curriculum to children depending on their skill level. After grade 8, an Open School Exam option is available to the children to provide an equivalent of the Madhyamik certificate.

There have been some visible signs of progress through Uthnau's work. Villagers are noticing a difference in the quality of the government schools and Uthnau's schools. This has resulted in additional inflows and re-flows to the Mocha-Ora. The parents are taking a stake in running the ECEs by searching for new teachers, organizing new meetings and providing free labor.

A Mothers' committee was formed to improve the environment for children in the villages and tackle issues like domestic violence, alcoholism and multiple marriages. The children attending the Mocha-Ora are also attempting to influence social responsibility in their parents. The villagers have raised their voice against the prevalence of corruption in government primary schools, especially in building constructions and the mid day meal system.

V-Excel

V-Excel aspires to be a model school for mentally and developmentally challenged children. A multi-modal approach is used, where visual and tactile experiences had to be integrated into the method of instruction. The trust has teacher training programs that helps address the dearth of teacher training

facilities for centers catering to the needs of special education. The group's mission is to make a difference in the world of disability.

9. Onetime Support

Deenabandhu Trust

Deenabandhu is a home for children with a vision of developing orphan, destitute and estranged children towards achievement of their best potential by providing them a loving home and good education. Since Asha started supporting this project from 2000, Deenabandhu has grown from an orphanage boarding 30 children to a school for 180 children and orphanage now house 44 children. More than 80% of children come from families which have income below 15,000 Rs per year, which is well below the poverty line defined by Indian government at Rs 10 per day/ person. Asha Seattle sent a onetime support for the construction of a girls' home.

Wagheshwar Trust

Wagheshwar trust runs a school in the Wagholi village in Pune District of Maharashtra to make education easily accessible to boys and girls from poor rural families in and around Wagholi. Asha Seattle provided a onetime support for construction of 10 classrooms for the school building. The construction was completed by last week of October 2008 and the students have already started using the same.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Year	Revenue	Disbursement
2003	\$499,000	\$320,000
2004	\$686,000	\$372,000
2005	\$858,000	\$452,000
2006	\$729,000	\$616,000
2007	\$735,000	\$722,000
2008	\$725,000	\$1,066,000
2009	\$925,000	\$800,000

