

Asha for Education™

Project Proposal Submission Form

P.O. Box 322 • New York • NY 10040-0322

www.ashanet.org

Project Name: *Bridging the Divide: Community based Accelerated Reading and Bridge Course Programme with a special focus on mainstreaming children at risk.* **Date:** April, 2010

	Project Contact	Asha Contact
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Part I: Information about your group/organization

Please feel free to attach any additional sheets and/or information such as brochures, press reports etc.

1. Name of the group/organization requesting funds.

Institute for Planning, Innovative Research, Appropriate Training and Extension (Regd. Name: Hijli INSPIRATION)

2. When was the group established?

08/01/1996

3. Briefly describe the motivation for starting this group.

INSPIRATION was formed by a group of IIT Kharagpur Alumni. The genesis of the organisation was caused by the need for an organizational platform that would be able to provide the multidisciplinary support and integrated treatment for effective and appropriate solutions to a spectrum of national socioeconomic problems.

4. Briefly describe the aims of your group.

The main objective of the organisation is to carry out research / study / action oriented projects on socio-cultural, economic and environmental issues aimed at improving quality of life of people especially the weaker sections of the society and promoting eco-utilisation and preservation of natural resources.

5. Does your group have any religious or political affiliation? If yes, please describe the type of affiliation and the reason for it.

N.A.

6. What non education-related community development activities is your group involved in?

The non education related community development activities encompass sector domains like health and sanitation, livelihood promotion, tribal empowerment, Environmental conservation, Consumer rights, Road safety, Rural industrialization. Few representative programmes are as follows

- Design and Implementation of IEC (Information Education Communication) Strategy in the Bankura and Uttar Dinajpur Districts of West Bengal with special emphasis on women and tribals in the context of the World Bank aided State Health Systems Development Project-II,
- Formation of Self Help Groups for economic empowerment of women in Hooghly and Bardhaman Districts with the Panchayat and Rural development department of Govt. of West Bengal
- Health and Hygiene Education in the Primary Schools – A Step towards Community Sanitation in the context of the School Sanitation Programme of the UNICEF
- Evaluation of project “Community Awareness and Empowerment among Tribals’ in Khunti Block of Ranchi District, Jharkhand
- Development of cartoon based IEC Material for Consumer Affairs and Fair Business Practices Department of the Government of West Bengal
- Development of cartoon based Posters for UNDP Cell, Department of Development and Planning, Government of West Bengal
- Preparation of Campaign Implementation Plan for the Kolkata to Chennai Stretch of the Golden Quadrilateral and its Implementation in the West Bengal Stretch for NHAI, Govt of India.
- Research & Analysis Wing of NREGS, Bardwan
- Implementation of Rural Industrialization Programme in Hooghly District, 2008-2011.
- Primary survey (for functional assessment) of activity groups under DW CRA Scheme in Bardhaman District, 2001
- Assessment of the Mobile Health Care Service programme in Sunderbans in the context of the State Health System Development Project II of the World Bank.
- Rapid Assessment of Health Seeking Behaviour of the Villagers in Coochbehar District – Baseline Study in the context of the Indo –German Basic Health Project.

Part II: Details about your educational project/s

Mention the Education projects

- Community Based Accelerated Reading Programme – A Calcutta Foundation-INSPIRATION-Pratham initiative: The program aims to help children ‘learn to read’ through a community library approach. Since reading is intrinsically linked to the learning process, the program focuses on developing the reading ability in children by running community based libraries. 35 Libraries were made operational in six districts of West Bengal. 2006-2008
- HARMONY project for Mainstreaming out of school children,: The programme aims to bring out of school children (never been to school, drop outs, child labour and children of sex workers) within the folds of formal education by mainstreaming them after taking them through a year long bridge course programme. Eight such preparatory centres are operational in Kamarhati Municipality of Kolkata 2007-2010
- Reading Supplementation Programme by adopting Reading Centre Approach Learning to Read Technique : The present project intends to expose children to the world of books and implement a reading supplementation programme among ALL children (school goers and non school goers) by adopting a strategic Learning to Read technique based on the strategy adopted in the Accelerated Reading Programme. The community library would be considered a tool and a platform for intervention 2008-2009
- Development of Primary Education Improvement Plan for over 20 Municipalities

7. List the school/s run by your group, and their locations. If you are requesting funds for only a few of several schools, please specify which one/s.

INSPIRATION runs 5 Preparatory Centres for 125 general out of school children, 1 Non Residential Camps (NRC- s) for 30 child labour , 1 Anandalaya for 30 children of sex workers and Back-up coaching centres for already mainstreamed children. The list of such centres under HARMONY programme is provided below:

Type of Centre	Ward no	Location
Preparatory center	3	Agar Para 1 no. Mill line quarter, Kamarahati, N24 pgs
Preparatory center (2)	1	Kalitala sporting club, Kamarhathi
Preparatory center	4	Crig row, Kamarhathi
Preparatory center	7	Yusuf market, Kamarhathi, N24 pgs
N.R.C	2	Bara masjid, Kamarhathi, N 24 pgs
Anandalaya	3	Crig row, Kamarhathi
Back up coaching (4)	2, 3, 4	Kamarhathi, N24 pgs

INSPIRATION also runs 20 Reading Centres in 20 slums of Hooghly- Chinsurah Municipality. The list is provided below:

Sl No.	Ward No.	Centre No.	No. of Children
1	1	I	31
2	2	II	38
3	3	III	54
4	4	IV	31
5	5	V	40
6	6	VI	50
7	7	VII	37
8.	8	VIII	29
9.	9	IX	45
10	10	X	40
11	11	XI	31
12	27	XII	33
13	29	XIII	35
14	22	XIV	30
15	15	XV	45
16	16	XVI	58
17	23	XVII	33
18	18	XVIII	30
19	19	XIX	33
20	20	XX	30
Total Beneficiary			753

35 Rural Libraries had been made operational catering to over 1000 children in 6 Districts, majority of which have been handed over to the community. The break up is as follows

District	Block	No. of Libraries
Bankura	Raipur (a tribal block)	5
Hooghly	Chanditala –II	5
North 24 Parganas	Rajarhat	5
Cooch Bihar	Tufangunj I and Cooch Behar II	10
Dakshin Dinajpur	Hili (a border block)	5
Darjeeling	Takda	5

8. **Location of school/s** Urban Rural Other _____

9. **Specify the type of education provided (e.g. basic literacy, vocational training etc.).**

Basic literacy, Formal and non- formal education

10. **Please tell us about your teaching techniques (conventional vs. alternative).**

Preparatory coaching support is given to the never been to school and dropped out children to make them fit for the age- appropriate class through Bridge Course Methodology of teaching. A teaching course is followed for brushing up the knowledge of the previously dropped out children. For example a drop out from class IV would have a condensed input on contents of Classes, I II and III. This will help in the reinforcement of the acquired learning Coaching support is also given to those children who have already been mainstreamed in the formal school so that they will not be dropped out again. Besides, some art and craft activities are also introduced for the children to get them interested in the programme and ensure regular attendance.

Back up coaching support is provided for the mainstreamed children to help them cope with the curricular learning. .

Learning to read techniques are adopted in Community Libraries and reading centres. The teaching method is very informal but based on pedagogic principles. Children are categorised based on their knowledge of letters, words , sentences, paragraph reading and comprehending capacity. Strategies are adopted using books and joyful learning strategies to take them from one level to another rather than following the conventional methods of teaching. Reading skill of the children is improved by engaging them into reading children's books. In this way they develop the habit of reading and in the process improves their reading skill.

11. **What is the literacy rate in the local community?**

12. **Describe the socio-economic background of the children and their parents (e.g. education, occupational). If any of your students are employed, please tell us about that as well.**

The Kamarhati project area is dominated by Muslim community though there is a good representation of Hindu population.. Most of the children are from Below Poverty Line enlisted households. Parents are engaged in differents types of wage earning. They are Rickshaw/ Van pullers, casual workres at jute mill, daily labour etc.A few children enlisted have parents who are beggers. Most of the children are first generation learners. Children of NRC are basically belong to child labour category. But at present they have joined the NRC-s and have abandoned the practice of daily labour.

In the reading centre project since our target is ALL children parents belong to varied classes. But these centres being located in slums of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality have majority of the children from familied where the lead earner is engaged as a daily wageworkers. A large section of children come from families where mothers work as maidservants. The overall financial condition is not good at all.

In the case of Rural Community Library Programme the background of the children are primarily agriculture. Guardians either work as cultivators or agricultural labourers

13. In addition to education, does your group provide any other services to the children in your schools (e.g. food, health care, clothing, etc.)?

In Anandalaya and NRC which run for 8 hours the children are provided with nutritious food for lunch and snacks. The preparatory centres which run for 5 hours are not provided with any food support. However this has been conceived as a shortcoming of the programme funded by the AXIS Bank foundation as children would definitely need a light snack during a five hour stay in the Preparatory Centres.

Routine Health check up is carried out in each and every center and children diagnosed with specific problem are referred to govt. hospitals and parents are informed about the particular ailment.

Children of Reading Centres are occasionally provided food since primarily it operates in a library mode.

Children are also supplied with game and sports items to sustain their enthusiasm and ensure retention.

Apart from these INSPIRATION organises Educational Tours, Annual Sports, Competitions and Exhibitions and Children's festivals following the principle that children learn the most by seeing and participating. Instances of such events are as follows:

An educational tour was arranged for the children of Kamarhatu at Imambara and Bandel Church in Chinsurah, Hooghly.

The Shishu Utsav was a very colorfully organized programme where children of the reading centres of Hooghly Chinsurah took part in different events. Children performed spontaneously and staged two Dramas (Abhyarthana and Tuntunir Galpo), Brotochari Nritya, Folk Dance, Galpo Balar Ashar, Chhara Balar Asar. It was an experience to watch such natural and fine performances. Children enjoyed performing which was apparent from their fun filled gesture and faces.

Such programmes have also been organised in the previous years .

14. Does your school have:

Its own building(s): Yes No Number _____

Number and type of classrooms (e.g. Pukka): _____

	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chairs & Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackboard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electricity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Computers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laboratory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teaching aids (e.g. books/slates)				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How many children are currently enrolled in your school(s)?

Male:- Harmony:180/ Reading Centers:425/ Rural Library: 650 Female 206/328/350

Age Range 7-14/6-14/ 6-14

16. How many staff are employed at your schools?

Teacher Volunteers 15 /40 for 20 Reading Centres/ 70 for 35 Rural Libraries

Minimum Qualifications Graduate or School Leaving Certificate

Other staff 5 Minimum Graduate

17. Average distance the children travel to attend your school 200mt to 1km

18. How many children have gone through your program in the past five years and what are they doing currently? Please tell us about their future education and employment possibilities.

INSPIRATION under these programmes doesn't look into the issue of employability since all the projects aim at enhancing the basic and primary level education. On the other hand we try to bring child labour within the folds of these projects and try to mainstream them or orient them towards a learning environment.

Under the HARMONY Project on Mainstreaming out of school children in Kamarhati where 386 children have been covered . Of the total children, 29 children relocated due to an eviction drive by the local authority for demolishing slums. 240 children out of 350 have already been mainstreamed and are pursuing their studies in formal schools with an exception of few stray cases. Mainstreamed children are also attending back Up coaching centres designed under this project. In the first year mainstreaming rate was low since the community was not totally convinced with the programme outcomes. However in the second year over 80% of the children have been mainstreamed. Children under this programme are exposed to rigorous coaching sessions to prepare them for the age specific class.

As against the HARMONY Project the Reading Centre/ Accelerated reading programmes covers a large number of children who are brought under the Learning to read programme. It operates on a library mode and thus there is always a floating section of children. On an average around 30 children come to the 20 reading centres on a regular basis. Through this programme the identified drop-outs are also mainstreamed and child laborers are treated with special emphasis.

19. Do you help your students with their future education efforts after they have passed out of your school?

Coaching support is provided to the children mainstreamed from our centres

20. Are there any other schools (Kindergarten/Balwadi, Elementary school, and High school) in the area? If so, please list the schools and the range of classes each of them offers.

List of schools in Kamarhati and surrounding places:

- Madrasah Salimah school, ward-3 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Muslim girls Urdu primary school, ward-2 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Kamarhati Urdu primary school, ward 1(Kamarhati municipality)
- R.K.P. Sarma up. Hindi school, ward-3 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Sarala Devi Govt. Sponsored school ward-1 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Kamarhati Urdu junior high school, ward-5 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Kamarhati union collegiate school, ward- 4 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Udayvilla junior basic school,(Kamarhati municipality)
- Agarpara valika vidyalaya (Panihti municipality, at the bank of Agarpara Ganga)
- Muslim girls Urdu high school, ward-2 (Kamarhati municipality)
- Solil Smriti primary school, (Panihti municipality)

21. Is your program different from that provided at these schools? Please explain

Our programmes is a learning supplementation and supportive education approach to address the quantitative and qualitative aspects of universalisation of education. It tries to establish a linkage with the formal school system by identifying the drop out children and mainstreaming them on one hand and enhancing the reading and cognitive capabilities of children in general so that they do not drop out in future for not being able to cope up with the curricular learning levels.

For bridging the curricular gap among the identified drop-outs, a condensed course is followed for brushing up the existing knowledge of the children. For example a drop out from class IV would have a condensed input on contents of Classes, I II and III .This will help in the reinforcement of the acquired learning. The bridge course is based on the concept of *Learning from Known to unknown* and *Learning through observation*. The bridge course adopts different methods of teaching like

- Creating joyful and child friendly environment
- Use of TLM/Chart as per lesson plan
- Teaching through activity

The steps follow the *Logographic method of learning*.

To deal with the qualitative aspect a structured accelerated reading technique that combines several activities to build reading skills is adopted using child friendly books. The daily activities will include reading aloud, using the phonetic chart in a variety of ways, written and oral word games and daily writing tasks. Reading out stories adopting different strategies of guided reading, peer reading, group reading is a focus. In most cases, the “accelerated reading programmes” conducted for short periods – two three months – will yield remarkable results.

For the Bridge course programme children are identified through survey and parents meeting and are classified as dropout, first generation learner, child labour and slow learner. After classification the child specific lesson needs are identified and children are prepared through formal, non - formal and alternative method of education as per the need to admit them to the general school. Normally the mainstreamed children are monitored through the back up coaching centres and through interactions with the community.

22. Why are the children in your school/s not attending government/other schools in the local area?

Poverty, lack of awareness and peer instances are some of the major reasons behind children dropping out from schools or not being to school. However detailed research on the background of children revealed the following factors:

- Large family size and low family income restricts children from going to school as they are often engaged in petty work or are left behind for sibling care where the mother is engaged in some income generating activity..
- Illiteracy of parents should be considered as one of the main reasons behind not sending children to school. This is true in the case of almost all the families. As parents of these children are not educated, they do not realise the worth of education.
- Migration and short duration stay in a particular location hinders children from going to school or results in absenteeism and subsequently dropping out.
- Often long distance from home to school acts as a barrier
- In Muslim dominated areas like Kamarhati, religious restrictions hold back children from attending normal school particularly the girl child.
- For girl child, work at home, siblings care is considered as an prohibitive factor in attending school. It is also observed that while they are more or less regular in coming to the Bridge course centre, they are not going to school.
- Peer instances like neighbours not sending their children to school also has a demonstration effect.

23. Do you try to involve the parents of the children in the running of the school (e.g. in setting the syllabus etc.)? Please specify.

The parents and the community are involved in each and every stage like selecting the Centre venue, conducting baseline surveys, selecting community volunteers etc. We believe that unless the community is proactive the parents Parents are motivated to visit the centres and get involved in activities based on their skill set. Regular meetings are conducted with the parents to report the development of the child and to

The project team has conducted several community level meetings, meetings with Education Committees at the village and ward levels, Gram Panchayat Pradhans, Councilors, Panchayat members, CDS and other local organisations. Most of the local people visit the Centres. The issue of sustainability has been specifically undertaken with the Gram Panchayats, Councilors and the Municipal,Chairman. However one to one discussions are being held with Councilors of different wards. Most of the Councilors mentioned that they are trying to retain these reading centres. They have realized the benefits accrued from these Reading Centres and that after May the children will suffer a major set back. They also mentioned that there has been a visible change among these children and are apprehensive that they will revert to their old shape after the closure of the reading centres.

Ward Education Committees already exist in the wards and efforts are being taken up to link these reading centres with the WEC-s. A core group of volunteers has been formed – majority of them comprising CDS members – which will liaise with the WEC.

Till date 9 Reading centre are expected to be handed over although finalization is still awaiting the list is provided below:

- 1) Ward-3 - Volunteer
- 2) Ward-7 - Volunteer
- 3) Ward-9 - Imambarah
- 4) Ward-10 - Local Club
- 5) Ward-11 - In our Office (INSPIRATION)
- 6) Ward-15 - Ward Community Centre
- 7) Ward-20 - Local Primary School or Volunteer's House
- 8) Ward-23 - Local Club
- 9) Ward-27 - Reading Centre's Children's Guardian

Meetings have been held with the Secretary of Sishu Bijjan Kendro, Chinsurah for integrating the Reading Centre in their system in Hooghly-Chinsurah Municipality

The Librarian of District Library, Hooghly has been approached for amalgamation.

24. What are your expansion plans for the future (e.g. adding more classes or schools)?

The pool of disadvantaged children is immense and many more centres would be required to bring the children within the folds of formal education even in our study area, Kamarhati. Our future plan is to establish 4 back up coaching cum basic skill development centres for the children (app 125 in no.) who have been mainstreamed in the current year. A one year long coaching cum basic skill building on reading, writing and computation will create a condition for retaining the children within the folds of education. Gradually with availability of funds more centres could be set up benefiting the vulnerable children as far as possible.

The proposal for a detailed overview.

It will be a continuation of our long run activity with the children of Kamarhati slums basically those who are first generation learner or never been to school or child labours. The service will be provided to the children whom we have mainstreamed with our rigorous continuous effort.

Community Teacher Volunteers would be selected from within the community maintaining the Teacher – Pupil ratio of 1:30. The teachers would be selected in consultation with the WEC-s and Ward Committee representatives following the eligibility criteria of 1) higher secondary by qualification 2) Enterprising and enthusiastic 3) aware of basic pedagogic approaches of joyful learning and 4) having special knack in any one of extra curricular activities.

Volunteer Teachers would be trained initially in the Learning to Read techniques and how to handle various types of children at a time. This will be followed by trainings on curriculum teaching in the Coaching support centers (CSC) for mainstreamed children.

Timing of centers would be decided in consultation with the community and children. Three-hour session for the CSC will be followed.

25. Do you have any suggestions on how Asha can be a positive influence in changing the education scenario in India?

Asha can help the organizations like us by supporting few centers of the above mentioned category to change the education scenario of India and to make the education a joyful one.

Every individual or organisation can create a positive influence

26. If possible, please provide us with the contact information of two individuals from your community who can describe the impact of your program.

1	Name	Sarda Devi
	Address	11, Nilratan Adikari Road, Kamarhati, Kolkata- 700058 West Bengal India
	Phone	+91 9339394912

2	Name	Chaitali Rana
	Address	P.O & Village : Baksha (Rana Para) PIN: 712304 District : Hooghly West Bengal India
	Phone	+91 9339109520

27. Asha for Education requires reports from its projects every six months to continue funding. Please provide the contact information for the person from your group who will be responsible for these reports.

Name	Mrs Kanika Banerjee
Address	
Phone	

Part III: Financial Details

Please feel free to attach any information such as annual reports, budgets etc.

28. What sources fund your group's activities at present? List the sources and the current and future funding from each of them. If these funds are meant for a specific part of your group's activities, please describe those restrictions.

- The centres under the HARMONY project in Kamarhati are funded by AXIS Bank foundation (It is restricted only for children's of the Kamarhati field). AXIS Bank will fund the project till May 2010.
- TCS and Alumnus Software, corporate organizations have made small donations in the form of educational gifts and sports items.
- The centres under the Reading Centre programme in Hooghly – Chinsurah is supported by DFID, through ICF (This fund is restricted for the 20 activity centers of the Municipal slums). DFID will fund this project till June 2009.

29. Please provide us with details of your projected budget for the next 3 years:

Year(s)	Recurring costs (INR)	Fixed costs
1	80,400.00	
2	90,000.00 (app.)	
3	1,00,000.00 (app)	

Considering 10% hike in prices.

30. Salary expenditure details:

	Number	Salary Range
Volunteer Staff	4	600-800

31. Please provide details of the fixed costs of your school/s for the next three years.

NA

32. How many of your students pay school fees? Please provide details.

None

33. What amount are you requesting from Asha, and for what specific purpose?

Approximately \$1800 for providing back up coaching and basic skill development support to app 125 children in the slums of Kamarhati

Items	Amount (INR)	One time / Annual
4Teacher Volunteers For 125 mainstreamed children @ Rs.600.00 per month for each Volunteer	28,800.00	Annual
Education material for 125 children @ Rs. 20.00 per month per child	30,000.00	Annual
Rent for 4 center @ Rs. 100.00 per month per center	4,800.00	Annual
Supervision cost @ Rs.1000.00 per month	12,000.00	Annual
Other incidental expenses @ Rs 400 per month	4,800.00	Annual
TOTAL	80,400.00	

Depending on the availability of funds, nutrition will be provided (additional to the requested budget).