

9 February 2014

Ms. Sridevi Prasad
Project Coordinator
Asha for Education
Berkeley Chapter
San Francisco, USA

Respected Ms. Sridevi,

Subject: Seeking your support for our supplementary educational programmes for underprivileged children

Bhumi is one of India's largest independent youth volunteer non-profit organisations. Our volunteers work amongst orphaned and underprivileged children in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, New Delhi and other parts of the country.

As we step into the next academic year, we seek support for our programmes that will benefit around 15,000 children across India.

As a growing non-profit organisation striving towards the socio-economic conditions of our country with the energy and enthusiasm of a young and focussed volunteering team, we would be grateful if you could read through the attached proposal and help us take a positive step towards the cause.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Vaishnavi Srinivasan
Executive Director

Executive Summary

Bhumi volunteers educate orphaned and underprivileged children with the vision to help build a more influential, equal and socially conscious society. We are currently operational in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and New Delhi and our programmes are expected to benefit over 12,000 children in over 170 centres.

Various reforms and awareness initiated have contributed to the rapid growth of the educational sector in India in the last few decades. Yet, children in orphanages, slums and village communities continue to have a little or no access to quality education. Over time, this creates a large gap and irreparable damage to their holistic development.

With the primary goal of improving these children's exposure and bringing them on par with their peers from privileged communities with stronger backgrounds, our volunteers have been delivering supplementary educational programmes every weekend. Through these programmes, we want to increase our reach to 15,000 children from classes 1 to 12 across the country next year.

We have been able to bring down the actual costs by networking with orphanages to use their infrastructure, and involving students and young professionals to teach these children without any honorarium or salary.

We solicit your support for this year, to help us strengthen our efforts in bridging this gap and improve the lives of these children.

Introduction

Bhumi, founded in 2006, is one of India's largest independent youth volunteer non-profit organisations. Our volunteers work amongst orphaned and underprivileged children in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, New Delhi, other parts of the country with the aim of providing children with quality supplementary education and enable them to become responsible and productive citizens of the future.

Our vision is to help build a more influential, equal and socially conscious society and to accomplish this by:

- Bridging gaps in society through quality education
- Providing a platform for socially minded youth
- Moulding today's youth into tomorrow's leaders
- Fighting global warming through citizen-level initiatives
- Turning youth into Climate Messengers

We currently have two full-time employees who manage operations, events, curriculum development and training. The efforts of our volunteer force consisting of over 1,000 students and young professionals under the age of 30 are expected to benefit over 12,000 children this year.

In addition to being a part of one of these programmes, our volunteers also handle day-to-day administrative operations and other specialised verticals like Human Resources, operations, public relations, syllabus development, training etc.

Statement of Need

Various reforms and awareness initiated have contributed to the rapid growth of the educational sector in India in the last few decades. Yet, children in orphanages, slums and village communities continue to have a little or no access to quality education. They go to schools that lack basic infrastructure or adequate quality teachers. They undergo the vernacular medium of education where English is just another subject with little or very little focus on communication and life skills. Apart from the socio-economic problems of these children, the reduced quality of education and various other problems at school force most children to drop out even before their schooling is completed.

Even the small percentages that complete schooling are faced with the daunting task of suddenly switching over to a completely English medium of education if they have to continue their education beyond school. While the better privileged sections of society are using computers in their everyday life, a large part caught in the brutal fringes have neither access nor awareness to these all their lives – most of the time.

To help children deprived of this opportunity, boost their levels of confidence and prep them up to face this competitive world, Bhumi has identified this need through our sustainable intervention.

Programmes, Goals & Objectives

Our primary programmes, framed in-line with our mission statements, include:

1. **Kanini** – computer literacy programme that involves teaching of basic and advanced concepts based on the children's aptitude levels. The programme is ongoing at five chapters where over 800 children are benefitting from it.
2. **Speak Out** – interactive English-learning programme for children who have limited or no proficiency in the language. This programme is ongoing at one chapter where 160 children are benefitting.
3. **Lakshya** – mentorship programme that pairs underprivileged children with volunteers, who act as their mentors and undergo experiential learning in leadership. The programme is ongoing at three chapters where 300 children are benefitting.
4. **Little Einsteins** – activity-based approach to learn Mathematics and Science using live demonstrations and multimedia tools. The programme is ongoing in five chapters where 300 children are benefitting.
5. **Nakshatra** – Annual inter-children's home art, cultural, sports and science talent fest for children to exhibit their talents and explore their potential in an atmosphere of healthy competition. Over 5,500 children from 100 children's homes have benefitted across Chennai, Mumbai, Bengaluru, New Delhi & Tiruchirapalli.
6. **Joy to the World** – annual initiative to spread joy to underprivileged children by fulfilling their small wishes just ahead of the New Year. Over 5,000 children are expected to benefit this year.
7. **Bring Smiles** – Portal to make contribution towards the education of children or amenities like setting up a library, purchasing a computer etc.
8. **Hi5 Club** – Social club that promotes volunteering among young people across India. Every person has to engage in 5 hours of volunteering during the Joy of Giving Week celebrations (Sep 20 – Oct 10)

The syllabi that we have adopted for our educational programmes have been carefully structured to supplement what these children get at school. Our project team, after extensive research, has put together lesson plans and supporting aids to improve the quality of syllabus. The children's progress is tracked through baseline and progressive assessments and we are also analyzing their scores in school exams, to ensure the impact is truly felt beyond Bhumi's classes. Even though a volunteer's time with the children is just about two hours every weekend, they put in a few more hours during the week to customise the lesson plans and ensure the children receive what they require at a pace suitable to their learning capacity. Our observations are as follows:

- Children most of whom have never used a computer, feel the need to learn, use computers are taught and given access to them.

- Children, most of whom are unable to even write 3 letter words in English at Class 7 or 8 now feel confident enough to speak in English with strangers.
- Children aspire to perform better at our inter-orphanage talent festival; as a result they have improved the quality of the competing standards.
- Orphanage wardens testify for the positive impact the interaction with the volunteers has on the children's personality and outlook towards life.

Methods / Project Description

For our English programme, we are associated with the CfBT Education Services. Children are regularly assessed in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. They progress through Levels 1-5 in this five year programme. The progress, since we retargeted this programme in July 2013, has been significant and children are now able to recognise alphabets, read three-four letter words and speak in simple yet broken sentences.

For our computer programme, we teach children basics of the computer, operating system, office productivity tools and the internet. The syllabus and the textbooks have been internally developed by our volunteers. In 2012, 35 children in one of our centres took a test on Basics of Computers conducted by NIIT and the scores were as follows. While 7 children scored below 50%, 23 children scored 51%-60% and 5 scored 70% and above. We are exploring various certification options including Microsoft, NIIT and NIELIT.

For our Mathematics programme we use an internally developed syllabus and use materials developed by organisations like Vidyarambam, Jodo Gyan and Aakash Foundation. The children are assessed based on parameters such as number recognition, mathematical operations, fractions, and estimation. We have observed that children who were hardly able to work with two and three digit numbers are now able to solve simple word problems with these parameters. Feedback from orphanages state, that their performance at school has also significantly improved.

The science programme is based on internally prepared content, with inputs organisations like AID India, Parikshan, Bodha Guru, Arvind Gupta toys, concepts from Bill Nye etc. The programme is modelled to complement the state curriculum where children learn by seeing and doing experiments and videos. The programme is currently being piloted.

The mentorship programme has two models, an annual weekly mentorship-tutorship model and a monthly workshop model (with a combination of group activities). We are guided by some industry experts in this programme modeled on several successful models like Vazhai Nalandaway, Dream a Dream, Gurudakshina, Peace Child India, DISHA, Mentoring Work etc. In one of the centres where we have been working for the last 3 years, we have seen the children score higher each year. In 2012, there was a 100% pass rate, with more than 80% scoring above 80% overall, the best ever results in the century old institution.

The lack of support and the unfavourable conditions in which they live do not provide for holistic development of these children. Through Nakshatra, Bhumi's annual inter-orphanage talent festival and the talent development programme we create an opportunity for these

children to discover and showcase their talents. This programme is targeted at the most needy, children of shelter homes and orphanages. In the fifth edition of Nakshatra, over 5,500 children from 100 orphanages across India, and we intend to make this bigger and better with every year.

People

While the volunteers are our key resources to deliver education and mentorship to the children our supporting projects team (full time employees) ensures that their time with the children create maximum impact.

Primary responsibilities include:

- Identify like-minded organisations and review material every year
- Design criteria and identify specialized people (such as translating etc)
- Design the format of training
- Define expected outcome after exposure of each term
- Design content for assessment
- Reporting: Data collection, project progress and analysis

Budget

S.No	Description - Expenses	INR
1	Salary - Programme Staff	18,00,000
2	Nakshatra - Inter orphanage Talent Carnival	13,00,000
3	Computers and other Technology	7,00,000
4	Rent for Training and office	4,00,000
5	Books, Printing, Stationery & Gifts	4,00,000
6	Training	8,00,000
7	English, Maths, Science, Mentorship project	5,00,000
8	Miscellaneous	5,00,000
9	Salary - Admin Staff	2,00,000
Total		66,00,000

Requested Support

S.No	Description - Expenses	INR
1	Salary - Programme Staff	6,00,000
2	Nakshatra - Inter orphanage Talent Carnival	2,00,000
3	Salary - Admin Staff	2,00,000
Total		10,00,000

Evaluation

A baseline assessment at the beginning of the year will give us an idea of where every child stands. Periodic assessments after completing certain number of modules and interactive activities will help us understand the progress of the children; and to aid effective evaluation of how far the child has progressed since the intervention began, the academic year will end with conducting the baseline assessment that was initially given.

Conclusion

Bhumi embarked on the mission to bridge the gap in education seven years ago, and we wouldn't have come this far if not for the undying spirit and energy of our volunteers. We have been applying the learning from our experiences in content development and project management, improving the quality of our delivery.

We believe that these supplementary educational programmes are steering these underprivileged children in the right direction and will aid in giving a structured beginning to what could be life-altering for each one of them.

We also believe that we are where we are in life only because we were given the opportunity to get good education. Extending your support would transform the lives of those who deserve but have not yet had the exposure to quality education. We seek your support to ***Change Today ... Change Tomorrow***

Appendix

- Audited financial statements for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012
- 80G and FCRA Certificates
- Society Registration Certificate
- Annual Report for 2013
- Credibility Alliance Accreditation under Desirable Norms
- Copy of a few media articles in which Bhumi, its programmes and volunteers have been covered in the past.