

Grant application to Asha 2019

Background: Sri Aurobindo Educational Academy and Society, a non-profit registered society located in a rural village of Telengana, India was formed with the aim to improve the quality of education in the surrounding areas. One of its primary and important objectives is to give shape to and expand “Sri Aurobindo’s School” which was named by the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1971. The commitment of the members of the society is to implement in whatever little way possible the system of Integral Education based on the principles laid out by Sri Aurobindo (Brochure attached).

This school ran for a few years when it was initially set up in 1971 but because the members of the community were unwilling to financially support the school, it had to be handed over to the Government. The founding member of the school, Late Dr. Gopal Reddy, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother since 1965 recently revived the school.

The school has now 295 students, a new but unfinished building, an open ground and a 20,000 sqft. Hall donated by the community society, four acres of land donated by Late Gopal Reddy and his family. The salaries of the teachers are paid with the little amount we collect from the students. It seems now to be on firmer footing and will hopefully grow and expand progressively.

A brief background of Gopal Reddy, the founding member of the school and the person who was driving it till last year: Completing his graduation in Hyderabad, he worked as an Agricultural officer with the government of Andhra Pradesh for two years and later in 1959 he went to the US for his post-doctoral studies. Five years later he returned to India and took a post in the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University as a professor of Agronomy. In 1968, he submitted his application for long leave and returned to Gaddipalli, his native village with the specific aim of improving the conditions of the farming community. He remained there and worked in the village and was involved with various programs and projects connected with agriculture and rural development. He was always been clear since his early days in the village where he had his first schooling that his destiny was closely connected to rural India.

Summary/overview:

Sri Aurobindo’s School focuses on the all-round progress of the child, giving equal emphasis and importance to the development of his mind, his character and his body. The aim is to help children become independent learners, responsible, creative, and committed to the progress of himself and the community.

But a major challenge that the Society faces is that capacity of the families in rural areas to pay is limited. It is not possible to develop the infrastructure and facilities necessary for quality education with the fees collected from the students as sometimes it is not even sufficient to pay the salaries of the teachers. In our experience the only way to provide quality education in rural areas is with external support. Over the years we have fortunately received grants and have been able to take up the following initiatives.

1. We completed the construction of 10 class rooms.
2. We have prepared a syllabus for English, Math, and Sense Training that exposes students to hands on experiential learning and helps develop their capacity for observation, concentration and thinking.
3. Teachers are regularly sent for training and experts are occasionally invited to conduct short workshops to upgrade their knowledge.
4. We have recently appointed a part time dance teacher.
5. We have set up a large room with block games, puzzles and other innovative games for the Nursery students.
6. We built a children's playground designed in Auroville.
7. To improve the health of the students we provide freely every day a banana or an egg.
8. We have tied up with Global Hospital to conduct every three months free eye camps for the parents and elders of the surrounding villages.
9. Considering that conditions and background of the families in this area we have exempted school and transport fees for about 25 children.

The school has made progress and is now on a firmer footing but a lot more needs to be done to fully achieve our objectives.

Need/rationale:

At present the school has 7 grades with a total of 295 students. We are planning to add the 8th grade this year for which we will have to appoint an English and Math teacher. We also plan to expand the hostel that we had set up last year. We therefore request finding for the following initiatives.

SL No.	Funding Proposed For	Amount Proposed (RS)	Dollars (rate Rs 69.90)
1	1 English teacher - Rs. 10,000 per month (\$143)	11 Months - 110,000	1,574
2	1 Math teacher - Rs. 10,000 per month (\$143)	11 Months - 110,000	1,574
3	Partial scholarship for hostel fees for poor students	150,000	2,149
4	Nutrition supplement for students	100,000	1,430
5	Projector	50,000	715
6	Game material for mental development	40,000	572
7	Maintenance of the herbal	100,000	1,430
	Total	Rs. 660,000	\$9,440

Current and future funding: List sources of income and/or other funding sources for your project. The FWE encourages applicants to inform us of other funding sources that assist in supporting your project.

New Creation International, a non-profit foundation incorporated in the US involved in the promotion of Integral Education has been donating around \$ 30,000 per year for the past three years. These funds were used for the completion of the building, providing nutrition supplements to the students and setting up a corpus fund.