

ASHA Odisha project site visit December 2010

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In the calendar year 2010, there are nine Asha teachers deployed in six primary schools and one middle school. These seven schools are located in two Panchayats, Kubera and Bilana, in the district of Bhadrak. The primary school in Odisha is from 1st to 5th grades and the middle school is from 6th to 7th grades. These schools are all government schools. Due to the poor economic state of Odisha, the government can provide only 2 to 3 teachers to each primary school (5 grades). Each government teacher is asked to teach 2 to 3 grades, and the students from these grades are usually seated in the same room, so that one teacher can teach several grades simultaneously. This way, students only get attention of the teacher one third of the time in a school day. Teaching several grades in the same room creates noise and distraction for all the students. Asha teachers in each school have been supplementing teaching needs to cover basic teaching materials that are prescribed by the state government. Asha teachers have become the back bone of teaching staffs of these schools. They work harder than the government teachers and are very punctual in attending schools. We talked to principals, students, and parents of each village and got extremely positive feedback. Asha volunteer, Mr. Abhimanyu Nayak, is a former Sarapanch of this area for 30 years and he visits these villages every week to keep track of the progress of the teachers. Bhoomika Director, Mr. Rath, visits these schools twice a year to inspect the working of the Asha teachers.

All the headmasters, parents, and Asha teachers requested us to increase the salary, starting from 2010. After studying the cost of living of these villages, we recommend to pay Rs. 1200/month, starting from 2010. These schools also need very basic teaching aids, such as science instruments, maps, sporting materials, and black boards. During this visit, we bought Rs. 20000 worth of teaching and sporting goods and distributed them to each school. All students are excited to receive the sporting materials (soccer balls, volley balls, cricket sets, ring balls, jumping ropes). We also bought 3 stainless steel storage cabinets for storage of papers, books, and documents.

In summary, Asha teachers have been providing critical teaching support in seven schools and have become integral part of the main teaching staff. All the students, parents, and the community are extremely thankful to the Asha-LA for making a huge impact on the lives of students here.

Budget (Indian Rs)	2009	2010	2011 (proposed)
Income (Asha-LA donation \$3000)	126000	126000	168000
Teacher Salary (Rs 800x12 monthx9 teachers)	86400	86400	129600*
Teaching and Sporting aids	30150	30150	26460
Bhoomika project expenses (7.5%)	9450	9450	12600
Total expenses	12600	12600	168660

*Teacher salary Rs1200/month