

Asha for Education

PROGRESS REPORT OF 15 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

(FROM 1ST JULY - 2002 TO 31ST Dec - 2003)

Name of the organization :- **Ruchika Social Service Organization**

Date of establishment :- **07.04.1985**

Location :- **Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India**

Description of area :- **Bhubaneswar Urban Slum Area**

Contact person(s) :- **Mrs. Inderjit Khurana**

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Number of children currently enrolled in the project :- **467**

Current Girl/Boy ratio :- **Boys- 212 , Girls - 255**

Current Teacher/ student ratio : - **1 : 25**

Over all school attendance percentage: - **70% - 80%**

Medium of Instruction : - **Oriva (Local Language of Orissa)**

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Below are some general questions regarding the project. Since your is valuable to us, please make your answers as detailed as possible.

Details on the school curriculum (please attach additional sheets if necessary)

The Ruchika Social Service Organisation is experienced in running play-way and innovative education centers since 1985. The EFA society also trained the teaching staff to effectively conduct a participatory class. The EV's learnt how to teach more effectively using minimum available resources from the community.

The education programme follows a child-centered activity oriented method. The curriculum was planned and given by EFA society, and this was used for the Asha run schools as well to keep the parity.

To hold the children's attention and make the class interesting, activities like singing, dancing, story telling, puppets, sight-reading and flash cards are used. Efforts are made to create a liberal and child-friendly environment in the school and to make the school a non-authoritarian place. The children sit in semi circles in the study and activity classes and in a circle during song, dance and drama classes. Hand made educational materials are used as well as the materials available in the immediate vicinity like trees, plants, leaves, stone, sand, water, seeds, match-boxes, old newspapers, old magazines, ice-cream sticks and disposable plastic cups etc. The children were both interested in and excited to use these materials.

Long-term goals of the project (mention any changes you foresee)

There are plans of extending classes up to class-V before transferring the children to regular school. This way the drop out ratio can be reduced as they get personal attention in the non formal school, progress is monitored and the foundation becomes firmer. Secondly, vocational training can be planned out for those who are not making progress in academics. We have a vocational training centre with continuing education classes in 4 trades, after which the children are helped with jobs or self employment.

Description of current school facilities (building, equipment etc)

All the Alternative Schools are running in the slums. Out of the 15 such Asha centres - two are running on the temple platform, two in community halls, and one center in an open area under the tree. One school shed is in progress. Nine centers have regular one-room buildings constructed by the organization.

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How do you need to improve these facilities?

To maintain and improve these facilities we need permanent school houses and the help of the community. After the super cyclone, all the school sheds were demolished. With help from **CRY, ICIC** and the community, we put up the sheds with pillars and roofs of GC sheets. Subsequently with the help of **Concern World Wide** and the community we were able to construct the walls, flooring, and fix doors and windows. It is hoped that the school building will become the hub of many community activities.

How do you think the school has improved in the last year?

The schools have undoubtedly improved. Most of slum children are getting schooling facilities in their community. The school is looking bright with charts on the wall and children's art work displayed. Schoolroom makes for orderliness.

What are the problems you have faced in the last year?

- Attendance of some children is irregular. Poverty compels parents to send children as domestics or other petty jobs for some additional income.
- There is no potable water or toilet near the AS centers
- Girl children go for water collection for the family during class-hours specially in summer

How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this project over the past year?

The project has worked well. It has been very effective with the "out of school" children. Most importantly 60% of the parents have been motivated to send their children

to school everyday. The outreach of the education programme has involved the whole community in women empowerment projects, meetings of the committees, family planning meetings, and immunization camps. The school has become the focal point in the slum, providing a convergence of services.

How much longer do you foresee requiring Asha funding, and for what purpose?

We look at the Asha project support for another 9 years, by which time an empowered community would take over the running of the school. Perhaps the govt. will have provided regular schools for the children by then. We will then run toddler centers / balwadis to take care of the below 6 year old group the age group that has not been covered in the 93rd Amendment which made education compulsory and free from 6-14 years.

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Is there any other feedback you would like to provide to Asha?

Asha for education project was started in July-2002, in 15 urban slums of Bhubaneswar city. This helped the slum children who are not getting scope for primary education on account of inflexible timing of schools, distance from school, parental indifference, and inability to escort the child to school etc. With the school in the slum, the child comes to school on her/his own, bringing the sibling along. With a firm foundation in language and numbers, they go on to regular schools with greater chances of retention in the school system.

An interesting programme on sports was organized in two alternative schools. On 15th Dec-2002.in Harinagar Alternative School an inter school competition was organized. The fun events were spoon potato race, needle thread race, puchhi, 100 meters race, 50 meters race. A mini sports meeting was organized in the community.

Same sports were held on 15th Feb. -2003, at Baliapata sahi G.G.P. Colony Alternative School. All the programmes were organized by the community with help of RSSO. All prize winners received prizes from the Basti Education Committee President Khetra Mohan Mohapatra.

We felt happy when a popular oriya film maker considered our alternative center at Baramunda GodamSahi good enough to include in his film "Rakat Kahib Kie Kahar". The community was also very excited and happy with the shooting.

Mrs. Esther Hewlett and her daughter Mary visited our alternative centers from 25th - 27th March 2003. She was happy to see the organizations programme so well run.

Mrs. Vered Kater from Israel came as a volunteer to the organisation and stayed for two months. She trained our field workers, teachers and supervisor in First Aid and Emergency medical aid. This training was very effective and helpful for our staff.