

**Gramin Shiksha Kendra**  
**Evaluation by Asha Austin (2011-12)**

Steward: Murali Narasimhan

1. How long have we funded this project and what is the total amount funded so far?  
*2005-11: Total amount ~ \$84000 (including WAH 2008-09)*
2. What is Asha Austin's portion in the entire organization budget (ball park figure)  
8%
3. What is the bottom line problem that this project is aiming to solve? (enable govt schools in a region, eradicate girl child illiteracy, fill the gaps in govt schools, provide assistance where there are no govt. schools, etc?)

*This project aims to address the issue of*

a. **Community involvement and ownership of the school** by the village community. The 73rd constitutional amendment, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and now the Right to Education act all have been advocating the importance of community playing a role in the school management and ownership but we are yet to find one school where community participation is at a satisfactory level, leave aside ownership issue. The project aims at working intensively with the community. The organization has proved in its four schools that school management and school ownership is possible by the community. If that can happen for four schools run by GSK, it can be possible for government schools also that too in the same cultural and economic setting.

b. **Community is highly unaware of school matters, their rights and their responsibilities.** The project aims at improving that.

c. The recommendations of **NCF (National Curriculum Framework) demand continuous and compressive evaluation of child's progress and planning based on evaluation.** NCF has addressed these two core problems in the education system. But the problem is its application at the school level. We have been practicing and advocating planning based on evaluation and daily monitoring of child's progress now for eight years. The project aims at working with DIET (Teachers Training Institute at District Level) on the above two issues also providing time bound support to the teachers at the school.

d. **The atmosphere at the schools have become very non conducive to learning and unattractive to the children.** An effort needs to be made by all the stakeholders. The project aims at doing that.

e. The teachers often complain of other responsibilities and paperwork they have to do, due to which they are not able to work with children. A random survey conducted reveals that it's not more than half man hours per day where as teachers spend more than one man day. An effort needs to be made to train teachers on **planning and time management.**

f. Lack of **encouragement for teachers** to practice and try innovative teaching methods and tools.

g. Working on the above issues will help improvement in attendance, decrease in dropouts and increase in enrolment in government schools. With RTE it's already being insured by the government to enrol every child between 6-14 years in the school. The challenge today is to retain them in the school and insure regular attendance.

4. What has been the significant quantifiable improvement that we have seen in the project over the years (eg. Increase in attendance, increase in self-sufficiency, improved community involvement etc.)

*Till now the project has been working on its first phase plan i.e establishing Resource School. The following changes have been seen:*

a. *Community Ownership: In 7 years, a community eager to send their children to a good school and knew not what exactly they were expecting are now managing four high quality schools with over 500 children and 30 teachers. Asking questions to the teachers about work done with their kids and the methods used.*

b. *Mainstreaming/Results: So far some 30 students have graduated from the these Resource schools most of them have been enrolled in the government school, the school whose result in class 10th board examination three years ago was ZERO has improved to 100% with good first division and teachers claim that due to these kids they need to come prepared every day.*

c. *Child Participation: In 2004 when we started the resource school the average attendance of the school was 70 % even this school was very attractive but with ownership of the community it has been constant for last three years at around 88%. (Murali: from all schools I've visited, GSK schools present the highest child participation of all)*

5. What is the project's long term strategy – Do they plan to increase their activity significantly (No. of centres, No of schools, no of beneficiaries etc)

*GSK is at present running **4 resource schools** and plans to work with **15 government schools** directly this year. In next five years we plan to establish two more resource schools and reach out directly to **120 government schools**. At present these resource schools work with 500 children. The initiative with 15 government schools will add another 1500 children benefiting directly. **AT 6 resource schools and 120 government schools, the reach will be 1200 children in Resource schools and 12000 children in government schools**. The cost per child ~ 9000 (resource), ~1000 (Vistaar). After 6 years, the average cost per child across both programs will be less than 2000.*

6. Is this model replicable (in an entirely new state by a different organization)?

*As the project is based in Rural areas of Eastern Rajasthan, it has evolved here. This means that it has its own social, cultural and economic connotations. The conditions of the Government schools though bad in most parts of the country and struggling on similar issues, are not the same everywhere. The model can be replicated but will acquire local characteristics where applied.*

*The approach is definitely applicable i.e the classroom process, pedagogy, school atmosphere, teacher-pupil relations, school community relations. But the strategy i.e. creating a model and work with the community to demand for a high quality school from the government to very long lasting is time taking, lot of hard work, belief in the community and expensive.*

7. Is this model scalable (may be by the same organization but over a large region and larger beneficiary base)?

*There are 2 programs: resource schools and the outreach with govt schools. Resource schools take significant effort in scaling up, while the outreach program scales very well. For the outreach program to be successful, resource centers are essential.*

*The RTE bill has already proved that alternative systems that establish viable models of education will have nationwide adoption. GSK's ideological predecessors were a crucial part of NAFRE and CBE that led to the RTE bill.*

8. If the model is scalable, then does the project have the resource/bandwidth to do it?  
*For the resource schools, GSK has an experienced team of 30 talented teachers with experience and expertise. The Vistaar program is only now being built up. They do have experience with government outreach, they worked with 20 schools through SCF in 2005-07.*
9. What would be the impact if Asha Austin cannot continue its funding?  
*GSK's resource schools are currently supported also by Asha SV, Vibha and Yatra. HKF has some verbal agreement to put in some funds to the schools as well. However, Asha's funding is still critical at this point until stable long-term foundation support can be found. HKF is also looking at funding a very significant part of the Vistaar (outreach) program.*
10. What is the best exit-strategy for Asha Austin?  
*Set a target date in the future for reduced funding. And, in the meantime, help GSK find stable long-term foundational support for the resource schools.*
11. Is this project solving the root cause of the problem or finding a temporary fix for the problem?  
*The resource schools are solving the root cause of the quality of education issue in India. Resource schools will always be necessary to provide models of education that can be adopted and spread on a wide-scale by the government. Example: RTE bill. The outreach program alleviates the quality issue in government schools until such time that the quality is improved by executive action.  
Murali: I think this is the right solution for the problem. Having resource schools that challenge and seek to improve the existing government setup is important. Ultimately, successful implementation of any model can then used to pressure the government to adopt it on a wider scale.*
12. Do you know of a government program that can actually fix this problem?  
*The SSA, RTE and NCF are some initiatives undertaken by the government that have the potential.*
13. Does this project have any corpus fund?  
*NO. GSK has a verbal commitment from HKF that if they obtain partial support for Vistaar from elsewhere, HKF will fund the rest of the program, a corpus and some funding for the resource schools.*
14. How much money for this project is coming from the local community?  
*The community has given the matching amount to the Resource Schools till now. But the contribution is in terms of assets like land, school building, hand pumps, overhead tanks etc. The recurring cost has been largely incurred by GSK. The Vistaar project however will be using government infrastructure, systems and institutions and their provisions.*