

Name of the Project: “Apna Skool” (Educational Project for the Children of Migrant Workers)

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Submitted to: Asha for Education – Silicon Valley, USA

Name of the Organisation: Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti

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Objectives of the Project:

To provide education to the unprivileged children of migrant workers.

To provide, as far as possible, continuing supplementary education to the children in their own villages in Jharkand, Bihar and Eastern UP.

To provide mid day meal/nutritional supplement to the children.

To protect children from child-labour.

To provide health and hygiene awareness to the children and the parents.

To provide primary health care to the mother and the child.

Goal of the Project:

This project attempts to reach the underprivileged children of migrant workers with basic primary education in an environment which combines awareness of health, hygiene and social issues. Another intended objective is to protect them from child labour. Children are also helped with a mid day meal. **In the span of 20 years, the project directly enabled 20000 children cross illiteracy to joyful learning. Many have continued and attained proficiency at High School, Higher Secondary and College levels. Significant numbers of them have become Teachers, Skilled workers and even Entrepreneurs, generating jobs for others.**

Expected Outcome:

1. To help about 600-700 children (20 to 30 children in about 20 to 25 rudimentary centres (that are called Apna Skool) to achieve literacy and numeracy and prepare them for normal schooling.
2. To assist some older migrant children in the higher classes in city schools through scholarships and other tuition needs.
3. To ensure parents appreciate the need to get their children remain in School at least until they reach 15 years, so that they become good citizens.

We believe that through our efforts children and their parents will understand the importance of schooling so that wherever they are they will move towards main stream school system. In view of the recently passed Right to Education bill, they will indeed be enrolled in the Schools, but in order to bridge the gap and derive full benefits we will be providing the necessary facilitations and assistance.

About Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti:

During the late eighties Vivekananda Samiti, a student wing of IIT Kanpur, along with some volunteers were educating the children of migrant labourers on the campus. Around 1994 some members of IIT community and social workers felt the necessity of an independent forum to address the issue of education and welfare of underprivileged children on a larger scale. Thus came into existence Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti.

Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti is an organization working for children's education and welfare. It is running schools for the underprivileged children and working towards their social and economic development. It is also attempting to develop an effective and meaningful academic and vocational curriculum, educational materials and teaching kits at primary and secondary level, training the teachers, and establishing alternative employment resources, with no undue stress on academic excellence. Jagriti aims to bring people of various expertises to one platform for the betterment of education scenario in the country.

Apna Skools (Non-formal Schools for the Children of Migrant Workers)**A brief description:**

There are large number of migrant seasonal workers, particularly in agricultural sectors in farmlands of Punjab, Haryana and western UP and construction activities/brick kilns etc. in or near urban centers. Usual practice is that the entire family stays in hutments/temporary sheds at the construction site/brick kilns and all adult members are engaged as daily wage/ contract laborers. Accompanying children of school going age are deprived of normal schooling and just remain at worksites, notwithstanding the inherent dangers of accidents, run errands for all and sundry and slowly get prematurely inducted into workforce. The girl child is worse off; having to take care of the infants while parents are at work and assist the family in household chores, going to school is not even thought of as an option. There is also a perception among the poor workers of associating

schooling with upper classes and they feel that schooling is necessary only for those jobs that are in any case not available to them. Formal education, on the contrary, should be viewed as necessity for development of an individual rather than as a passport for jobs. Reaching the School to these unreachable is the aim of Jagriti.

Apna Skool is a place for these children where they find an opportunity to develop their skills. It is a place for learning in an enjoyable mode. They inculcate individual and national pride and societal responsibility as integral part of their education. Every effort is made and caution taken not to generate fear in children towards study. Notwithstanding the limitations and late start, their academic progress has been reasonable. We are happy to say that our children absorb the content of a normal school year curriculum in the truncated (on account of migration) average six to eight month period. They learn Reading, Writing and Arithmetics (traditional 3 R's) just as in regular schools and at the same time participate in many extracurricular mind-broadening activities, such as Songs and Dances, Artwork, Dramatics, Storytelling and Poetry recitation, Sports and Games etc..

Thanks to support from our doners (Asha for Education, AID (Association for India's development), Mala Foundation, Belgium and several Individuals) we are able to provide at each of our *Apna Skools* nutritious mid day meals or at least some nutritional substitutes. We have also been able to provide basic health needs in the form of usual immunizations, vitamin supplements and medical referrals to those afflicted. We provide all children a pair of School uniform and Shoes, Sweaters during winters and School supplies, such as Text books and Copies. Most importantly we insist on them being neat and keep their environment clean.

Some thoughts on new strategy for APNA SKOOLS

One of the nagging concerns for *Apna Skool* is the issue of continuity for the educational process for the children when they return to their homes after the seasonal work comes to an end. Typically, the brick kilns operate for six to eight months in a year and close operations once the monsoon sets in, migrant workers get back to their village. Realizing that this will mean interruption of schooling for the children, who were attending *Apna Skool*, we try to convince the parents that the children are made to attend the village school and try to integrate with the regular schooling, as far as possible. While some do, many don't for many reasons, and a few who join do not always stay with the school for a variety of reasons. As a result, when they return for the next season's work – quite a few returns to the same workplace – a significant fraction have slipped up so much that we are forced to begin afresh; one can analyze the reason for such an outcome and see how they may be remedied.

Village school does not accept students joining in the mid-year and there are administrative hurdles to be overcome.

Now there exist clear directives from the Government to facilitate children joining school, since we have enacted legislation for Compulsory Education till 14 years of age. School for everyone is now current objective of the Society and it may be possible to change the existing mindset.

Even where the children get admission in the village school, they remain totally neglected as no teacher wants to attend them. The children find themselves out of sync with the school either in terms of the level, or in terms of the methods of instruction. School may appear either boring or fearsome. It results into the dropping out of these children from the schools.

Continuity is lost on account of the fact that the migrant workers do not necessarily return to the same worksite or same works contractor.

That the workers go to wherever there is work and so this can be taken care of only by having a network of Apna Skools at many locations, not necessarily run by us, but by others who are like-minded. We have been, for last few years attempting to keep engaged with the children in Nawada, Bihar and Hamirpur, UP districts during the breaks, with increasingly positive results. During the last monsoon break, we kept getting news from many children that they are getting enrolled in their village schools almost on their initiative. It is estimated that in some villages as many as 80 – 90 % children continue schooling.

We need someone to act as a supplementary instructor cum monitor, so that while the main responsibility of Schooling rests with the Village school, we may try to provide just the wee bit of personal attention through someone familiar with the strategies for learning that we develop at our *Apna Skools*. This is what we have been trying to do for the last few years in Hamirpur district.

There is always a temptation for the older children to enter the workforce and become wage-earners. School is not seen as a necessity, particularly because many real jobs remain out of reach for these children, either because of severe competition or because Schools curricula are not vocation oriented.

The object of Schooling is not necessarily to impart work-skills. Main purpose of a formal School is to ensure that the children develop into good citizens and learn, to begin with, the so called 3R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) and then accumulate various commonsense facts and develop as many skills as possible that interest them. These must not be seen as formal training program preparing the children for a career. School curricula should be processes by which children's curiosity is kept alive and they experience the joy of learning. Free and Compulsory Schooling should be instruments by which the children are not deprived of their childhood (to play and learn) and become prematurely captured in the work-force. *Apna Skool* is designed not as a part-time school or supplementary education, but as enabler towards proper schooling. A child not going to a fulltime School during the school-going age is either becoming a vagabond or presumed to be exploited as child-labour, a practice that should be roundly condemned. *Apna Skools* try to introduce older children to various vocational options and work with the help of organizations such as *Jan Shikshan Sansthan* for them to develop work-skills; but that is not the main objective of *Apna Skool* concept. We believe all children must go to School during their school-going age. *Apna Skool* is a fulltime bridge school that aims to introduce joy of learning as in a regular school and fill up the gaps in their learning as quickly as possible so that they can thereafter join the mainstream schools.

Current Statistics

Presently there are about 25 *Apna Skool* centres at various locations (several at the sites of Brick Kilns and a few on other worksites and urban labour settlements) with about 20 to 30 children in each. While in each centre students are imparted education appropriate to class 1 and 2 levels, older children with 3rd, 4th, and 5th class level are assembled together at Tatyaganj centre. In 2012 -13 there were in all about 600 students enrolled in various centres of *Apna Skool*. Children who have reached levels higher than 5th are helped to enroll in various mainstream schools and assisted in many ways in their staying with formal schooling. During 2012-13, about 45 *Apna Skool* alumni benefited through such programs.

Entrepreneurs

Some of our students have become skilled workers and entrepreneurs. A few exemplifying cases are briefly given below.

1. Mr. Chandrabhan has become a skilled mason practicing in Chhattisgarh.
2. About 10 girl students of Apna Skool in the age-group 15-25 years have learned the craft of tailoring through which they have become financially independent.
3. Mr. Karimuddin and Ms. China who were earlier rag pickers have opened an eatery stall thus moving from an extremely hazardous work environment to a relatively safe and healthy workplace.

If possible, please provide us with the contact information of two individuals from your community (not related to the school) who can describe the impact of your program.

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Asha for Education requires reports from its projects every six months to continue funding. Please provide the contact information for the person from your group who will be responsible for these reports.

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Budget Proposal 2014 -15

Total 23 centers for the next session (Total No. of Teachers: 23)¹.

APNA SCHOOL ANNUAL BUDGET (2014-15)					
SN	Particulars	Description	Budget sought in Preceding year	Proposed Budget 2014-15	Total
1	Salary				
i	10 teachers at construction sites	12 months @ Rs. 5000 x 10	480000	600000	
ii	13 teachers at Brick-kilns	8 months @ Rs 5000 x 13	320000	520000	
iii	MLP Coordinator	12 months @Rs. 10000	120000	120000	
iv	Project In-charge - 2				
	Salary	12 months @Rs. (8000 & 7000)	180000	180000	
	Conveyance allowances	12 months @Rs. (800 & 800)	19200	19200	
v	Health worker's Salary	8 months @ Rs 3000	24000	24000	
	Total on Salary Head		1143200	--->	14,63,200
2	Supplies (Mostly consumables)				
i	<u>Educational Materials</u>				
	a) Blackboards (20 nos)	@ Rs. 1500 x 20	22500	30000	
	b) Books	@ Rs. 50 (675 children)	30000	33750	
	c) Slates	@ Rs. 40 (675 children)	18000	27000	
	d) Copy/Registers	@ Rs. 800 (23 centers)	14000	18400	
	e) Pencils, Chalk, etc.	@ Rs. 600 (23 centers)	12000	13800	
	f) Other Study Materials like Charts, Posters, Puzzles, etc		2000	2500	
	g) Games Materials	@Rs 200 (23 centers)	3000	4600	
	h) Library				
	i) Children's books		4000	4000	

¹ The number of centers (23) and students (675) is based on our past experience. Actual number of centers and students in each center vary every year.

	ii) Teacher's Reference books		4000	2000	
ii	<u>Furniture Chair and mats</u>	@Rs. 800 (23centers)	15000	18400	
iii	<u>Phone charges</u>	12 months @Rs. 500	6000	6000	
iv	<u>Stationery (office)</u>	12 months @Rs. 400	4800	4800	
v	<u>General Maintenance</u>		5000	5000	
	Total on Supplies Head		124500	--->	1,70,250
3	Children Centric Expenses				
i	Winter clothes + Uniforms	@Rs. 200 x (675 children)	120000	135000	
ii	Health & Hygiene (Medicines, First-aid boxes, Soaps, Towels, Oil, etc.)	@Rs. 2000 (23 centers)	40000	46000	
iii	Children's Educational Tour		25000	25000	
iv	Cultural Events		5000	5000	
	Child centric Expenses		190000	--->	2,11,000
4	Teachers' Training Programme		20000	--->	20,000
			15,23.500		18,64,450
	Total (for the year)		Grant Received from Asha SV: ~ Rs 15 L		

Explanations:

S.No. 1 i,ii There are 23 centers. Each centre has one teacher and hence total number of teachers is 23. Teachers' salary has been increased to Rs 5000 per month

S.No. 1 iv. There are two Project In-charges who are responsible to supervise the schools, help teachers at centers and to provide materials (education, nutrition, etc.) from time to time. Coordinator is responsible for overall implementation, designing course content, conducting training workshops, visiting schools from time to time to ensure the quality education, doing all administrative paper work relating to project, etc. The honorarium of the project supervisors is increased this year on account of inflation.

- S.No. 1 v. We have to do regular health related activities for the children and their parents. Almost every week one teacher or other or project in-charge had to take some children or their parents to the doctors in city. This was hampering their teaching work. Besides it, there is no immunization for the children of the brick kiln workers. They themselves are totally unaware of it. So it was felt that to do all these work properly, we need a full time health worker who will not only organize the regular immunization camps at brick kilns in coordination with the nearby primary health centers, but also will take the needy children or parents to the doctors. Initially the health worker was appointed for 8 months for the brick kiln season only.
- S.No. 2 i-iv. Self explanatory.
- S.No. 2 v. Repairing and maintenance charges are for the two mopeds that are used by the project in-charge to visit the schools. Besides them, education and nutrition boxes, black boards, school room, etc. also need repairing and maintenance.
- S.No. 3 i. We propose to use meet a part of this grant on a set of School uniforms and another part on sweaters for winter.
- S.No. 3 ii. This item includes First-aid boxes with medicines at each centre and contingency medical expenses that we incur for the children from time to time. Medicines also include regular doses of de-worming, vitamin-A, B and C tablets to every child. Also we provide soaps, towels and mustard oil (in winter only) at each centers for children to keep themselves clean.
- S.No. 3 iii. Every year children of Apna skools go for a trip to Zoo, museum or similar locations. This is a fun trip with an aim to provide them an opportunity to educate themselves on the large variety of flora and fauna, history and culture of India etc..
- S.No. 3 iv. Apna Skools celebrate their annual day programme each year apart from celebrating the Independence Day and Republic Day. These are occasions when the parents get informed about the Schooling and take note of the progress of their children
- S.No. 4. We have regular teachers' training workshop every fortnight at Jagriti office. Beside these workshops, we organize a 3-5 days intensive training programme (usually in the beginning of November) especially for the teachers of brick kiln Apna skools by external experts in the field of education, such as *Ekalavya*, Hoshangabad (MP)

Expenses are also incurred by APNA SKOOL on Mid-day Meal/Nutritional Supplement and Grant of Scholarship to Apna Skool alumni and are met from other dedicated projects.

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