

Asha for Education™

Project Proposal Submission Form

P.O. Box 322 • New York • NY 10040-0322

www.ashanet.org

Project Name: Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay

Date: 19-05-2020

	Project Contact	Asha Contact
Name	Purba Rudra	Radhika Poddar & Jahnvi Bhojwani
Address	7/2/7 Sahapur Main Road, Kolkata 700038	
Phone(s)	91-9874477411	
Fax		
E-mail	info@shishursevay.org	

Part I: Information about your group/organization

Please feel free to attach any additional sheets and/or information such as brochures, press reports etc.

1. Name of the group/organization requesting funds.

Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay

2. When was the group established?

June 14, 2006

3. Briefly describe the motivation for starting this group.

Dr. Michelle Harrison the founder of Shishur Sevay adopted a baby girl from Kolkata in 1984; she returned to India in 2000 to reconnect with her daughter's roots. Her experience at the orphanage made her realize that the orphans who are not adopted received very little opportunities in life. Convinced that if she could give them some opportunities, while they remained rooted in their heritage, they would flourish. In 2006, she formed the society with the specific purpose to protect orphans and abandoned children by providing a safe environment where they will be sheltered, nurtured and educated in ways that build competence, confidence and independence. Shishur Sevay was established as a model of inclusive non-institutional care of orphan girls, some with profound disabilities. The children were all housed in a government institution and were transferred to Shishur Sevay for "rehabilitation."

This group was identified because they lack advocates, are usually institutionalized in government homes, are uneducated, and unprepared for life outside an institution when they leave. Therefore they are rarely seen as credible advocates for their group. The prejudice against them and the belief they are destined for the difficult lives they have and will have prevents the creation of opportunity. Shishur Sevay was established to refute the notion that "nothing can be done." children

4. Briefly describe the aims of your group.

Since we started our biggest aim has been to protect orphans and abandoned children, including those having differing abilities and disabilities, by providing a safe environment where they will be

sheltered, nurtured, and educated in ways that build competence, confidence, independence and leadership. With our years of experience, we will take our learnings to the community, with the Children's Smart Centre, an inclusive play school, meant for the underserved children, aged 2-4 years, in our community, where the girls of Shishur Sevay will take teaching and leadership roles.

Our aims unfold into several sub-objectives:

1. To identify the needs of the orphan children.
2. To serve as a model of non-institutional care for the orphaned girls and promote the model for replication.
3. To demonstrate the benefits of, "INCLUSION," i.e. inclusive living of the orphan girls and the orphaned differently abled children.
4. Maintain a home that is secure and safe, physically and emotionally.
5. To establish an inclusive overall educational system via Ichche Dana Learning Center.
6. To organize and run Shishur Sevay as a therapeutic environment, operating on principles of compassion and discipline.
7. To reintegrate the children back to the community and give them a sense of belonging to India, their country.
8. Create safe and realistic plans for independent living and self sufficiency for the girls where possible.
9. For those who cannot ever be independent, provide the highest quality of life, filled with human contact and a sense of belonging.
10. To advocate for orphans.
11. Extend our model and expertise to create an inclusive home for life.
12. Establish Tuni Harrison Research and Training Center to advance the learnings and methods of inclusive teaching, particularly on the developmental and personal growth of the children.
13. Through the Children's Smart Centre, reach out to the underserved in the neighbourhood, taking inclusion to the community.

5. ***Does your group have any religious or political affiliation? If yes, please describe the type of affiliation and the reason for it.***

Shishur Sevay does not have any religious or political affiliation.

6. ***What non education-related community development activities is your group involved in?***

1. We take part in various awareness programmes organised by different NGOs and disability groups.
2. We participate in socio-cultural events organized in the community including celebration of national and regional days of importance.
3. We advocated for access to local parks for our wheelchair bound girls when they did not allow wheelchairs inside the park.
4. We source our supplies locally; buy food, medicines and other items from local shops and vendors, thus contributing to the local economy.
5. Most of our staff members are from the immediate or extended neighbourhood.
6. On request, our staff and girls have volunteered time at other non-profits.
7. Once the Children's Smart Centre opens we foresee being able to do other activities in the community as well, including education for the parents.

Part II: Details about your educational project/s

- 7. List the school/s run by your group, and their locations. If you are requesting funds for only a few of several schools, please specify which one/s**

Currently Shishur Sevay operates from only one location:

17/2/7 Sahapur Main Rd.,
Kolkata, 700038

We were slated to begin the Children's Smart Centre in the middle of April but it stands postponed till lock down restrictions are removed. That will be on a rented premise, within walking distance from Shishur Sevay.

- 8. Location of school/s** Urban ~~Rural~~ Other

- 9. Specify the type of education provided (e.g. basic literacy, vocational training etc.)**

Basic literacy, preparing some for higher education, vocational training and special education.

- 10. Please tell us about your teaching techniques (conventional vs. alternative) 21, 10**

We have a huge variety of needs at Shishur Sevay, because of the huge range of abilities and disabilities of the girls. The biggest challenge has been to form plans for individual girls especially when formal schools have not worked for them. In the formal schools they faced discrimination, were learning little, and giving up with all the unnecessary pressure and fear. Our response to this situation was to start Ichche Dana Learning Center, an inclusive school, within Shishur Sevay, providing a supportive environment with cutting edge technology and creative teaching methods for the girls at Shishur Sevay.

We have been using K5 learning for quite sometime and it has been a useful resource for basic reading and math. It automatically adjusts the levels of the problems based on how the student is doing, which also helps in assessing them. We have also been using the flipped classroom concept through Khan Academy, where the class time is used more for discussions and problem solving rather than lectures, something that is available to the student anytime they want to listen to it. These are more like supplements to the regular classes.

Shishur Sevay is very well equipped with teaching aids, computers, disability aids etc. There are a lot of books, both reference and story books. Assistive computer hardware and software is used for some of the children with disabilities. The Tobii PCEyeGo that uses an eye tracker interface for using the computer, including an assistive communication software is being used for two of the children with cerebral palsy. Last year we upgraded to the PCEye Mini. Apps on Ipads have also been used.

We use teaching methods that take the pressure off the students while letting their curiosity to prosper. We are constantly learning, adjusting and upgrading our methods according to the needs of the children. Dr. Rudra underwent training in mediated learning through Fuerstein Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) program, Basic 1 & 2. She has been using those instruments in class and it has been very useful. She also attended the XIV International Conference on Strategies/interventions to improve processing skills and the two day follow up workshop on the Search and Teach method, geared for children with learning difficulties. She has been using the knowledge she gained from the workshops in her classes addressing learning disabilities, abstract thinking, and communicating. Earlier this year she attended a two-day RXMath workshop in Hyderabad, conducted by Jacquie

Johnston from National Institute of Learning Development (NILD) South Africa, to help some of the students improve their number sense. Many of them have struggled with math as they try to do it through rote, without a clear concept. We had tried various methods and aids but had difficulty in getting basic concepts across. Even if they are not doing math ‘academically’ it is a basic skill required in everyday life. For that, the basic concepts and principles have to be clear and attending this workshop was done keeping that in mind.

A critical aspect of our teaching is that we make it safe, safe not to know, safe to ask. We call it a place where nothing bad happens. A failed test just shows what you still have to learn. This is a critical factor for traumatized children who have already felt the harshness of the Indian educational system.

11. What is the literacy rate in the local community?

Not applicable for students within Shishur Sevay.

It is a mixed neighbourhood. The children coming to the Children’s Smart Centre will be from the poorer neighbourhoods in our locality. We will learn more as we work and interact more with them.

12. Describe the socio-economic background of the children and their parents (e.g. education, occupational). If any of your students are employed, please tell us about that as well.

Shishur Sevay is non-institutional inclusive home for orphaned, abandoned, and lost girls, some with profound disabilities. The girls who live here lost the family and community they were born into. When the girls came to Shishur Sevay in 2007, even at 7-8 years of age, they did not know the alphabet or colours and spoke in phrases not complete sentences. They are not old enough for employment yet. For most of them the progress has been steady although much slower for their age. Apart from academic subjects we are also teaching them life skills that will help them be independent individuals. Many would require life time care and support. What we have learned about their families over time is that they were poor and that the girls have seen and faced violence and abuse. It has taken at least ten years for them to think into the future and not live in their pasts.

The children in the Children’s Smart Centre will be from the poorer neighbourhoods close by. The centre will be within walking distance for us as well as most of the students coming in.

13. In addition to education, does your group provide any other services to the children in your school (e.g. food, health care, clothing, etc.)?

The girls live at Shishur Sevay where all their needs material needs (food, health care, education recreation etc.) are met. Equally if not more importantly, Shishur Sevay provides a space for the children to feel secure, protected, and sheltered. We also stress health and hygiene, nutrition and psychosocial care, where opportunities for their developmental milestones can be achieved.

14. Does your school have:

Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay

Its own building(s): Yes No Number 1

Number and type of classrooms(mixed use rooms) (e.g. Pukka): 3, pucca

Children’s Smart Centre

Its own building(s): Yes No Number 1

Number and type of classrooms (e.g. Pukka): 4, pucca (1 office/3 classrooms)

The response to the following for both premises are the same:

	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No
Toilets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Toys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chairs & Tables	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackboard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electricity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Computers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laboratory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				Teaching aids (e.g books/slates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How many children are currently enrolled in your school(s)?

Male 0 Female: 14 Age Range: 08-22 years

16. How many staff are employed at your schools?

Teachers 10 Minimum Qualifications Secondary
 Other staff 8 (the 6 childcare workers are part of the home based care as well as the school +2 physiotherapy) There are 6 more for the organization as a whole, but not specifically for the school. This includes two guards through the security agency)

Presently no new hiring has been done for the Children’s Smart Centre. Depending on need we might have to, in the future.

17. Average distance the children travel to attend your school

Inhouse school for resident girls; hence no travel is involved. However, as part of their holistic education, the girls are enrolled in dance, painting, karate, tailoring classes etc which requires the girls to travel to these centres located outside Shishur Sevay, most of which require taking public transport or being dropped by Shishur Sevay’s car.

For the Children’s Smart Centre we do not have the final students list yet, but most of them would be within walking distance from the school.

18. How many children have gone through your program in the past five years and what are they doing currently? Please tell us about their future education and employment possibilities.

The in-house education program caters to a fixed number girls, all residents of Shishur Sevay. While a few girls from the first intake of residents have left, in the last few years the number of persons have remained constant at 15 for the expanded education program through Ichche Dana Inclusive Centre, which include basic literacy and numeracy, vocational training and other activities like dancing, music, karate etc.

The girls have a wide range of abilities and disabilities; most are late learners, all have traumatic pasts and related learning disabilities. We have been working on developing individualized tracks for each of the girls. One of the girls completed her 10th grade and passed her National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) Examinations, and has registered for the Senior Secondary (12th) level course and Board Examinations through the same. Another student who had registered for the secondary level exams through NIOS, had developed extreme depression and anxiety induced by the exams, is now back preparing for her next exam at class X level.

The girls who are not academically inclined or have learning disabilities are being given opportunities to train for other things. One of them is undergoing tailoring training. Several are enrolled for training in karate and kalahi and the instructors at the school believe these girls have the potential to become karate instructors. One of the students who is a gifted artist gets art classes with an artist three days a week and also goes to his art academy once a week. She has also expressed her wish to prepare for class 10. She has severe learning disabilities but is eager to do it, so we will provide the necessary support for that. None of the girls are working yet, but we are preparing them for independent living.

For the children with disabilities we will expand the use of assistive apps and other technologies. Two girls are using the two Tobii PCEye mini eye trackers we have as interface to use the communication software on the computer. It will take a long time to be adept at it, but they are using it successfully to express some of their needs and communicate their feelings. Those with severe disabilities and some other girls will require life time care and support as they can't live independently, so we need to develop our aftercare/life time care program. Two of the girls, using tobii will also be part of the teaching program at the Children's Smart Centre. Using the technology they will be able to chose activities and become role models for all the children.

19. Do you help your students with their future education efforts after they have passed out of your school?

Shishur Sevay is non-institutional inclusive home where the residents live in a family setting. Hence, Shishur Sevay will continue to support the girls till they achieve a certain capacity for independent living.

One girl left seven years ago because of violent behavior we could not manage. She went on to an excellent shelter but then ran away. Recently she contacted us as she was married and had a very sick child, and they lived in North Bengal. We were able to provide medical care for what was tuberculosis and get her into the government program. Earlier while she was at Shishur Sevay she was oppositional and despite being very bright resisted education, but whatever she learnt here helped her later in life and also made her realize the value of education. She decided to continue with her school education after her marriage, even encouraging her husband to do so. Later they visited us. We remain a resource for them.

20. Are there any other schools (Kindergarten/Balwadi, Elementary school, High school) in the area? If so, please list the schools and the range of classes each of them offers.

There are several public and private schools, some offering classes up to Higher Secondary level within a few kilometres from Shishur Sevay. There are very few schools for children with special needs or regular schools that practice real inclusion. We had the girls enrolled in government and private schools at various times, but they faced harassment as orphans, and they stopped trying to learn and do well.

21. Is your program different from that provided at these schools? Please explain.

Shishur Sevay is a non-institutional inclusive Home for orphaned, lost and abandoned girls, some with profound disabilities, such as Cerebral Palsy with Spastic Quadriplegia, Autism, Impulsive Behavior Disorders, Sexual Aggression, Eating Disorders, Suicidal behavior, PTSD, Delayed Development etc. In addition, all are late learners with most having learning disabilities arising out of their conditions or traumatic past. Therefore, unlike other regular mainstream schools, we have to necessarily plan for each individual student. Our education program goes beyond numeracy and literacy to include vocational training and other activities like dancing, painting, music, karate etc. These activities are important to build the self-confidence and self esteem of the girls and prepare them for independent living.

Shishur Sevay is different from other homes or orphanages in the level of intensity of the personalized teaching. Most formal schools also stick to a system of learning by rote and has very harsh learning environments. At Shishur Sevay the stress is on understanding concepts and gaining knowledge in an environment that is friendly and enabling. The supportive environment with a more hands-on learning has had a positive impact on their learning. They are much more curious and they also feel safe to ask questions.

22. Why are the children in your school/s not attending government/other schools in the local area?

Our experience with mainstream schools and schools for the disabled in the area has not been good. The girls did attend primary school in a local government school and some of them went to other formal schools but faced a lot of discrimination, more so by teachers. The girls faced discrimination as orphans, or were seen as too disabled for regular schools. Because of the pressure and fear they were not learning much. A school specifically built for mentally challenged children is fully accessible but won't take children in wheelchairs. Most of the girls have faced abuse in their past and we have learnt from experience that an enabling and supportive environment is absolutely essential to their learning.

23. Do you try to involve the parents of the children in the running of the school (e.g. in setting the syllabus etc.)? Please specify.

We work with orphans and hence there is no parental participation in the education program for the girls living at Shishur Sevay.

For the Children's Smart Centre we plan to have regular meetings with the parents.

24. What are your expansion plans for the future (e.g. adding more classes or schools)?

Shishur Sevay has become a model of an inclusive non-institutional home for orphan children, some with disabilities, all previously rejected for adoption. Shishur Sevay must also become a Home for Life for those children who cannot be on their own, due to physical disabilities, emotional needs, or developmental limitations. We envision Shishur Sevay becoming an inclusive inter-generational home with education, rehabilitation, recreation, meaningful work and sense of community.

The Ichche Dana Inclusive School and The Tuni Harrison Center for Research, Training, and Advocacy reflect a broadening of the scope of what we are learning and implementing, and how we become a center for understanding inclusion in its broadest sense and practice. Long-term sustainability requires some level of income generation as meaningful contribution to the costs. We are exploring ways and means to diversify our funding and build a strong and dedicated donor base here and abroad. Friends of Shishur Sevay, a 501 (c) (3) organization, was established in 2012 to help with fundraising in the US. We are slowly beginning to expand our Indian donor base. We continue to explore other opportunities to raise resources.

If not for the lockdown the Children’s Smart Centre was slated to begin functioning in the middle of April, but everything is very uncertain now, as to when the restrictions will be lifted and when it will be safe to begin again. The children and staff of Shishur Sevay are waiting eagerly for this next step. The centre will be an inclusive program of activity-based learning in our community, at no cost to help the very poor from our community. It will begin small and with 2-4 year olds. The girls who grew up in Shishur Sevay want to help the other children and hence will be teaching along with Dr. Harrison, adding an innovative aspect to the program.

25. Do you have any suggestions on how Asha can be a positive influence in changing the education scenario in India?

Shishur Sevay represents a small variety of the conditions in children that can go unaddressed due to a complicated mix of political apathy, lack of awareness and financial constraints in India. The same children would have had access to better facilities and teaching resources in the US as compared to here. The facilities here in India need more money and increased exchange of ideas and advancement in technology. The core of Asha is providing financial support, which is much needed, but they can also get more involved with projects to improve access to other resources and realising that just 'uplifting' the children to a minimum level of existence should not be the acceptable norm when they can do much better.

Asha can also play an important role in the development of inclusive education in India. Part of the problem is the prejudice about disability in India, not so different from how it was in the US fifty years ago. There is much literature as to the benefits of inclusion to all students. Asha can begin to ask their partners about disability. For instance in this application, what if there was a question of “how many children with disabilities are in your school?” If none, why? Just asking the question is educational for a start. You can’t fix what you can’t name. Shishur Sevay would be happy to help in any way if this is of interest.

26. If possible, please provide us with the contact information of two individuals from your community who can describe the impact of your program.

<i>I</i>	Name	Chandradeep Maitra
	Address	

	Phone	+91-9831114260

2	Name	
	Address	
	Phone	

27. 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.

Name	Purba Rudra
Address	
Phone	91-9874477411

Part III: Financial Details:

Please feel free to attach any information such as annual reports, budgets etc.

28. What sources fund your group’s activities at present? List the sources and the current and future funding from each of them. If these funds are meant for a specific part of your group’s activities, please describe those restrictions.

In the year 2019-20 grants from our regular donors, for expenses incurred in running Shishur Sevay (including Ichche Dana Learning Center) were received from:

- Asha for Education, Colorado chapter (education): ₹ 2,87,000
 - Asha for Education, Cornell Chapter(education): ₹ 2,80,000
 - Friends of Shishur Sevay (FOSS - The US non-profit- part of it was for a new car, rest unrestricted): ₹ 50,88,071.25
 - Children's Hope India (education): ₹ 10,20,000
 - Equal Health (Children’s Smart Centre): ₹2,25,995
 - Vesuvius India Ltd. (Children’s Smart Centre): ₹11,85,600
 - Dr. Michelle Harrison and other individual donors(unrestricted). More recently Dr. Harrison has mostly been donating through FOSS
- Dr. Michelle Harrison continues to be the biggest donor. She fills in whatever is the shortfall after fundraising from grants.

29. Please provide us with details of your projected budget for the next 3 years:

Year(s)	Recurring costs(education)	Fixed costs
2020-21	₹1714,200	₹1,00,000

2021-22	₹1885620(2020-21+10%)+CSC expenses	₹1,00,000
2022-23	₹20,74,182 (2021-22+10%)+CSC expenses	₹1,00,000

30. Salary expenditure details:

	Number	Salary Range
Teachers	10	₹1750-₹21,600 pm
Paid Staff	18 (10 teachers +6 childcare workers+2 physiotherapy). Other than the 18 , six more for CPSS (accounts, operations etc.)	₹1750-₹21,600 pm
Volunteer Staff	4 +3 board members who volunteer their time	0

31. Please provide details of the fixed costs of your school/s for the next years.

Please see the attached budget

32. How many of your students pay school fees? Please provide details.

Orphaned girls residing in Shishur Sevay are attending classes in the in-house Ichche Dana Learning Center; they do not pay any fees. These girls are also enrolled in various other training external facilities for training in tailoring, dance, karate, painting etc. Some also attend external coaching centers for additional help with their studies. While some of these facilities have offered us limited fees waivers, in most cases we have to pay regular fees for the girls.

The Children's Smart Centre will be free for its students.

33. What amount are you requesting from Asha, and for what specific purpose?

Items	Amount	One time/Annual
We have attached the whole budget with the budget heads relevant to Asha Cornell highlighted in yellow		