Annual Report 2022
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Asha by the Numbers

$4.14MM
Funds raised

$3.02MM
Funds disbursed across projects

155
Asha projects supported

200K
Children served through Asha projects

1500
Asha volunteers worldwide

9
chapters with Team Asha events

48
Active Asha for Education chapters worldwide in 2021

40 U.S. CHAPTERS
4 EUROPE CHAPTERS
3 INDIA CHAPTERS
1 CANADA CHAPTER
Letter from the President

In 2022, as India gradually recovered from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic downturn, Asha projects faced the challenges posed by digital divide and access to quality education. Asha projects supported a mix of remote, hybrid, and in-person learning models, but the digital divide became more apparent during this period, as students from marginalized communities faced challenges in accessing online education. The lack of necessary infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity and digital devices, hindered their ability to participate in remote learning, especially in the rural areas and marginalized communities.

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and an overwhelming sense of purpose. I am grateful for the opportunity to play my role as part of this organization. Despite the complex economic environment characterized by various factors such as inflation and fluctuations in global markets, Asha for Education remained steadfast in its commitment to providing support to underprivileged children in India through various projects and initiatives. We saw an increase in fundraising for the year 2022 over 2021 by 10%. This achievement was made possible through the generous contributions and continued support of our donors. We are immensely grateful for their commitment to our cause. During the year, we disbursed a total of $3M+ across 155 projects, benefiting over 198,610 underprivileged children in various regions of India.

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

We have 48 Asha chapters across North America, Europe and Asia, working tirelessly to make a positive impact on education in India. Despite the challenges posed post COVID-19, due to disruptions to our in-person fundraising events, these chapters and our volunteers persevered and got creative in coming up with new ways to stay connected with communities through virtual fundraising events and campaigns and continued their efforts to raise funds. 9 chapters continued to
organize Team Asha endurance training events, virtually and in-person, engaging volunteers and raising funds to support our cause.

Looking forward, we recognize that there is a significant learning gap for students that has built up over the pandemic years. The challenges posed by the pandemic have only reinforced the importance of our mission. We remain committed to bridging that gap and providing access to education to children from the underprivileged communities.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our patrons, volunteers, and donors who have been instrumental in our success. If you wish to learn more about Asha for Education or visit any of our projects to witness the impact firsthand, please feel free to reach out to me at president@ashanet.org. Together, we can help create a brighter future for the children we serve.

Sincerely,
Prema Grandhi,
President, Asha for Education
The 30th Asha Conference (US) was held at Georgia Tech on March 26-27, 2022. The conference ran simultaneously with the Asha for Education India counterpart in Pondicherry. This enabled speakers in India to present to and interact with attendees in the US, and several sessions happened concurrently. The host chapter, Asha Atlanta, was represented by several student volunteers, while volunteers from Asha Seattle, UIUC, Delaware, Cornell, Silicon Valley, NYC/NJ were also able to attend in person. Volunteers across various US chapters were able to join the conference virtually, including from the Zurich and London chapters. The conference, other than talks and panel discussions, involved in-depth discussions on Asha’s vision and future, specifically in the context of various issues and inequalities that have been exposed through the attempts at online education over the past 2 years. Binay Pathak, Asha’s president, moderated the discussions and questions from the US conference, while Rajaraman Krishnan moderated the discussions from India. Recordings of the talks are available on YouTube.
“The conference ran simultaneously with the Asha for Education India counterpart in Pondicherry.”

First Plenary Talk: Simantini Dhuru from Avehi Abacus

In the first plenary talk, the discussion outlined numerous problems and possible improvements to the current education system in India. Students' welfare, safety, security, and engagement were part of the central theme, especially issues revealed with the online nature of education in the recent past. A major revision that was suggested is the creation of spaces for children to ensure a community exists, even when teaching is happening online. The discussion also focused on the importance of supporting government school teachers and helping them. Ms. Dhuru also talked about a curriculum that her organization Avehi Abacus has been developing, for children, that covers not only subjects but also sensitivity training and inclusivity, for students and teachers alike, on gender and social issues.

“A major revision that was suggested is the creation of spaces for children to ensure a community exists, even when teaching is happening online.”

New-age learning with Asha Mumbai

Professor Jitendra Shah talked about his work towards making Mumbai a zero waste city. In particular, using tools from GIS software, he is preparing a platform that will enable children from all parts of the city to engage in problems in their own community. Through this social involvement, the hope is that it will enable the underprivileged to become more socially aware and engaged.

Chapter Presentations

Various Asha chapters presented their recent fundraising and project involvement work. To improve the involvement of volunteers, Asha Cornell led a discussion on
recruitment efforts. They proposed several ideas involving one-on-one chats, internships, conducting socials, and talking about projects to increase awareness. Asha Delaware and Asha UIUC talked about their social events and how those have helped increase outreach. Asha Atlanta talked about recent efforts in their athletic programs and events. A major discussion point was how virtual site visits have enabled chapters to bring donors and volunteers in close contact with projects in India. Leap Foundation from Atlanta spoke about their work on online education with students from West Bengal under the Nishtha project that is supported by Asha Atlanta.

“A major discussion point was how virtual site visits have enabled chapters to bring donors and volunteers in close contact with projects in India.”

Second Plenary Talk

In the second plenary talk, Mr. T. M. Krishna had an insightful discussion with his mother, Prema Rangachary, on equity in education. The conversation hovered around co-learning, involving learning from peers, environment, experiences, and activities like singing and dancing. Implementing co-learning will promote multicultural education and inclusivity. In addition, it will help break the social barriers in education - social status and the caste system. Mr. T. M. Krishna also suggested encouraging all forms of arts in the classroom. The speakers pointed out that the main issue in realizing co-learning is the central focus of the curriculum. Students learning or pursuing non-mainstream skills did not warrant the same respect from their teachers and peers. A major step in bringing equity in education, or ensuring education offers similar opportunities for livelihood, will need a global shift in how we regard various skills. Traditional skills and cultures need to be promoted, not just a one-size-fits-all approach -- which will only lead to people sacrificing traditional livelihoods and heading to cities for sustenance. Mr. Krishna and Ms. Rangachary talked about the work being done at their school Vidya Vanam, a school for tribal and underprivileged children in and around Anaikatti, a village in the foothills of the Nilgiris, near Coimbatore. The school seeks to nurture these children by encouraging their traditional knowledge base and providing platforms for exposure to mold them into the leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

The talk was followed by a panel discussion with Mr. Krishna, Ms. Rangachari, Mr. Krishnan, and Arun and Poornima Venkataraman, the coordinators for Marudam Farm School, which had insightful conversations on the current status of the
education system. Inclusive libraries for marginalized communities were suggested to promote equality. The discussion then moved on to talk about the right to education (RTE) - which clauses of RTE are implementable; is it the only way to bring equity in education? Lastly, Asha for Education received several recommendations like understanding the policy domain and making learning materials more inclusive.

“The conversation hovered around co-learning, involving learning from peers, environment, experiences, and activities like singing and dancing. Implementing co-learning will promote multicultural education and inclusivity.”

Mukti
Sankar Halder represents Mukti, an organization that works in Sunderbans for community upliftment and education for the underprivileged. Mr. Haldar focused his talk on sustainable practices in education. Some of the points mentioned in ensuring sustainability for education projects included the training of the teachers model, sponsorship programs, and involving the community to take ownership of projects. Mukti runs schools, support schools, a book bank, as well as a technology institute to teach technical skills. They sponsor scholarships for meritorious students who are financially not well off. He highlighted the importance of quantitative metrics to understand improvements in the project. He suggested the project partners consolidate a numbers-heavy report regularly. This will help assess the impact of the projects.
Theater for Social Empowerment

Abhishek Vyas and Sandeep Morthala, Asha Frankfurt

In March 2019, during one of our team meetings, we had the pleasure of meeting Richa, who works for GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeiten, a German government-funded organization that supports developmental projects) in New Delhi. She mentioned that GIZ supports projects every year in various countries for the upliftment of weaker sections of society. The projects are funded by GIZ but executed by diaspora organizations.

After asking Richa for more details, we discovered that the event had close to 500 entries from across the globe, and every year around 30 projects get funding for around 40k Euros each. The projects need to be unique, sustainable, and should help the weaker sections of society.

“With this project, we wanted to engage closely with the communities, especially the children and youth between the ages of 12-18, using a methodology involving the performative arts.”

Asha Frankfurt brainstormed a few ideas and reached out to one of the NGOs we had worked with in the past, Muskaan. Muskaan is based out of Bhopal in Central India and has been a trusted partner of Asha Frankfurt for many years. During our conversation with them, we identified the denotified tribes in Bhopal city, who live in about 15 slums, as our target audience. Denotified tribes are the communities who were
categorized as habitual criminals during British colonization times. Even though the categorization has been officially removed since 1952, the social stigma against the community still exists. Police repression and discrimination in schools is extreme. Apart from this, the communities have other social issues like child marriages, violence against women, high levels of unemployment and dependency on child labour. We realized that if the community people are able to express their ideas to the masses, it will help to eradicate the stigma.

“The project plan also has a section on how the Indian diaspora settled in Germany are giving back to the society.”

Asha Frankfurt came up with the idea of "Theatre for Social Empowerment, Social Inclusion, and Social Change." With this project, we wanted to engage closely with the communities, especially the children and youth between the ages of 12-18, using a methodology involving the performative arts. We believe that this will enable the communities to engage and integrate with mainstream society, as well as uplift their confidence and lifestyle.

The Proposal

Our three-page proposal was selected in the first round, and we were in the last 80 teams. In the second round, we had to give the detailed project plan, budget, people involved, and sustainability plan. Because neither of us had experience in theater, we needed to find experts to execute our project.

Through mutual contacts, we found Wolfgang Schramm, a certified theater artist and founder of the organization CreActing. CreActing has been organizing such theater workshops for the slum children in the Bodhgaya region in the eastern part of India over the last decade.
The project plan also has a section on how the Indian diaspora settled in Germany are giving back to the society. We onboarded Sukhesh Arora as one of the contributors. Originally from India and currently residing in Berlin, Sukhesh Arora is an actor, performance-maker, and facilitator whose work explores the intersections of theater, games, and embodied learning.

“We observed greater confidence levels in the youth as they were able to express their emotions more freely.”

Finally the project was selected in February 2020 with an approved budget of 40k euros and the project timeline was September 2020 - March 2022. It is important to note the timelines because we planned to start the project during the unanticipated year of COVID-19, with multiple lockdowns both in Germany and in India.

Achievements of the Project

1. We organized theater workshops for children and youth from the denotified communities. Workshops were organized in the premises of Muskaan Educational Centres as well as within the slums. The focus of the workshops was to address social issues faced by the community through theater. The overall objective of the workshops was to provide the children and youth a hands-on experience of participating in theater with the organizers and teachers.

2. From the entire corpus of participants, 10 youths with a strong interest and innate talent in theater were selected and trained to become certified trainers. The trainer also got monetary benefits during the project.

3. We created the “Dera Theatre Group” at Muskaan, run by the certified trainers, who would organize regular theater programs and train other interested members.
4. Sukesh continued to channel his network to help in sustainability and providing contacts so the group may perform at various stages.

We observed greater confidence levels in the youth as they were able to express their emotions more freely. It also gave them an opportunity to perform on stages and potentially earn a living.

“Even though we had a contingency plan, we never anticipated the effects of the COVID-19 in 2019... When we faced these challenges and were overwhelmed, the only thing that helped us was taking things one at a time.”

Our Learnings

In the last two years since the project’s execution, these were our findings:

*Learning 1: Delegate*

Even though we started small, we expanded our partnership with multiple parties to attain close to 20 members, including Wolfgang and his theater group, Sukesh, GIZ coordination, and Muskaan team members. Sandeep and Abhishek who were the main coordinators from Asha Frankfurt realized that it was difficult to execute a project with such a big scale with a full-time job. The Project did have a provision for administrative cost for the project in the project plan so we decided to hire an Intern, Anna. Anna also had some experience in local Theatre in Dusseldorf, Germany. She was a great addition to the team.

During execution, Anna collected and validated all the bills, scheduled regular meetings with all the team members, communicated, prepared reports, and translated all the documents in German. Sandeep and Abhishek were freed up to make better decisions rather than working at an operational level.
Learning 2: Plan, then Progress

Making a good plan does not always mean it will succeed. We realized this as we started our project when COVID restrictions were in place. GIZ rejected our request to move ahead the timeframe of project execution as they had to fund the next projects as soon as our ends.

Even though we had a contingency plan, we never anticipated the effects of the COVID-19 in 2019. First, the teams were not able to travel to Bhopal. When they did finally travel, they could only do it via flights because there were no trains running in India at the beginning of 2021. It was also challenging to convince the parents of the children to send their children for the theater workshop. Altogether the overall cost of execution had increased. People from other districts were not allowed in Bhopal until mid-July so we had to postpone the workshops for the end of August instead. When we faced these challenges and were overwhelmed, the only thing that helped us was taking things one at a time.

“...what seems to have evolved from just an idea became really big. It taught us multiple lessons on executing and leading a project.”

Learning 3: Conflict Resolution through Clear Communication

During the execution of the plan, we identified conflicting views between the theater groups from Wolfgang and Sukesh because both had different approaches towards theater. The project’s success depended on both parties. To prevent further conflicts and ensure a smooth workflow for the project, we segmented the entire project into three phases.

- **Phase 1:** Wolfgang and team focused on understanding the children, teaching them the basics of theater using their technique.
- **Phase 2:** Sukhesh worked on advanced techniques with makeup, lighting, conceptualizing, and ideating the plays.
- **Phase 3:** Wolfgang and his team focused on creating a few plays, helping them perform, and finally consolidating the learnings.
- **Phase 4:** Sukesh used his network and helped in sustainability, providing contacts so that the group can perform at various stages.

In addition to that we also planned a regular catch up call once a month over Skype that helped us to innovate and identify possible solutions in a timely manner. We
also set up a Google drive in order to share the documentation. Also, due to COVID-19, we could not travel as planned and it was difficult to audit the ongoing work. Sharing pictures and videos of the workshops helped overcome this roadblock.

To summarize, what seems to have evolved from just an idea became really big. It taught us multiple lessons on executing and leading a project. Delegation helped us focus on items that needed more attention, and conflicts were an inevitable part of teamwork. Clear communication facilitated solutions and a strong team could take care of any unexpected circumstances. Lastly, when the focus was kept on building progress instead of being married to static plans, it allowed for adaptability and greater impact.

A simple idea that started in a restaurant three years ago, ended up helping many children who we didn't know before. We think we have come so far because of the great team behind this effort.

“No one can whistle a symphony; it takes a whole orchestra to play it.” - Halford E. Luccock
Volunteer Share

Shruti Motiwale

My journey with Asha Austin as a volunteer since 2020 has been extremely fulfilling. As a steward for a girl child empowerment project, I got the opportunity to work on an issue that is very close to my heart. I get to stay in close touch with the grassroots volunteers working in India and receive frequent updates about the impact of our support. The unwavering spirit of the children to learn and succeed against all odds is so inspiring! There are days when managing volunteer work with the busyness of life feels very hard, but when I look at the impact of our work, the smiles on the children's faces, and the dedication of my fellow volunteers, I know that every second of it is absolutely worth it! Last but not the least, I moved to Austin during the pandemic, and Asha Austin provided me with a spirit of the community during this time that was extremely valuable to me.

Prasenjit Biswas

I have been a volunteer with Asha Austin since the summer of 2020 and it has been an incredibly rich experience. Their dedication and commitment to making education accessible to disadvantaged children are inspiring. I am humbled by the strength and attitude of children who are growing up in challenging situations but are determined to overcome their present circumstances and make a better life for themselves. I am also a part of Strides of Hope, Asha-Austin’s team of runners. It has been really great training with them and sharing their enthusiasm and energy to fundraise by completing long-distance races. I have been truly fortunate to have had wonderful coaches and mentors in both my running and volunteer teams. I am very grateful for having the opportunity to serve with Asha-Austin.
Donor Share

Subeer and Sonia Manhas

How and when did you get introduced to Asha for Education?

Our family became familiar with Asha for Education back in the late 90s through our friend, B. Ashok. He told us all about the goals and the structure of the organization and we were very inspired. We were impressed with how there was minimal overhead and all the volunteers were so committed to the mission of bringing hope and education to so many underprivileged children in India. It just sounded at the time like the most ideal and worthy non-profit to us, and it resonated with us on many levels.

What got you initially interested in supporting our organization?

The organic, grassroots nature of Asha for Education really appealed to us as a newly married couple in the late 90s. We wanted to invest our time and monetary resources into worthy causes that held similar values and goals as ours, primarily educating those children in India that required and deserved as much support as possible. We firmly believe that investing in education is the primary way to break the cycle of poverty in India and lift individuals and families up together to create a better quality of life.

“We were impressed with how there was minimal overhead and all the volunteers were so committed to the mission...”
There are so many non-profit organizations out there working on many great causes. Why has Asha for Education stuck out for you as one that is important to continue supporting?

Asha for Education has always remained a humble, intimate non-profit organization in our eyes, with committed volunteers. We are always amazed by the responsibility and dedication with which the volunteers contribute their time and energy, and how the projects and causes are so carefully vetted, chosen, and supported. Even though there are many chapters, the Seattle Chapter has always presented itself as strong, reliable, and responsible. The volunteers are incredibly wholehearted and helpful.

“We firmly believe that investing in education is the primary way to break the cycle of poverty in India and lift individuals and families up together to create a better quality of life.”

What has been your most memorable way of supporting Asha for Education?

The Manhas Family Charitable Golf Tournament launched in Fall of 2001, soon after 9/11. Sonia was pregnant with our 1st child, daughter Tara. It was a precarious time in our personal life, and of course, our country. We felt compelled to give back to our community and world. Thus our golf tournament was born in October 2001, just a month before Tara! We wanted to honor our growing family by supporting those children in India who simply did not have the tools and resources to educate themselves as ours did. Since then, we have held a tournament every year, and all the proceeds benefit Asha for Education. We are now coming up on our 22nd year of the tournament, and only took a break during Covid in 2020. We have a big, wonderful family (Tara is now 21, twins Ajay and Jaya are 18, and Gian is 17) and all four of our kids have grown up with the golf tournament as part of their childhood. They have given speeches about Asha at the lunch ceremony, stuffed goody bags, and simply been there to help and volunteer their time. To date, we have raised over $350,000 for Asha for Education through the donors, sponsors and players who support the Manhas Family Charitable Golf Tournament. It has been an incredible partnership between our family and the excellent volunteers from Asha for Education all these years!

Anything else you’d like to share?

Keep up the great work!
Work an Hour (WAH) 2023

Asha Public Relations/Fundraising Team

The Work An Hour campaign is an annual fundraising drive for Asha which encourages donors to give an hour of their salary towards Asha’s cause.

The campaign for 2023 ran for 8 weeks, from September to November. This time the campaign highlighted the following projects (supporting chapters in parentheses), all of which work for the welfare of special needs children or children of migrant labourers

- Divya Jyothi Trust (Atlanta)
- Sandnya Sanwardhan Sanstha (NYCNJ, Athens)
- Shaaron Special School (Toledo)
- Nirmaan Vidya HelpLine (Madison)
- Kumarappa Gram Swaraj Sansthan - KIGS Brick Lane Project (Seattle)
- Ashraya - Kerala (San Diego)
- Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay (Cornell)
- Payir Trust (Florida)

The campaign was run by the Asha Central PR team in conjunction with the chapters. It was highlighted across various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Linkedin, and chapters also reached out to their own donor bases. A new feature was blog posts on all of the projects, which were well-received.

The campaign raised a total of $22,612, from 130 donors.
Asha Chapters’ Social Challenge

Asha Volunteer Experience Team

The Asha-wide Volunteer Experience Team kicked off its 2022-2024 term in July 2022, and we have been channeling our energies to come up with ways to help Asha chapters with their volunteer recruitment, engagement, and retention goals!

In Fall of 2022, we held a couple focus group discussions amongst chapter volunteers specifically on volunteer engagement challenges. These conversations gave Asha volunteers a space to connect with volunteers in other chapters, and gave us all a chance to better understand some of the challenges that chapters were encountering.

From November 2022 - January 2023, we also launched our very first Asha-wide 'Asha Chapters' Social Challenge,' for which we encouraged all Asha chapters to come together in some sort of a social activity (whether in-person or virtually), which we then showcased in our All Volunteers Newsletter. Do check out some of the 2022 Social Challenge submissions below!

For questions about the Volunteer Experience team or to get involved, please email us at volunteer@ashanet.org. If you’re interested in volunteering with an Asha chapter or another Asha-wide team, please complete a Volunteer Sign Up Form under the ‘Getting Involved’ section of our website: ashanet.org.

Asha Chapters’ Social Challenge Shares

Asha Austin

The Asha Austin chapter had an in-person chapter social on Dec 11th 2022 at the Walnut Creek Park in Austin. 4 volunteers from the chapter joined with their families. It was a beautiful day in Austin, and we all shared lots of laughs, great conversations and some tacos while getting to know each other better.
The cherry on top was the fact that this was Asha Austin chapter's 25th year, and we celebrated it with a delicious tres-leche cake! This was a very welcome get-together, since our chapter meetings are usually virtual. Thanks for the encouragement with the chapter social challenge, we hope to do such events more often.

“*These conversations gave Asha volunteers a space to connect with volunteers in other chapters, and gave us all a chance to better understand some of the challenges that chapters were encountering.*”

*Asha Boston*

The Asha Boston chapter volunteers met in person after many months (our meetings are now virtual) and had a great time at our holiday social. It was good interacting with a mixed group of long time volunteers as well as first timers who had reached out to express interest in volunteering in the last few weeks.

In-person interaction definitely helps with volunteer engagement, especially for the newer folks who seem to be more engaged and have signed up for various volunteer activities including site visits in the near future. We're glad we were able to pull everyone together despite everyone's busy social calendar around holidays.

*Asha Cornell*

[We had a] social gathering and a dinner at Chili's before our main fundraising event of the fall semester, our a cappella concert. [We also had] our annual Secret Santa, which we hold at the end of our semester right before final exams. Our members exchanged gifts, ate pizza and holiday cookies, and wore our new Asha Cornell t-shirts!
Asha Beyond Borders

As a volunteer organization based on physical chapters, one of the challenges Asha historically has had is to find a way to channel the interest of prospective volunteers who do not live near existing chapters, and of existing volunteers who move away from their physical chapters. Recently, a new chapter called Asha Beyond Borders was launched to encourage the participation of such volunteers. Asha Beyond Borders is entirely virtual and open to anyone in the U.S. who would like to volunteer with Asha but who does not have an active local chapter to join.

Our initial Asha Beyond Borders volunteers hail from across the U.S., from New York, Washington D.C and North Carolina to Arizona, Arkansas and Texas. A few of our volunteers have previous experience with Asha but many are new to Asha and are bringing their enthusiasm and previous experience to help support our efforts. As one of our new volunteers, Nita Thacker, who lives in the DC area noted, “Asha for Education is ranked among the top charities that provides education to underprivileged children. More importantly, it uses a cost-benefit framework that produces concrete, tangible results and improves the lives of these people in the most cost-effective way possible. This helps Asha for Education to spread its resources over a wider network of individuals.”

“**Asha Beyond Borders is entirely virtual and open to anyone in the U.S. who would like to volunteer with Asha but who does not have an active local chapter to join.**”

Asha Beyond Borders has already picked an initial project to support - the Srijan initiative of Sankalp Ek Prayas. The Srijan initiative provides support schools for students in grades 6-10 in rural Chhattisgarh and has an established track record of meaningfully improving education outcomes for these children with a cost effective intervention. Asha Beyond Border hopes to support this initiative to expand it to more children. Asha Austin and Asha Silicon Valley currently support two other initiatives of Sankalp Ek Prayas, and we have already been able to arrange a site visit by one of the new Beyond Border project stewards which also covered Garima, the project of Asha Austin’s project.

We encourage all prospective Asha volunteers and donors in the U.S. who would like to participate in Asha but do not have a local physical to join to reach out to us at **beyondborders@ashanet.org.**
Project Highlight: Minnesota Schools

Despite several challenges due to environmental issues and the lingering effects of Covid-19 in 2022, Asha Minnesota has been able to continue to support underprivileged children by providing them with education thanks to the support of volunteers, donors, and our partners.

Asha Minnesota currently serves 4 schools located in impoverished areas in India. These schools have been able to demonstrate resilience in a post-Covid world through new admissions, promotion of English learning, communication workshops, training courses, talent shows, and field trips. Asha MN has worked to demonstrate this same adaptability and strength in our efforts to continue to provide opportunities to the students of these schools.

Asha Minnesota fundraised by creating GoFundMe campaigns, hosting booths at local events, and working with corporations to raise money for Tiyas, Balavidyalaya, Parner, and Bhumi. Asha met with Boston Scientific to present information at Boston Scientific's South Asia Employee Association. The slideshow was added to their Diwali presentation. This helped us create awareness and build connections for people who want to be involved with Asha. Boston Scientific also gives its employees a 100% match for money donated to Asha. Lastly, we worked with local Indian organizations such as the Marathi Association and the Hindu Temple of MN to hold booths at holiday events to fundraise. Through all this, we were able to support students and help build schools' resilience.

“These schools have been able to demonstrate resilience in a post-Covid world through new admissions, promotion of English learning, communication workshops, training courses, talent shows, and field trips.”

Tiyas School (received ~ $6,400)

The Tiyas School is located in rural Kankura Masat where 98% of the parents of children attending the school are migrant laborers - a profession that took a major hit with the loss of jobs after the Covid-19 Pandemic. Around the same time, Cyclone Amphan and Yaas brought serious detriment to the area. Families were dependent on farming and fishing and the natural disasters damaged property and livelihood. The resulting impoverished conditions made physiological necessities take precedence over primary education.
“School kobe khulbe? Amader mon ekdom bhalo nei (When school will start? We are very unhappy)” - said Arpita Patra, head teacher of Tiyas School.

“People’s physiological needs had to be met before the community could consider sending their children to get an education. During the lockdown, KMSWS used funds from Asha to distribute groceries to the school community.”

Asha Minnesota worked diligently to provide funding for rations and other materials to support the parents, teachers, and children from Tiyas. We provided oxygen concentrators and nebulizer machines to the Kankura Masat Social Welfare Society (KSMWS) and managed funds for the community. However, this was only a step in the right direction in terms of reopening schools. People's physiological needs had to be met before the community could consider sending their children to get an education. During the lockdown, KMSWS used funds from Asha to distribute groceries to the school community. This one-on-one interaction with families allowed them to explain the idea of online school. Families with smartphones and the internet would have the ability to have their children attend school virtually. Students who only had access to telephones were given lessons through a phone call. For those who had no means of communication, a weekly (socially-distanced) lesson in person was provided.

Balavidyalaya (received ~ $6,400)
The Balavidyalaya School is located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The school is made up of hearing-impaired children ages 0-5 years. Using Asha MN funds, Balavidyalaya was able to hold a workshop for parents of deaf children to teach them communication strategies. Over 60 audiologists, speech therapists, and ENTs were enlisted to raise awareness of the importance of early care for deaf children, and 15 new students were admitted!
Partner (received ~ $2,500)

The Parner Project aids over 100 children in 5 tribal areas of the Bhil and Thakkar indigenous tribes. This year, Asha Minnesota worked with the MASUM (Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal), to fund teacher salaries and educational supplies. As a result, 7 new students have been admitted to the preschool and 8 students have now passed the 10th grade and will be continuing their education into 11th.

Bhumi (received ~ $4,000)

Bhumi in Tamil Nadu funds schools and orphanages in slums and poorer areas. With Asha MN's help this year, Bhumi was able to support 15 community centers and 8 schools as well as fund valuable classes such as Tamil and English language learning and STEM subjects including basic computer knowledge. This year, Bhumi also partnered with Expo Femme to provide young females with information regarding menstrual health and hygiene.

A Resilient Year

The role of education is to guide students toward learning culture, mold their behavior, and direct them toward creating an eventual role in society. Education is a necessity and it is a right. Children in impoverished areas in India deserve this right. This year Asha MN is grateful for our donors and volunteers because we were able to support some of these children. With the help of resilient teachers, families, and volunteers, these students were able to receive the opportunities they deserve.
Project Highlight: Impact Assessment by Asha Chennai

Rajaram Krishnan (abridged from original)

This report presents an analysis of the assessment conducted by Asha Chennai in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Tamil Nadu (TN). The assessment focused on evaluating the academic performance of students in rural areas, particularly in the villages where Asha Chennai's mini-schools are located. A total of 8,082 students were assessed through oral and written tests, with 1,084 of them being attendees of the mini-schools. The analysis aims to explore the impact of the mini-schools and provide insights into the educational status and progress of the students.

The oral assessments were held in mini-schools in October 2021, followed by combined oral and written assessments at all supported schools in April 2022. The focus of the analysis is primarily on the oral assessment scores due to variations in the complexity of written assessment questions and the intentional reduction in difficulty for the April 2022 papers.

The analysis utilized a software system consisting of a MySQL database for storing student details and assessment results, Perl scripts for data processing and validation, and various displays for analysis purposes. The software allowed for comparisons of average written scores by subject and class, comparisons of oral assessment status buckets between different samples based on sociological criteria, comparisons of average oral and written scores for each subject, ranking of schools based on average scores, and correlation analysis between scores and school factors.

One key objective of the assessments was to measure the loss of education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis shows a significant decline in student
performance in oral assessments in 2021-22 compared to 2019-20, particularly for students who missed 18 months of education. Teachers reported even worse performance in written assessments, indicating the challenges faced by students in adapting to question paper-based exams. The graph above compares mathematical ability between students in 2021-22 (dotted line), in Classes 1-5 (x-axis), to that of students in 2019-20 (normal lines).

**The analysis shows a significant decline in student performance in oral assessments in 2021-22 compared to 2019-20, particularly for students who missed 18 months of education. Teachers reported even worse performance in written assessments ...**

The impact of mini-schools on student performance was assessed by comparing the scores of students who attended mini-schools for three months or more with those who didn’t. The analysis demonstrates that students who attended mini-schools performed significantly better in oral assessments for English, Math, and Tamil. Furthermore, their performance closely aligned with that of students assessed in regular schools in 2019-20, suggesting minimal learning loss for these students. The graph pictured compares mathematics performance between students in mini-schools (normal lines) to that of students who did not go to mini-schools (dotted lines).

**... students who attended mini-schools performed significantly better in oral assessments for English, Math, and Tamil.**

The analysis also examined the performance of mini-school students before and after the reopening of regular schools. While the performance in October 2021 was slightly lower than in October 2020, the transition back to regular schools resulted in remarkable progress, indicating the benefits of both mini-school and regular
school approaches. A comparison between schools in Tamil Nadu (TN) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) highlighted variations in performance. TN students performed better in English, while UP students performed better in Hindi. This aligns with other findings on the reading and writing abilities of students from TN.

Future work includes online submission of student details and assessment grading to streamline data processing, implementing a unique student ID for longitudinal tracking, correlating performance with sociological factors, and conducting linear regression analysis for predictive and prescriptive insights.

**Overall, the assessments have proven to be valuable in monitoring progress, measuring intervention effectiveness, and identifying areas for improvement.** The analysis informs ongoing efforts to enhance the software system and leverage data for meaningful analysis.
Section Highlight: Austin

Our Partnership With The Lal Family Towards Shri Nand Lal Educational Program For The Underprivileged

Asha for Education, Austin Chapter, is grateful and proud to partner with the Lal Family, to help bring about quality education to the underserved and marginalized sections of rural India. “Shri Nand Lal Educational Program for the Underprivileged” has been instituted in 2022 in the memory of Shri Nand Lalji. The core objectives of this program are to work with Rural and alternate schools with emphasis on primary education, focus on improving the quality of education and reach, in serving the needs of an underdeveloped region or underserved and underprivileged sections of the society. We work together with the Lal Family on this shared vision and purpose.

Nand Lal had long wanted to invest in medical and educational access in underserved and underinvested communities. Born near Rawalpindi, in today’s Pakistan, he spent his early childhood on a farm. He was the oldest male child in a family of three brothers who had modest means and little access to formal education. During the Partition, his family migrated to India and settled in old Delhi.

It was there that Nand Lal’s curiosity blossomed. He found refuge in the Qudsia public library, spending several hours there daily and excelling in school. His hard
work resulted in him completing his Higher Secondary with flying colors. He topped the All-India college entrance examination and earned a scholarship to pursue Physics Honors in Hansraj College, Delhi University where he received the gold medal in B.Sc. honors. In addition to being dedicated to his studies in his college days, he cared for his fellow students when they were sick. After completing his M.Sc. he chose to enroll himself in Cornell University, an Ivy league college, in the USA and completed his PhD.

Nand Lal was a self-learner and could often be found on his computer mastering several computer languages. For the last 50 years he dedicated himself to working with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) programs. The Voyager programs were of specific interest to him. Voyager 1 and 2 are a pair of space crafts launched in 1977 to explore the outer planets. Initially launched only to unravel mysteries of Jupiter and Saturn, they went on to investigate Uranus and Neptune. These spacecrafts are still actively sending data to earth even though they have gone beyond our galaxy. Since the inception of the Voyager program until the time of his death, Nand Lal, had been engaged in analyzing data sent by the aircraft to understand the mysteries of the universe.

Nand Lal was compassionate and caring. He knew from his own experience that access to both education and healthcare can change lives. He could never have dreamed how much. It is in his honor that his family is carrying on his legacy by helping to provide greater access to education and healthcare for those who are most needy and impoverished in both rural and urban areas in India.

Program Overview in 2022

Asha Austin, in consultation and approval of the Lal Family, allocated funds raised in this program for the 2022 financial year towards the annual support for four of our projects, namely, Reward Trust, Sangamam, Garima and Support.

_Nand Lal was compassionate and caring. He knew from his own experience that access to both education and healthcare can change lives. He could never have dreamed how much._

Reward Trust fills the education gap and shortage of teachers in Government schools in rural Tamil Nadu, and works on improving the quality of science and math education in these schools. Sangamam is computer-based intervention in government schools in rural Uttar Pradesh, and works on imparting computer science and concepts in Science, Math and languages with the aid of Asha Kanini (home grown software tool of Asha Chennai, mapped to Uttar Pradesh syllabus).
Garima is a girl child focused program in rural Chhattisgarh working on supplemental education, improving morale and confidence, health and hygiene, and access to trusted Garima didi’s for the holistic development of adolescent girls.

The total funds raised in the program for the year 2022 was approximately $35,000. Additionally, with the fundraising efforts of Asha Austin volunteers towards 50% of the needs, the total program impact for the year 2022 was 70000 USD, to benefit 8000 students and support salaries of 50 teachers and support staff towards the four projects.
Asha India Highlight: Mumbai

The Asha for Education Mumbai chapter was established in 2006 with the objective of providing quality education to underprivileged sections of society. Their activities & resources include regular Primary and Secondary section classes, basic & advanced computer skills training through the chapter computer lab, a science lab, a library, mid-day meals for students, creativity and extra-curricular activities and various awareness programs. The awareness programs range from content on ‘microgreens’ and growing nutritious food, environmental conservation, health & wellness, child sexual abuse, communal harmony and digital geography. The Mumbai chapter school staff consist of twenty paid teachers, 10 volunteer teachers, kitchen & cleaning personnel, and additional personnel. The chapter also supports satellite projects in local villages and holds annual events such as an ‘Annual Sports Day’, ‘Asha Mumbai Annual Day’ and other events to bring students and volunteers together for celebration.

For more information about the Asha Mumbai chapter, please visit mumbai.ashanet.org.
Asha Project Pictures
Mission, Objectives, and 2022 Directors

OUR MISSION
To catalyze socio-economic change in India through the education of underprivileged children.

OUR OBJECTIVES
Asha for Education is a secular organization dedicated to change in India by focusing on basic education in the belief that education is a critical requisite for socio-economic change. In keeping with this focus, our volunteers are involved with and support projects that are secular and have an education-related component to them. The objectives of this group are:

- To provide education to underprivileged children in India.
- To encourage the formation of various local groups across the world to reach out to larger sections of the population.
- To support and cooperate with persons and groups already engaged in similar activities.
- To raise required human and other resources to achieve group objectives.
- To provide opportunities to individuals living outside India who wish to participate in Asha activities in India.
- To address, whenever possible, other issues affecting human life such as health care, environment, socio-economic aspects and women’s issues.

2022-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Prema Grandhi
president@ashanet.org

Secretary: Sridhar Dandapanthula
secretary@ashanet.org

Treasurer: Subra Nathan
treasurer@ashanet.org

Projects: Padmanava Sen
projects@ashanet.org

Web: Amit Sharma
webmaster@ashanet.org

Public Relations: Anish Mukherjee
pr@ashanet.org

Volunteer Experience: Payal Shah
volunteer@ashanet.org
Disbursement by state and project type

Total funds disbursed: $3,024,856.26
## Statement of Financial Position

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and Equivalents</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Contribution Receivable</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>$ 6,365,448</td>
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# Statement of Activities

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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Management &amp; General</td>
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<td>Net Assets - End of Year</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Get involved with Asha

Contact Us:

directors@ashanet.org
Asha for Education
440 N. Barranca Ave.
Suite 2742
Covina, CA 91723
TAX EIN 77-0459884

Donate:

Online:
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Asha for Education
PO Box 888080
Los Angeles, CA 90088-8080

Volunteer:

Contact your local chapter today to learn how you can help:
https://ashanet.org/chapters/