



# ANNUAL REPORT

2016

*Mission: To catalyze socio-economic change through education of underprivileged children in India*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Table of Contents

<b>2016 COMMITTEE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>EDITOR'S NOTE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>PRESIDENT'S NOTE</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>PROJECT-LOK BIRADARI PRAKALP</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>PROJECT-PALAS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>PROJECT-SACSAS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>PROJECT-Boys Town Society</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>PROJECT-Ved Vignan</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>PROJECT-Notun Alo</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>PROJECT-Naba Diganta</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>FUNDRAISERS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>TREASURER'S NOTE</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>AUDITOR'S NOTE</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>ASHA AND YOU</b> .....	<b>35</b>

# 2016 COMMITTEE



Rajesh - President



Doris - Treasurer



Rajdeep – Coordinator LBP



Samyuktha - Coordinator VMS/PALAS



Namita - Coordinator SACSAS



Stefania - Coordinator BTS



Katka - Coordinator VVMV



Elien - Coordinator NA

## 2016 COMMITTEE



Vineet - Coordinator ND



Vijay - Coordinator NA



Prat - Publicity/Social Media



Neera - Editor

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The eminent scientist and one of the most inspiring former Presidents of India, A.P.J Abdul Kalam had once said:

*"Dream, Dream, Dream! Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts transform into action."*

At Asha Zürich, we dream of a better India, a land that is thriving in its multi-cultural ethnicities, safe and progressive, and most importantly, where all its children are provided an equal opportunity: an opportunity to dream of a better future.

As our slogan: "Bringing hope through Education" indicates, at Asha Zürich, we believe that this dream of a better future can be transformed into action most effectively by means of education. Since its inception in May 2002, the volunteers and donors at Asha Zürich have



persistently worked towards this dream by means of supporting educational projects in mostly remote and often unsafe areas of India. Volunteers have been selflessly contributing their time, effort and expertise to engage in fund-raising activities as well as in managing the funds generated as effectively as possible. This has been consistently done without compromising on our flat organizational structure and minimum- overheads manner of functioning.

2016 was a highly successful year in terms of fund-raising and disbursement of funds. In addition to regular donations, funds were raised by means of the Zürich Marathon, Google fund-matching and collaboration with other organizations such as Chat with Chaat, Nalan's kitchen and Swiss Puja.

In addition to the five existing projects, namely SACSAS Academy in Manipur, Palas and Lok Biradari Prakalp in the remote regions of Maharashtra, Ved Vignan Maha Vidyapeeth and a

## EDITOR'S NOTE

primary school in Thirumangalam village run by the Boys Town Society in Tamil Nadu, two new projects were adopted this year. These are Naba Diganta consisting of two non-formal rural learning centres in Alipurduar district of West Bengal and Natun Aalo, in the Sundarbans, West Bengal.

All new projects in Asha are undertaken only after a thorough background check of the institution and an on-site visit that is carried out either by an Asha volunteer or a trusted representative. The above projects were selected from many others discussed, after careful debate and deliberation. On-site visits are also conducted to assess the optimal functioning of the schools as well as to ensure that the funds disbursed are being effectively utilized. On occasions where issues of transparency or a lack of adequate communication is perceived, projects are reevaluated and discontinued if necessary.

Despite their remote locations, site visits were conducted to all projects this year by various volunteers: Eileen, Rajesh, Sachin to name a few and children were also subjected to tests to check the standard of education being provided. Their positive feedback served to confirm and renew our commitment to these projects. All the schools are run by able administrators and dedicated teachers who not only contribute to the academic development of the children but also to their personal development so that the students can easily integrate into the society once they graduate.

I would like to conclude with the hope that the selflessness, dedication, commitment and dynamism displayed by these volunteer teachers working at the grass roots and Asha Zurich volunteers here is adequately rewarded in this new year as well.

To quote APJ Abdul Kalam again,

*"A dream is not what you see in sleep, it is the thing that doesn't let you sleep!"*

So let us keep dreaming .....

Neera Mallick

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

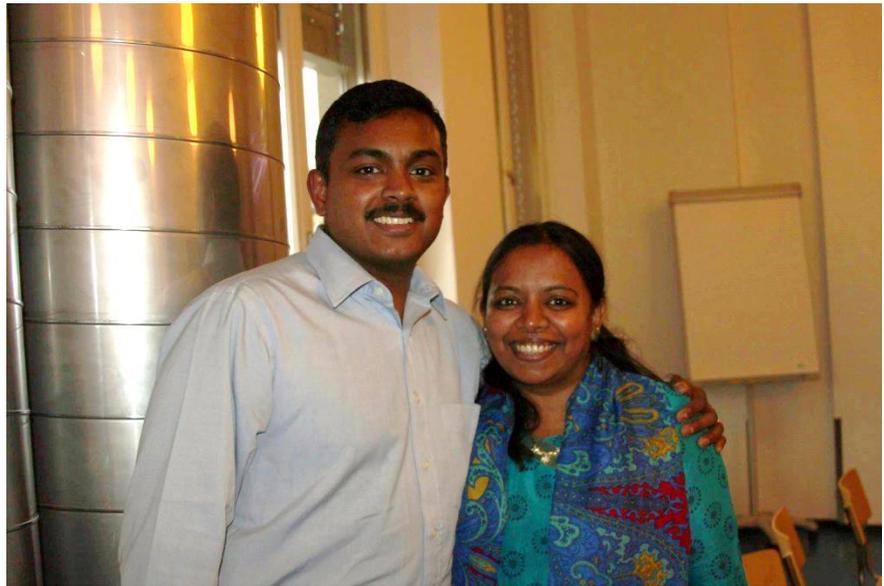
“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.” – Oscar Wilde

Dear donors and well-wishers of Asha,

I would like to begin by wishing you all a very "**Happy New Year 2017**"!

2016 was a great year for Asha Zurich in terms of funds raised and projects supported.

We supported 7 projects in 2016. I would like to thank our excellent team comprising of Prat, Doris, Stefania, Damu, Sachin, Rajdeep, Namita, Samyuktha, Vineeth, Elien, Katka, Neera & Hans. Most of them used their personal time to visit the projects, get a firsthand experience of what was going on and provide insight to our donors. In this way everyone specifically knows where and for what the money is used for. We did have



challenges with two of our projects: we were not able to get the required information. However, again thanks to our persistent volunteers, who put in additional efforts, resolved the issues and achieved success in these projects too. Their selfless and passionate efforts lit up the lives of many children. The team spirit in each team meeting we had was amazing.

Our major source of funds in 2016 was due to the collaboration with Asha Global (4 star charity navigator). The funds were further augmented with our major fund raising event - our participation in Zurich Marathon 2016.

I would like to express my gratitude to those who supported us in various ways with their events: Indi, Brindarica, Kirti & Vishnu. I am thankful to Vishnu for introducing Asha Zurich into Google and obtaining a good fund matching. He also helped us in our difficult time with SACSAS project.

Namrata, Rama and Dipankar joined our team in 2016. Hearty welcome guys! Thanks to Sudha, Vijay & Karthick who also helped us this year. I thank all our volunteers who helped us.

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

What makes us different? We come from different backgrounds with one common cause which is to educate children. We contribute in various ways without any expectations. Our hierarchy is flat and everyone is equally responsible.



We are always looking out for more people to help our cause. You have already taken the first step when you had the willingness to read this. Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something and together we can make a difference. Please join us; we need your helping hands too!

Rajesh Varadarajan

# PROJECT- LOK BIRADARI PRAKALP

Asha Zurich has been associated with this project since June 2011. The LBP is a school and ashram that offers a sanctuary of peace where education is provided to tribal children free of cost in an otherwise disturbed region that is not only inhabited by wild animals and venomous snakes but also affected by Naxalite (ultra-left rebels) violence. The project was started by Dr. Prakash and his wife Mandakini Amte in 1973 in the forests of the very remote region of Hemalkasa, located between Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh state.

**The School:** Ashram Shala. The school serves students from 600 neighboring villages and was built from financial aid from Swiss-Aid and Oxfam. In 2015, Asha Zurich organized a site visit, which revealed the following findings:

## Key Achievements

### 1. Board Exam Performances :-

#### 10th Grade

Exam	Boys	Girls	Total	% Results	Highest Scorers
Appeared	30	15	45	97.77	Ms. Muskan Sayyed (88%)
Passed	29	15	44		

#### 12th Grade

Exam	Boys	Girls	Total	% Results	Highest Scorers
Appeared	18	20	38	97.36	Mr. Pankaj Maharu (80.15%)
Passed	18	19	37		

### 2. Sports Achievements

Children of LBP very enthusiastically participated in various district level and state level athletic events. One of the achievements include winning medals in tribal department state level athletic competitions. In district level sport competitions, 22 students from LBP won the events they participated in. Students also participated in Nagpur marathon events where one girl received a 3<sup>rd</sup> prize.



# PROJECT- LOK BIRADARI PRAKALP

## Major Activities

Besides the regular school activities, LBP organized various short workshops and field trips to develop technological skills, health awareness and overall personalities of the students.

Few of these are:-



1. Robotics Workshop: Here a professional robotics technocrat visited the LBP school and held a robotics workshop. It is very important to mention that the girls participated very enthusiastically along with boys. This served as a very important message to break the stereotype even in those remote villages

and encourage girls to take up the technological and scientific curriculum in their further studies.

2. School Health Awareness Program: The students were trained to deal with the first aid treatment of fractures and sprains, wounds and burns, and other related skills such as sponging in fever and ORS preparation.

3. Stretch your imagination: Students had to imagine different kinds of agricultural products for an agricultural exhibition. Students had the freedom to think differently and make changes in fruits and vegetables that they want to change and imagine. The main learning outcome was to think creatively and innovatively.

4. Various school trips include field trip to a paddy farm, school trip to Konkan Sindhurg fort, and trip to Tiger Reserve in Nazira.

Rajdeep Deb

# PROJECT- PALAS



PALAS has been associated with Asha Zurich since 2004 and is based in the western state of Maharashtra. The VMS Palas classes are held in Shirpur in Dulhe district. The centre which is part of the Jesuit Missionary has been operating out of Shirpur for more than 50 years. Currently, there are four fathers who are engaged in different programmes directly benefiting Adivasi population in rural areas of Shirpur district. The administration of the centre is centrally managed out of Mumbai- Andheri where the main centre is based supporting all projects in the Maharashtra.

In the Palas schools, they conduct non-formal classes for children who are typically between 4-10 years of age. The aim of these classes is to prepare these children to attend formal schools. Classes are typically divided into groups and are monitored by an assigned teacher who checks the attendance of students, conducts exams and makes random visits. The Project Coordinator, Father Lopes overlooks the reports and all activities of supervisors and teachers. The children are not charged any fees. With the help of RTE (Right to Education) act, VMS Palas is integrating children into the nearby government schools.



There are currently 831 students enrolled in Palas schools. 219 students joined in the last year alone. There are 30 teachers and 3 supervisors.

## **Clothes maketh a man (or child):**

Last year Asha Zurich decided to sponsor school uniforms for the children of VMS Palas classes. The response to them was very positive. 831 children received uniforms. The local tailors were called to VMS to stitch uniforms. They learnt stitching from VMS in one of the training programmes. The distribution of the uniforms provided a good, informal opportunity for the teachers to interact with the parents of the students. A pleasant increase in attendance in the classes was observed following the uniform distribution.

# PROJECT- PALAS

## Teacher training:

VMS Palas assigns a lot of importance to teacher training which they think is the backbone of their Project. These have, to a large extent, helped them address the issue of not having sufficient teachers, a problem that continues to haunt rural projects in India. During the course of the year they conduct various programs, where the teachers not only learn from the resource persons but also from each other through various interactive sessions. Assessment sessions are held in the beginning of the current academic year. During the teachers' trainings, some of our teachers and supervisors conducted evaluation sessions of previous months. Where there was a need for extra guidance, experts were called in as resource persons. Besides this, time to time senior teachers and supervisors were called in to share their knowledge to the whole group.



## Familiarizing students with computers



Two laptops were kindly donated by one of Asha Zurich's well-wishers. These have successfully been utilized by the teachers as visual aids during their classes.

In addition to these, the students and staff are also involved in environmental awareness activities.

They are also taught about other religions, customs and traditions.

Samyuktha Muralidharan Sharma

## PROJECT- SACSAS

**SACSAS Academy** is a secular organization dedicated to socio-economic change in Manipur. In pursuit of this goal, SACSAS focuses on free quality education and healthcare in the belief that education and healthcare are critical requisites for socio-economic change.

Their program aims to provide free quality education to the children who live in remote villages and cannot travel to the nearest State run school. This facility offers an opportunity to save the lives of these children by providing quality education to the underprivileged and



downtrodden (low-income) remote sections of the society in Manipur, especially those based in tribal areas. Sacsas runs five schools (Loilamkot, Maobam, Laishoi, New Dampi and Wangoo) providing quality education to about 500 kids in the far-flung remote villages of the state.

Asha Zurich financially supports the New Dampi branch, Loilamkot and Wangoo schools. The school in New Dampi has a strength of 185 students who study in classes from pre-nursery to Class 7 with seven teachers. The school in Loilamkot has a strength of 84 students who study in classes from nursery to Class 4 with four teachers. The school in Wangoo has a strength of 274 students who study in classes from nursery to Class 7 with ten teachers.

Mr. Surjit Kumar is the on-ground coordinator of the SACSAS Academy and has been coordinating all the five schools. However, owing to the vastness of the area where all these schools operate and also the difficulty in organizing daily visits to all these schools, the functioning of all the schools is taken up by the local people.

The SACSAS model revolves around the understanding and the cooperation of the executive committee, the village guardian committee and the teachers. The village guardians play a prominent role in making sure that the set goals are achieved and the children get quality education. They not only take care of the protection of the school premises against the terrorist groups but also take care of the school administration. This is really essential in order to build a spirit of self-governance and sense of responsibility in the minds of parents and villagers for their children's education. The committee also makes sure that the children attend the school regularly besides monitoring the punctuality of the school teachers.

The functioning of the schools and the salary of the teachers in case of lack of funds has been addressed by running a charitable hospital named "National Charitable Hospital" over the last six

# PROJECT- SACSAS

years by Mr. Surjitkumar Yumkhaibam, who tries to fund the salaries of the teachers in difficult times.

**Education Methodology** : The academy focuses on basic education for children. The books and teaching techniques used in imparting education are the same as the ones used in the government schools. This helps primarily to facilitate the smooth transition of children passing out of the SACSAS academy into mainstream schools.



For the all-round development of the students in the school, the school organizes sports meets at least four times a year after each quarterly exam and this has been a major source of motivation and entertainment for the children in the area with winning students given books as prizes.

Additionally, regular meetings with the parents and the guardian committee are conducted. This is essential to address the problems faced by the children and also brings about a sense of responsibility in the minds of the villagers where the school operates.

## Site Visit in 2016

Site visit was done in November 2016 by Mr. Raju Kumar (a resident of Manipur), who visited New Dampi, Wangoo and Loilamkot in a span of 2 days. He conducted Maths and English tests at each centre for all the students present. His conclusion : "SACSAS schools are being truly run in very much needy places. It is worth supporting those schools and we must continue to do that."

## Achievements in 2016

1. Many students are enthusiastic about sports and participate in various sports tournaments.
2. Summer camps and other events like Teacher's day, St Patriots day are regularly organised.
3. More than 60% of the students passed in the tests conducted during site visit.

Namita Agrawal

## PROJECT- BOYS TOWN SOCIETY

In 2014, Asha Zurich approved the proposal from Boys Town Society (BTS) of Thirumangalam village in Tamil Nadu based on a site visit conducted by our president, Rajesh Vardarajan, who made a site visit in October 2014. Boys Town Society was founded in 1965 by Joe Homan to educate and empower street children. Today, the society has 5 Boys Towns, 1 Girls Town and 2 Children villages (residential homes) that can accommodate up to 480 children. Currently, BTS is assisting 401 children under residential care and another 248 children under non-residential care in a primary school. In these institutions the children receive free education, food, medical care and activities



to develop their physical, mental and spiritual health. Youngsters who score a higher percentage of marks are sent to higher studies like a Polytechnic college and other professional courses. Moreover, BTS has initiated a non-residential program in four villages covering 300 children who stay with their parents and attend evening programs from 5 to 8.30 pm.

Asha Zurich has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide parts of the running cost of Francois Meyer Nursery and Primary School that benefits underprivileged children from Kindergarten to the 5th Standard with a donation of 10,00,000 INR in October 2016.



Two site visits were done by our volunteers in 2016: Stefania, the project coordinator for BTS, spent three weeks on the site in January 2016 to get a deeper understanding of the way the organization works and how the Asha funds are invested. Not only did she carry out a thorough due diligence but she also supported the administration by consulting in various matters.

Damodharan conducted another site visit on 23. August, 2016 at BTS and gave the feedback that his visit and

interaction with the children of the school gave lots of encouragement to the staff and children. Damodharan was very happy and appreciated the changes made in the academic programs and in the upbringing of the children. He had a discussion with the principal regarding the ACER test,

# PROJECT- BOYS TOWN SOCIETY

which was conducted earlier that month. He went through the test papers and appreciated the effort taken by the management in introducing such a test to the students. He visited all the classes and interacted with the students, which was highly appreciated by the staff and students. Overall, Asha for Education Zurich was really happy with the development of BTS in 2016.

## Achievements/important events in 2016:

- **Death of BTS founder Joe Homan**

The organization's founder, the Englishman Joe Homan, died unexpectedly on 30.03.2016. Stefania met him in January and was truly inspired by his personality and life. Despite Joe not really being active in the organization anymore, he was a source of inspiration for all teachers, staff and children alike.



- **Building of new school**

The construction work of the new school, which was initiated at the end of 2015 and which is situated right next to the current school (which is more of an auditorium), is still in progress. This school will be bigger than the current school and provide additional infrastructure, which is missing in the primary building. This building will be called *Francois Meyer School - BANYAN*, whereby the four wings will have names of trees, and the class rooms flower names. Asha Zurich has the honor to name one of the wings and will be choosing a Swiss tree for that purpose. The campus will be called *Joe*



*Homan campus*. BTS is planning to apply for high school recognition after the completion of the new school building.

Based on Stefania's site visit, Asha Zurich pointed out the extremely high and unproductive noise occurrence in the current school. Consequently, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th standard classes were transferred to the premises of one of the residential homes (in

immediate proximity) as the rooms are free from 8 AM to 5 PM. This arrangement is in place for a couple of months until the new building can be opened.

# PROJECT- BOYS TOWN SOCIETY

- **Pongal**

The yearly Pongal celebration was held on 15th January 2016 in a grand manner. Stefania had the honor of being the Chief Guest. Other guests, accompanied by staff from BTS participated in the function. Thereafter, further activities were conducted such as flag hoisting and a parade. Children exhibited their talents through dancing, yoga and musical performances (e.g. drums), wearing and showing fancy dresses and participating in a scouts competition.

- **Academic achievements:**

For the academic year 2015-16, the outgoing students had a 99% success rate in 10th Standard examination and 100% success in the 12th Standard examination. Besides this academic achievement, a lot of other activities were initiated this quarter by the on-site coordinator Dr. Raja and his team to ensure the social, physical and extracurricular development of the children.

- **Awareness program:**

Creating social responsibility in the young mind is part of the educational program of all the units of Boys Town Society. Students of various units organized a rally to create awareness on environmental cleanliness, ill-effects caused by the usage of plastics and prevention of dengue fever.

Regular staff training is organized to motivate and train the BTS staff, who are proud to be part of the organization.

- **Apprenticeship program:**

The Vocational Guidance Department organized a career counselling session, whereby the General Secretary gave his guidance regarding the schemes for apprenticeship programs in BTS. The 9th standard students were taken for Trade Exposure visit on 5.3.2016 to several companies such as TVS chakra, Fenner India etc. for choosing the different study programs.

The Vocational Guidance department plays a major role to place the students in job-oriented formal technical courses mainly in governmental institutions. This year, BTS had 46 out of 47 students pass their 10th standard, among those 1 is placed in degree course, 7 in polytechnic courses, 6 in nursing diploma courses, 7 in ITIs, and 25 students now study in the 11th standard.

51 Students, who had successfully completed their respective training like ITI, Polytechnic, Nursing, Engineering are placed in various companies like TVS, YAMAHA, FENNER, BHEL, HOSPITALS, ASHOK LEYLAND etc., they are paid between 5,000 to 15,000 INR per month.

# PROJECT- BOYS TOWN SOCIETY

- **Parents meeting 2016**

Feedback from the parents about their children helps the management reorganize their academic and non-academic programs. Two parents' meetings were conducted in the Francois Meyer Nursery & Primary school in 2016. Parents are encouraged to give their comments and suggestions for the improvement of the day to day functioning of the school. All staff participated in the program and answered the queries raised by the parents and they stressed the need for their involvement in the students' welfare.



- **Volunteer's visit**

A couple of volunteers not related to Asha, such as Tim Kiteley from the UK, visited BTS in 2016. Usually they give simple training to the students in spoken English and other subjects. They interact with the staff and help them to strengthen the curricular and co-curricular activities in the school.

- **Children's Festival in BTS**



The Children's Festival was celebrated on 26. November, 2016 at FRANCOIS MEYER NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOL premises. This year 96 Children from 8 organizations participated and exhibited their cultural talents. Also mentally challenged children from M.S. Chellamuthu Trust, Madurai delivered various performances, which were appreciated by all. The BTS children won several prizes.

# PROJECT- BOYS TOWN SOCIETY

## Sponsorships of BTS children

In March 2016, Asha Zurich has initiated three sponsorships between Switzerland-based donors and children boarding at one of the BTS institutions. The three children aged 5-14 are now supported with a yearly donation that covers all regular living and schooling costs. The sponsors are invited to attend the BTS events and are always welcome to visit.



This is Karthick Raja, aged 6, who lives with his mother Ayyamal and his brother Vetrivel in the Rengasamy Children's Village (RCV), one of the BTS homes. His mother is a caretaker of the children at RCV. Since March 2016, he is supported by a Swiss donor through Asha Zurich.

Stefania Lanfranchi

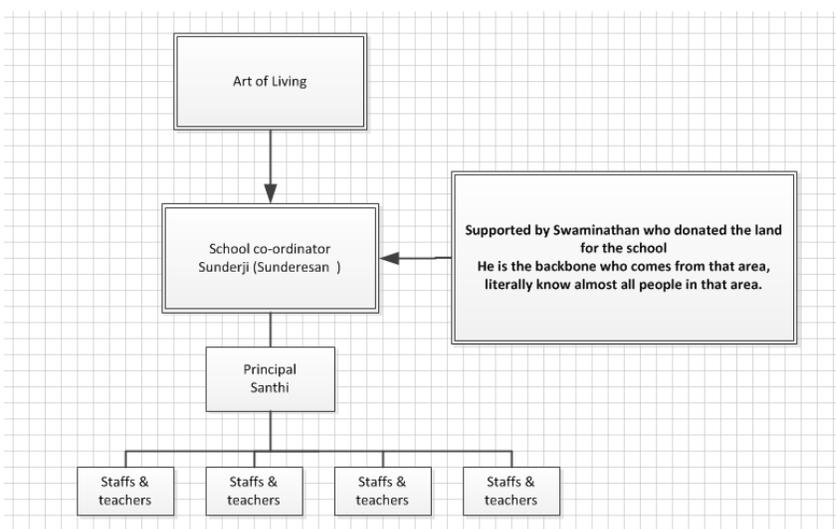
# PROJECT – VED VIGNAN

Ved Vignan is the second new project that Asha Zurich had decided to support from 2015 onwards. The school, also known as Sri Sri Gnan Mandir, is located in the remote Vadakkur village of Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu state. The project is managed under the umbrella of Art of Living Foundation. Asha Zurich supports the educational cost of 30 children.

In August 2016, a site visit was done by Rajesh. The following are some of his findings.

## *How does it operate? How does the school function?*

- All the donors donate to Art of living foundation (including us and around the world).
- When a project is decided by the organization, it assigns a project coordinator for it.
- He forms a committee and decides on activities and a budget.
- E.g.: for this school, after completion, the principal prepares a budget and submits it every month / year etc.
- This approved by project coordinator or rejected and sent back to the organization.
- They filter and send the amount appropriately.



LKG, UKG & 1 <sup>ST</sup>	40
2 <sup>nd</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup>	35
6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup>	40
9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup>	50

## **Feedback**

1. The school is maintaining all its functions to an excellent standard.
2. Additionally the structure is well-maintained and the core functions are funded correctly.

## PROJECT – VED VIGNAN

3. It is to be appreciated that the students in that area are getting a good education in English.
4. The teachers are well qualified.
5. Only improvements which are needed are hygiene in the lunch areas.



However, in spite of the great work done by the project it was decided to discontinue it from 2017. The primary reason was that the communication with the on-site coordinators was extremely difficult. In order to stick to our commitment of transparency to our donors, we have decided to disengage.

## PROJECT – NOTUN ALO

Natun Aalo is a project under Sabuj Sangha, an NGO based in Nandakumarpur in the Sundarbans, West Bengal. They are active in 26 villages in the region in areas such as healthcare, community development, women empowerment, disaster management and education. They run a fully functional school called Kishalaya Shishu Shiksha Niketan where 175 local children of poverty stricken homes attend for free. The vision of Sabuj Sangha is to secure a society where all people enjoy equal rights and access to equal opportunities.

The 35 boys supported under the **Natun Aalo** project by Asha attend the same school, and are housed in a dormitory on the school campus. These children have a very vulnerable position in society due to their underprivileged backgrounds. Some children are orphans, the parents of others are not able to provide the necessary care and protection due to poverty. In the Sunderban region, the inhabitants are mainly farmers, struggling to survive in an area prone to natural disaster, or domestic helps and daily labourers who often have to travel to faraway cities to make a living. Therefore, they have no other choice than to let the children fend for themselves at home. This makes them easy targets for sex traffickers and criminal street/ drug gangs. In a large amount of cases, parents are forced to send their children to work at a young age to generate an additional source of income. The children have no supervision of the parents while working in hotels, tea stalls, mines or as domestic servants, and find themselves victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse. They cannot speak up or defend themselves, have no idea about their rights and do not have the chance to achieve even a basic education, growing into adults who are stuck in the same cycle of exploitation.

Sabuj Sangha went in search of children in their community who were subject to these types of abuse, in order to give them the basics that every child deserves: security, care and education.

Under the Natun Aalo project, the children have the possibility to access medical and psychological care at the Rural Health and Training Center (RHTC) run by Sabuj Sangha, and take part in sport and leisure activities on the campus grounds. They attend the classes with the other children from the village and get additional training in practical skills. The aim is to improve their position in society and equip them with possibilities to break the cycle of poverty and abuse.

Besides the basic education, they are trained in awareness regarding hygiene practices and other life skills.



# PROJECT – NOTUN ALO

## Site visit December 2016

Asha has started supporting Natun Aalo only this year, and we are happy to say that in December a successful site visit of three days was completed to assess the first six months.

A lot of structural and qualitative progress has been made at the project, both for our boys and the school. A computer lab was added to the school, and the classrooms have been remodeled for more interactive teaching. Teaching standards have been raised and teachers have had special training to help children with learning challenges such as dyslexia.



The general health of the boys has improved a lot thanks to better quality meals and active engagement in sports and other activities according to their interests, like arts and craft, dancing, acting, cricket and gardening to name a few. They have made a wonderful garden at the school as well.

The children have regular health check - ups at the medical center and I saw them engage actively in sport and other leisure and co-curricular activities as mentioned above. They got two sets of new outfits during the Durga Puja festival in September and are provided with toiletries for daily hygiene.

Daily Meditation and yoga practice has helped to reduce the mental restlessness of the boys, which in turn has helped increase their learning capacities.



Some of them wish to do a practical job when their basic education is finished, others are very enthusiastic students looking to move on to the teacher training programs after finishing school. There is additional administrative support in case some of them want to apply for scholarships for higher education. During the whole visit I witnessed happy and active children, who were making a large effort to converse with me in

English. It was a joy to see them play happily and upon testing basic skills like calculating, reading and writing, find that the progress with relation to age is considerable.

## PROJECT – NOTUN ALO

A very good initiative is that the boys are encouraged to play and do sports with the girls from the school in order to enhance gender equality in the mindset of the future generations.

While speaking to the director of the school and Mr. Arunabha Das (responsible for external relations), I saw a lot of care and passion to help the children and to change society through educating future



generations. Asha is proud to support an organization that takes such a holistic approach in relation to child welfare and the improvement of society.

Elien De Proost and Vijay Ramaswamy

## PROJECT – NABA DIGANTA

Run by Sabuj Sangha, the Naba Diganta program consists of two non-formal rural learning centers in Alipurduar district of West Bengal. Asha Zurich has been supporting this project since June 2016.

### Background

The learning centers are situated in communities that are remote, economically backward and lack employment opportunities. The nearest government school is 6-7 km away. Faced with poverty, the families struggle to support the education of their children. Most are first generation learners and do not have any after-school support or access to reading/learning materials. In the absence of guidance, the children remain vulnerable as parents sometimes send them to work and earn livelihood.



### Working

The centers are run by self-help groups facilitated by Sabuj Sangha. The primary focus of the project is education by assisting the children with everyday school-work. The children come to the centers every morning before going to the school where they are provided with nutritious breakfast. The teachers, recruited from the community itself, spend time and help them with their tutoring needs.

<b>No. of centers</b>	2
<b>No. of children</b>	130 (63 boys + 67 girls)
<b>No. of teachers</b>	4
<b>Standards taught</b>	I-VIII
<b>Timings</b>	0600-0930 Monday-Friday
<b>Catchment area</b>	2-3 km
<b>Annual budget</b>	INR 865,600

## PROJECT – NABA DIGANTA

There are also regular health checkups with every child being given a health card. They are provided with educational materials, dresses, school bags. They like the positive atmosphere and this has kept the attendance numbers high. To encourage the parents to keep sending the children, two center development committees have been formed where parents, village council members and senior students come together to discuss ways of improving the centers.



### Activities

Along with regular studies, the children participate actively in various observation days and festivals namely Independence Day and Durga Puja. This enhances their social skills and teachers provide special emphasis on their communication skills. They are also involved in physical activities like running, jumping etc. that enhance their physical abilities and proper growth. Very recently a picnic was organized which was a big hit among the children.

### Challenges

Unfortunately, one of the centers is suffering from soggy floor which is especially damaging during monsoons.



In addition, although it was initially difficult to convince parents to regularly send the children to the centers or to get them to attend parents-teacher meetings, with some persuasion, they have realized the significance of education.

Vineet Mohan

# FUNDRAISERS

## Chat with Chaat and Nalan's Kitchen – Indian Street Food Café

The Zurich-based Indian street food company Chat with Chaat is Asha's long term partner, which is led by former Asha volunteer Kirtimalini Gadre. In 2016, we found a new partner in another food



brand called Nalan's Kitchen run by our volunteer Damo Thanik. Asha teamed up with both Chat with Chaat and Nalan's Kitchen twice (2. April and 7. May) to host an Indian Street Food Café at Gemeinschaftszentrum Oerlikon. An average of 250 guests attended the events and we received a good share of the profit. The share was counted as part of our marathon fundraising. Additionally Nalan's Kitchen contributed to our Work An Hour program.

## Zurich Marathon

Our marathon fundraising program reached its 5<sup>th</sup> year in 2016 when 61 runners ran for Team Asha, spreading our cause. Out of them 52 ran in Team Run (4 in each team), 3 ran the City Run and 6 ran the full marathon. A training program spanning a few weeks before the race day was organized by our partner Write Your Own Prescription ([www.wyop.ch](http://www.wyop.ch)). A team of Asha volunteers assisted the runners on the race day. We set a fundraising goal of CHF 30,000 which was surpassed by more than CHF 2,000.



## FUNDRAISERS

### Partnership with Google

Asha qualified for the first time for the “Googlers Give” donation drive at Google. These donations are personally given by Google employees and are matched by Google. On December 8, Asha had stands at two Google Zurich offices, spreading awareness of our cause. It turned out to be one of the most successful fundraising events of the year, following Zurich marathon.



### Art exhibition, Swiss Puja, Food stands, tea sales and Assam flood relief

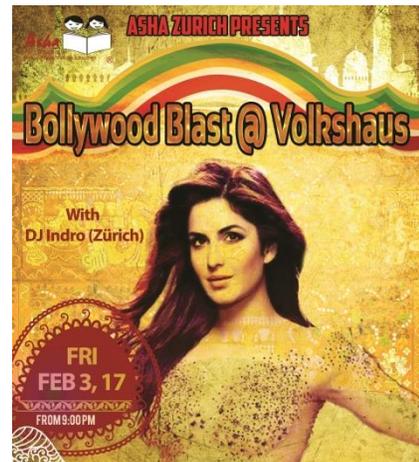
Asha was part of an art exhibition by the Aargau-based artist Brindarica Bose that took place on September 24-25. Profit from sales of one painting was contributed to Asha. A second painting benefitting Asha is still available for sale. Please contact the artist at [brindarica@gmail.com](mailto:brindarica@gmail.com). Asha Zurich also received donations from Swiss Puja’s musical concert Jhchankar ([www.swisspuja.org](http://www.swisspuja.org)), from Nalan’s Kitchen’s profits and from tea sales by Tea Fairy ([www.teafairy.ch](http://www.teafairy.ch)). These three combined earnings were contributed to Asha’s Work An Hour Program for which our project Lok Biradari Prakalp qualified. We have also conducted an online fundraiser via [www.youcaring.com](http://www.youcaring.com) to support flood relief and rehabilitation efforts in Assam. Asha Zurich matched the individual funds raised through it.



## Upcoming fundraisers

### Bollywood Blast @Volkshaus

After a gap of a year we are back with our flagship Bollywood party on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 at Volkshaus. Our partner Nachle will provide a FREE Bollywood dance workshop, following which, our favourite DJ Indro will turn the heat on with his latest mixes. Please book your ticket online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bollywood-blast-volkshaus-tickets-30999566538>.



### Zurich Marathon 2017

We have already registered 10 teams for Zurich Marathon in 2017 which is going to take place on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Please mark the date on your calendar and contact us if you would like to run for Team Asha.

**ZÜRICH MAKES YOU RUN!**  
der lauf durch die schnellste stadt der schweiz.



Information about other fundraisers will be communicated through our mailing list, facebook page and website.

# TREASURER'S NOTE

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The financial year 2016 shows a consolidation in terms of fund raising and disbursements.

<b>Opening Balance as at 1 January 2016</b>	<b>85,984</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>	
• Swiss Current Account	18,938
• Swiss Savings Account	50,599
• US Funds	14,589
• Cash	1,858
<b>Receipts</b>	<b>121,616</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>	
• Swiss Fundraising (Donations, CAYH and Events)	57,397
• Allocation of US Funds	64,219
<b>Project Disbursements</b>	<b>-101,948</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>-4,719</b>
<b>Net Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>14,949</b>
<b>Closing Balance as at 31 December 2016</b>	<b>100,933</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>	
• Swiss Current Account	33,551
• Swiss Savings Account	46,604
• US Funds (in CHF)	19,687
• Paypal	195
• Cash	896

The funds raised slightly fell to CHF 56,277 from CHF 57,663 in 2015. On the other hand, more funds were allocated from the global Asha Treasury pool which is maintained in the USA, and we received CHF 64,219 (vs. CHF 49,507 in 2015). This added up to total receipts of CHF 120,496 which is an increase of approx. 12% compared to the total receipts of 2015 (CHF 107,170). The allocation of global funds is dependent on the utilisation ratio; only chapters with a ratio below 1.5 (balances / average annual disbursement amount of last two years) qualify to receive a share of the global funds.

Disbursements amounted to CHF 101,948 (vs. CHF 113,646 in 2015). We adopted two new projects led by the same project partner in West Bengal. The purpose bound one-time disbursement facility for the relief of natural disaster distress introduced last year was also used this year (Chennai flood relief and Assam flood relief).

The funds utilised for the disbursements originated from our Swiss current account and from the US funds. CHF 4,000 were transferred from the Swiss savings account to the Swiss current account for administrative reasons.

The closing balance amounts to CHF 100,933 (vs. CHF 85,984 in 2015). This covers committed funding for approximately 1.25 years.

## INCOME AND EXPENSES OVERVIEW

The net income acquired in 2016 continued its upwards trend and summed up to CHF 116,897 (vs. CHF 101,906 in 2015). More than half of this (55%) is accounted for by the contribution from the global Asha Treasury pool.

# TREASURER'S NOTE

General and purpose bound one-time donations excluding the funds allocated by the global Asha Treasury pool rose to CHF 14,795 (vs. CHF 13,803 in 2015). Funds received from regular donors through our Charity as Your Hobby (CAYH) program remained with CHF 8,285 at the same level compared to 2015 (CHF 8,228). The Zurich Marathon, which is traditionally the largest fundraiser, was the only event organised in 2016. Its net profit was CHF 26,831 (vs. CHF 27,355 in 2015).

This year we launched the 'Sponsor a child' initiative for the project Boys Town in Tamil Nadu. So far, two boys and a girl have benefited from the CHF 1,499 donations received for this purpose.

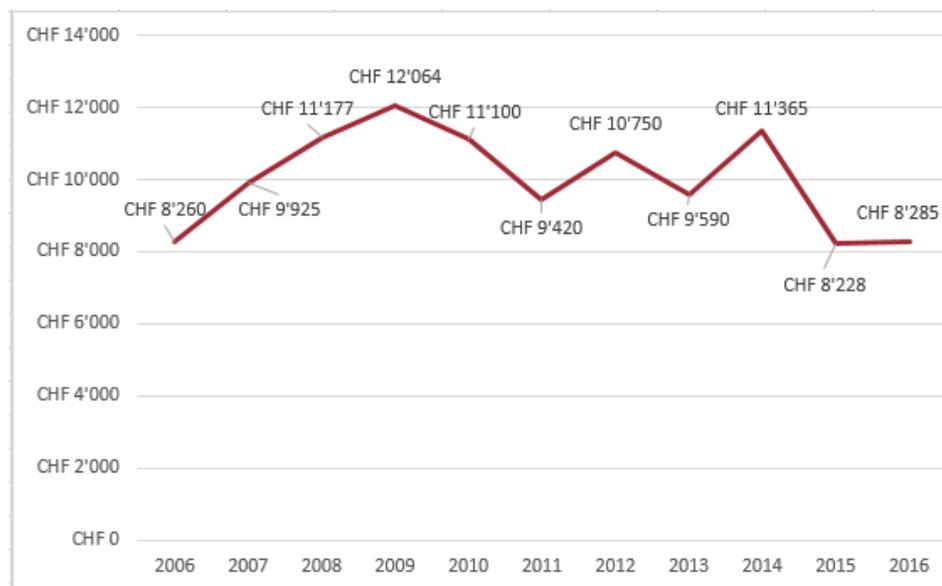
Source of Receipts	Income	Expenses	Profit/Loss
Donations (excluding US Funds)	9'775		9'775
Sponsor a Child (Boys Town)	1'499		1'499
Purpose bound Assam Flood Relief	746		746
Purpose bound Chennai Flood Rel.	2'775		2'775
CAYH	8'285		8'285
Nalan's Kitchen	1'019		1'019
Tea Fairy	858		858
Chat with Chaat	500		500
Allocation of US Funds	64'219		64'219
Zurich Marathon 2016	30'725	3'894	26'831
Bank Interest & Charges	95	340	-245
Admin (paypal, dropbox, rent, various)	149	485	-336
Foreign Exchange Gain	971		971
<b>Total</b>	<b>121'616</b>	<b>4'719</b>	<b>116'897</b>

It is also worth mentioning that Asha was part of Google's Giving Week 2016 and anticipates a handsome sum of more than CHF10,000 . The final amount is yet to be advised.

## CHARITY AS YOUR HOBBY (CAYH) AT A GLANCE

CAYH is a program initiated by Asha Zurich in 2002. Donors participating in this contribute a fixed amount

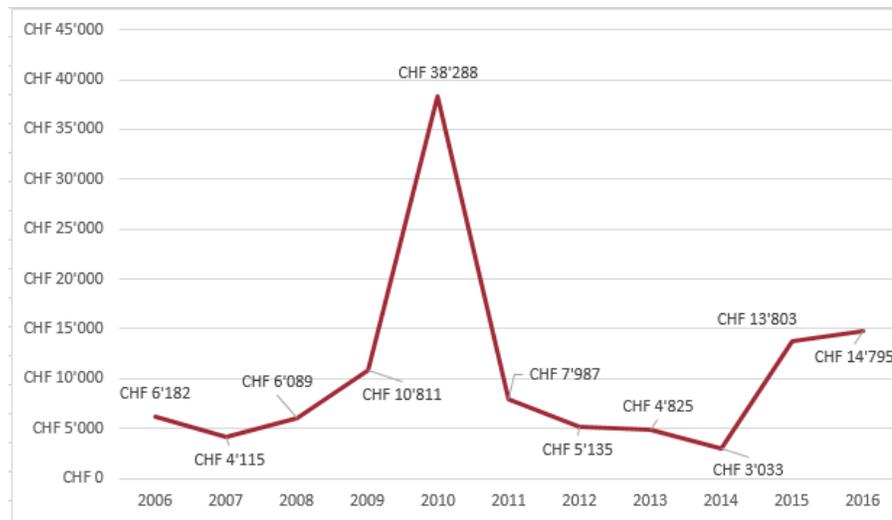
periodically, usually monthly. This ensures a constant inflow of funds and helps us to make our annual budget. CAYH donations remained at the same level as last year and could not recover to the level of previous years.



# TREASURER'S NOTE

## DONATIONS AT A GLANCE

The amount of one time donations also remained stable. Not included in this is the amount collected during Google's Giving Week 2016. This is expected to be received in January 2107.



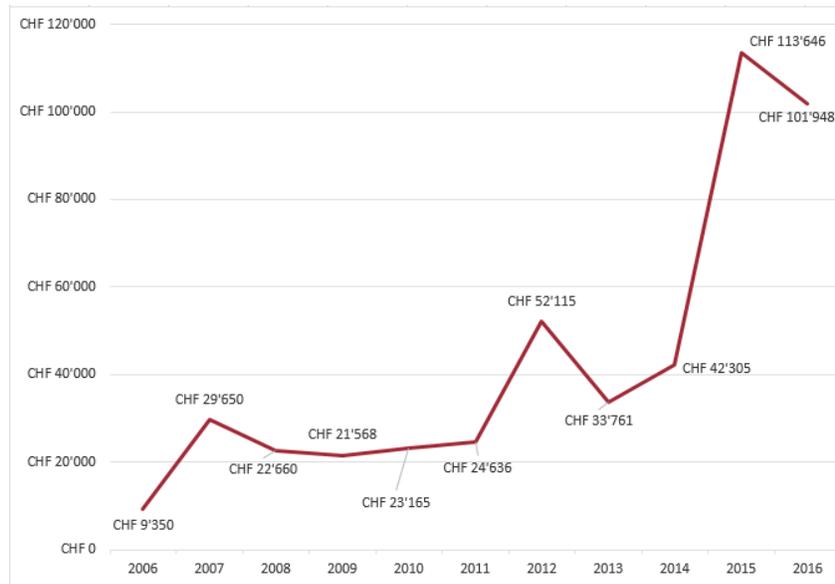
## Notes

- A handsome legacy contributed to the peak in 2010
- CHF3,521 of the one-time donations were actively raised for specific purposes (Chennai flood relief and Assam flood relief).

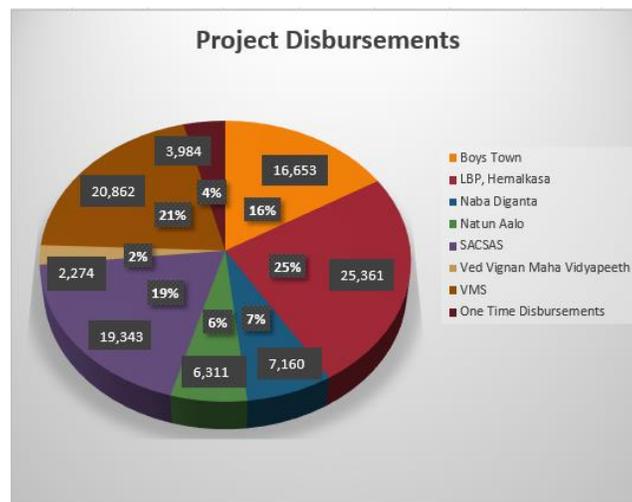
# TREASURER'S NOTE

## PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS AT A GLANCE

Asha Zurich again adopted two new projects in 2016, continued the one time purpose bound disbursements for relief of natural disaster distress and introduced the sponsor a child initiative for Boys Town.



The chart below shows the total disbursement shares of the various projects. The disbursements for the new projects Naba Diganta and Natun Aalo adopted in June represent only half of the budget agreed.



# TREASURER'S NOTE

## **CONCLUSION**

The financial year 2016 was another very stable and positive year. Overall fund receipts increased mainly due to a larger allocation of US funds and donations, whereas CAYH receipts remained at a constant level and disbursements slightly dropped. In addition, we launched the sponsor a child initiative, which is a new feature.

Doris Hofer

## ASHA ZURICH AUDITOR'S REPORT

Uster, 28.02.2017

As auditor, I have examined the financial statements of Asha Zurich, which comprise the balance sheet, operating statement and the income and expense overview, for the financial year ended 31 December 2016.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of Asha Zurich. My responsibility is to perform an examination on these financial statements in accordance with the Swiss Standard. This requires that I plan and perform an examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. The audit consists primarily of inquiries of association personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of association documents as considered appropriate in the circumstances.

Based on my examination, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe the financial statements do not comply with the Swiss law and the associations statutes.

The authorized auditor



Pascal Fischer

# ASHA AND YOU

## Giving to Asha

Asha Zurich team select educational projects for underprivileged children in India through a rigorous review process including a site visit. Funds for the project are raised by direct donation and charity events.



child. Please make a donation!

Bank	UBS Zurich
In favor of	Asha Zurich
Account Number	206-259021.40Q
IBAN	CH29 0020 6206 2590 2140 Q

Even small, regular donations count. Asha encourages its well-wishers to take part in the Charity As Your Hobby program. With as little as CHF 20 per month, one can sponsor

the monthly cost of education, food and accommodation of a

## Vol nteer

### Asha Zurich needs yoU

The core of Asha is its dedicated volunteers who passionately work for the cause without any monetary benefit. They are students and professionals based in and around Zurich who bring their skills and donate their time to professionally manage Asha's projects and make our fundraising events successful. Asha Zurich is also very diverse, with volunteers coming from many different countries with a significant presence of female volunteers. Would you like to join Asha and be a part of the change? Then contact us today.

### **Asha Zurich**

c/o Dr. Indranil Bhattacharya

Weidmannstrasse 14, 8046 Zürich

Tel: +41(0)767703517

E-Mail: info@asha-zurich.ch