



# ASHA ZURICH ANNUAL REPORT

2013

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE	1
PRESIDENT'S NOTE	2
SECRETARY'S NOTE	3
PROJECTS	
AKSHARDEEP	4
LOK BIRADRI PRAKALP	6
PALAS	8
SACSAS	10
FUNDRAISERS	
SPANDAN- NOTES OF HOPE	12
MARATHON	14
MANTRA AND MEDITATION CONCERT	16
MAKAIBARI	16
CHAT WITH CHAAT	17
HENNA AT IAGZ VASANT UTSAV	17
DONATE YOUR BIRTHDAY TO CHARITY	17
DIWALI GALA AND CHRITMAS MARKET	17
ASHA ZURICH'S UPCOMING EVENT 2014	18
NEW VOLUNTEERS	19
FINANCIAL REPORT	20
CONTACT US	23

## EDITOR'S NOTE

“Despair, Frustration and even Anger!” As members of the Indian Diaspora living here in Switzerland, we often experience these emotions when we think of the extreme poverty, lack of education and other consequent problems existing in our country. A lot of us constantly bemoan the fact that “Nothing changes!” without realizing that “change” is a responsibility that belongs to all of us.

At Asha Zürich, we believe that education is a critical element of change. Since 2002, volunteers at Asha Zürich chapter have been working selflessly and for free to strive to facilitate this change through fund-raising efforts. These funds are disbursed to four educational projects in India, three of which are located in remote, rural areas where no educational facilities are available from the government.

Asha Zürich has been doing this for 12 years, and 2013 was no different! There were several fund-raising activities organized this year, through which CHF 33,761 was funded to our 4 projects. Food stalls, collaboration with entrepreneurs and artists who contributed a share of their profits and of course, our annual events: Spandan and Zürich marathon. Although it was only the second time that we participated in the Zürich Marathon, our participation more than doubled from the previous year (8 in 2012 to 22 in 2013) and consequently, more than tripled the amount of funds raised. Our 2013 Annual charity concert – “Spandan – Notes of Hope” was also a great success. Ustad Shafqat Ali Khan from Pakistan, performed along with noted Swiss Sitar player Hans Wettstein and mesmerized an audience of about 120 people at the Gemeinschaftszentrum Affoltern with Hindustani-Classical and Sufi music.

On a personal note, my ride with Asha began in 2012 as I came in contact with two ‘veteran’ volunteers of Asha Zürich, Indranil Bhattacharya and Kirtimalini Gadre. As I helped at the Weltmarkt fund-raisers and the Spandan concerts and attended the monthly meetings, I came into contact with more volunteers. The selflessness, dedication, commitment and dynamism displayed by Asha-Zürich volunteers here, in spite of their busy professional lives, and by the ones working in the far-flung, remote regions in India is truly inspiring. I realized that the frustration I feel about the state of my country could only be dealt with through contributing to “change”, in whatever small way I can. I feel proud to be associated with Asha and its motto: to “catalyze a socio-economic change in India through education”.

Any regrets? Only one, I should have joined Asha Zürich several years ago!

- Neera Mallick

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Hope you all had a great start into 2014!

Asha for Education, Zürich has successfully entered into its 12th year. Congratulations!! Over the years, the people of Switzerland, in particular in and around Zurich, have placed a good amount of trust and responsibility on us. It is our duty to maintain this trust and carry forward Asha's mission with utmost care. Asha Zurich's main objective is to provide education to the underprivileged children in India. However, we are also able to create employment through this mission. In 2013, Asha Zurich supported the education of 1000 children. If one teacher is required for the effective education of every 20 children, then Asha Zurich can proudly declare that it has provided funds to employ 50 teachers.

Asha Zurich supported 4 projects this year. 3 of these were in tribal areas in the states of Maharashtra and Manipur, and one was in the Pune city of Maharashtra. In order to generate finances for these projects, 2013 saw a diverse range of fundraising activities.

Let me tell you about the two major fundraisers:

1. Zurich Marathon: In 2012, when we started this fundraiser, we had 8 runners. In 2013, we had 22 runners and it turned to be an absolutely grand fundraiser. I expect in 2014, there will be even more friends of Asha running under the banner – "Let us Run to Educate."
2. Spandan: A fundraising concert which was started in 2012, continued in 2013. The highlight was Sufi singing by famous Pakistani singer Shafqat Ali Khan. The event, besides providing music lovers in Zurich a unique opportunity to enjoy soulful classical music, proved to be a very successful fundraiser. Moreover, it set an example of integration - where a Pakistani singer sang to raise funds for Indian children by performing in Switzerland.

This year CHF **33,761** was funded to our 4 projects. I am happy to inform that the funds raised in 2013 were enough to support all our projects.

All this would not have been possible without the whole-hearted support of all our well-wishers and donors. I thank you all.

Finally, the core of this organization is volunteerism. The incredible spirit of its selfless and dedicated volunteers and their friends has helped Asha to attain its goal. I hope that 2014 will be another exciting year. I wish you all a great year ahead. Let us keep the Asha spirit alive...

-Indranil Bhattacharya



## SECRETARY'S NOTE



*"Be the change that you wish to see in the world."*

— Mahatma Gandhi

At Asha Zurich we realize these undying words of Gandhi every second as we strive to "catalyze a socio-economic change in India through education". The past year was no different as our dedicated team of volunteers scaled new heights. At the beginning of the year in our general body meeting, we made a projection of the funds to be raised in 2013 through various events. To our pleasant surprise, we surpassed the projection and raised more than we spent for our projects and administrative purposes. We owe it all to our dedicated volunteers, generous donors and warm-hearted well-wishers.

Through our fund-raising events such as Spandan, Zürich Marathon and Weltmarkt food stalls, we not only raised funds for our projects, but have also got a number of new people engaged to our cause. We have made alliances with a premium tea estate in India (Makaibari tea estate in Darjeeling), a top-class Indian restaurant in Zurich, a number of Zurich-based entrepreneurs, the Indian embassy at Bern, University of Zurich and a host of non-profit organizations such as Swiss-India Chamber of Commerce, Indian Association of Zurich, Greater Zurich and Baden etc. In addition, we have strongly increased our engagement with the public via social media. Through our very active Facebook and Twitter pages, we have been able to keep our well-wishers up-to-date of our activities. All of these have contributed to our success.

Overall, it was an excellent year for Asha that led to very good fundraising, helped raise awareness of our cause, earned us new volunteers, gifted us with new donors and enabled us to form alliances with new partners.

Once again, I would like to thank all of you that have been with us and hope to see you on board again in 2014.

-Pratyush Das Kanungo

## PROJECT- AKARSHDEEP

**AKSHARDEEP** as the name suggests, is an educational program initiated by **Swadhar**. Swadhar is a registered non-government organization, established in Pune, Maharashtra in 1995, for the development of women and children through activities like counselling centers, family life education and alternative education programs. In **1998**, Swadhar initiated an education program near **Pune, Maharashtra** to provide education to children coming from families of migrant laborers and sex workers. Akshardeep was successful in motivating a lot of families to start sending their children to such schools.

**The hallmark of Akshardeep** is providing Non-Formal Education (NFE) in the community where the children live and helps them to rise up to a threshold before enrolling them in the government schools. It also focuses on providing support classes to the children enrolled in government schools to prevent dropouts. Thirdly, they try to motivate the families of under-privileged children to enroll the child into regular schools. The teachers come from the same community and the timings and the teaching methods are innovative and sufficiently flexible so as to cater to the educational needs of children coming from varying backgrounds of poverty, deprivation, difficult social situations or families.

As in previous years, **several initiatives were taken by the educational team** to reach and advance the aforementioned goals, some of which are given below:

### Preparation of educational tools

The academic year concluded in April, towards the end of which the teachers and supervisors prepared new educational tools and repaired old ones.

### Anti - Child Labour day

On Anti-Child Labour day, Akshardeep children represented Swadhar at Indradhanushya Environmental center and participated in the program organized by the network-ARC (Action for Rights of Child), and presented their demands to the labour office.

### Survey of potential school children and their admission

The new academic year started in June with a survey in the 6 communities of Bibavewadi where it was most needed and covered around 4232 children; the result of which was as follows:

Children covered in survey	Out of school children to be admitted into schools or who could join bridge class	Children who could come to Balwadi	Children who could come to support class	Children who did not need any support
4232	68	206	1423	2535

As depicted in the above table, only 68 children were still out of school primarily due to reasons like distance from the school (having no free and suitable transportation facility) or having to take care of their siblings. The grass root staff worked hard to overcome these obstacles and admitted 26 children into formal municipal corporation schools in Bibavewadi.

## PROJECT- AKARSHDEEP

On 31. July, **9 support classes, 1 bridge class and 2 kindergartens (Balwadi)**, comprising of **251 children** in all, started work in the new academic year.

### Training for supervisors

A one day training session for supervisors was conducted on 9. June. Additionally, on 19. June a half- day training session was organized about corporal punishment by Abhay Abhiyan (An initiative which works against corporal punishment). In the second half, training regarding time management was given by the field coordinator and supervisor.

### Refresher Training for Teachers

From 23. July – 10. August an internal refresher training for teachers of support classes as well as kindergartens (Balwadi) was conducted by the school's senior staff.

In addition to the above activities, a thrust in the direction of **raising awareness of the RTE Act** was taken by Akshardeep, Swadhar through the following measures

As the RTE act is in place and this is the final year for complying with all necessary provisions of this act, Akshardeep, Swadhar felt the need of generating awareness about this act in the communities. Hence, various awareness sessions in the community were conducted from Oct 2013 onwards. These were conducted in association with the Pune based network working for child rights-ARC, Action for the Rights of Child with the aim of reaching out to many other communities.

A survey was conducted in the Gandhinagar area to identify the total no. of children in the 6 to 14 age group going to municipal school. There were 194 such children of which 76 children were finding it difficult to reach school or were finding difficulty in understanding the syllabus in the school. Akshardeep plans to counsel their parents regarding all these issues on a regular basis.

A quarterly Newsletter is also being published now regarding RTE as another medium of creating awareness. This newsletter is very simple so that people in the communities can easily read and understand it and can also be accessed online on the website [www.rtemaharashtra.org](http://www.rtemaharashtra.org) under the heading ARC.

Asha Zürich has supported Akshardeep for over 10 years and helped it grow, resulting in hundred's of students entering mainstream schools and continuing there. The fact that it is located in one of India's fast growing cities, Pune, has immensely helped their funding situation. Many donors like Tech Mahindra, Dorabjee Tata fund, Unicef, GiveIndia etc, are now investing time and funds into Akshardeep. This goodwill has put Akshardeep in a secure position financially and socially, ensuring that they will be able to continue working on their goal to educate underprivileged children for many years to come. With having provided all the necessary arms to Akshardeep, to continue their mission, it is time to shift our focus on other organizations in the interior and rural areas, which aren't as fortunate with funds. We hope to build another success story like Akshardeep.

- Akshata Roy

# PROJECT- LOK BIRADRI PRAKALP

The project **LOK BIRADARI PRAKALP (LBP)** was started by Dr. Prakash and his wife Mandakini Amte in 1973 in the forests of the very remote village of Hemalkasa, located between Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh state. Far away from civilization, the region is inhabited by the Madia Gond tribe along with wild animals such as leopards, brown bears and venomous snakes. In recent years, the village and the surrounding forest areas have seen the rise of ultra-Left rebels (Naxalites) which has often led to deadly clashes between them and paramilitary forces. However on the campus of LBP, no incidence of violence was ever reported. The couple first opened a hospital (1973) to treat the tribals for free, and subsequently a residential school (1976) called Ashram Shala for teaching the tribal children free of cost, and later an animal orphanage for the wounded wild animals they rescued from the forest.

## The School: Ashram Shala

The entire infrastructure including the Ashram Shala was built from financial aid from Swiss-Aid and Oxfam. The school serves students from 600 neighboring villages. The class rooms are spacious, each of which can accommodate about 40 students. Apart from the main class rooms, the school also has a library, a newly built science room, clean toilets, a computer laboratory and a playground.



## The Teaching Methods

Some very innovative teaching methods are implemented at the school. Special bridge classes are organized at kindergarten (Balwadi) for Madia students, in which they are taught Marathi (the state language) to prepare them for the transition to class 1 (six years of age).

Even though the school is Marathi medium, English is being taught already from Class 1. Languages are taught in an activity-based, creative manner and so is Maths. Stairs are labeled with objects with their numbers increasing from 1 to 10 and metric prefixes such as milli-, centi-, etc, thus introducing young students to the number system and the Metric system. To teach addition and subtraction, a number line is painted on the wall of the school balcony.

## Food and Accommodation for Students

Students are housed in spacious dormitory rooms with 5-10 beds each. There are separate dormitories for boys and girls. Healthy food is served in the canteen three times a day.

## Other Activities

The library has an impressive collection of books on a range of topics and a number of indoor and board games. According to the Librarian Jayashree Talpade, the enthusiasm the students have for reading is truly impressive. The science room is for learning by fun, such as building models from scrap or setting up experiments demonstrating basic scientific principles.



## PROJECT- LOK BIRADRI PRAKALP

Since the beginning, the partnership between LBP and Asha Zurich has been going very well. The project coordinator Aniket Amte (son of Dr. Prakash Amte) sends regular updates, and a number of volunteers from Asha Zurich have visited the project site. In 2010, it was visited by Kirtimalini Gadre and Indranil Bhattacharya for funding assessment; in 2012, by Lena Steiner and most recently, in early 2014 by Pratyush Das Kanungo (Prat).

Pratyush Das Kanungo (Prat) has made the following observations, based on his Site-visit-  
Ashram Shala and Asha Zurich's Commitment

By the end of 2013, Ashram Shala had 650 students in total who are given free education from kindergarten up to high school. For 480 students (40 per class, excluding the kindergarten), the school receives government funding. Expenses for the rest are covered from external sponsors. Since 2011, Asha Zurich has been sponsoring 100 of them with an annual contribution of around SFr. 6,100.00 (2013). This money is spent in providing:

- Uniforms, books and other stationary items for the students.
- Sports equipment.
- Healthy food three times a day.
- Accommodation in a student dormitory.

### Achievements in 2013

Even though most of the students enrolled in the school are first generation learners, they do very well in school. A good number of them go for higher education as well, while some make careers in sports. Some of the major achievements of 2013 are:

- 90% students passed the secondary examination (SSC) of Maharashtra state board.
- 90% students passed the higher secondary examination (HSC) of Maharashtra state board.
- One got admitted to electrical engineering and one to agricultural engineering in Pune.
- 12 children took part in state level athletics competitions.

### Interviews with Students

He made short interviews with a number of students, and mainly asked them about their experience of living and studying on campus and their career aspirations. All of them seemed to be very happy to be there. A few answers are listed in the table below.

Name	Grade/Class	Interest	Career Ambition
Meena	IX	Math	Police
Sunitha	XI	Marathi	Soldier
Rakesh	X	English, Marathi, Hindi	Engineer
Manoj	VII	Math	Doctor

The project coordinator Aniket, the students and the teachers were all very happy about Asha's support for the school. To conclude, Prat says; "Amidst the ongoing violence in the area, the campus of LBP offers a sanctuary of peace where constructive ideas are instilled in young minds. I think that Asha Zurich should continue to fund this project."

- Pratyush Das Kanungo and Ankita Singhal

## PROJECT- PALAS

**PALAS** is one of the oldest projects in Asha Zurich chapter, supported since 2005. Vishwa Mandal Sevashram opened schools under the VMS-Palash group, with the help of villagers, at places where there was no government (Zila Parishad) school.

### Teaching Program

The teachers are selected from the local community and children from 5 -12 years of age are encouraged to enroll. Non-formal education is provided with an emphasis on teaching with learning aids like charts, action songs and poems. Basic Mathematics, Marathi and English are taught.

Classes are divided into groups and are monitored by an assigned supervisor. The supervisor checks the attendance of students, conducts exams and does random visits. Project coordinators, **Brother Joseph and Father Assis** overlook the reports and all activities of supervisors and teachers. Teachers are paid a monthly salary in the magnitude of Rs.1000-1500 plus some travel expenses. Children are not charged any fee. With the help of RTE (Right to Education) act, VMS-Palas is integrating children in the nearby government schools.

### Triumphs of 2013

In 2013, classes were held in as many as 48 different villages, with 981 children under the guidance of about 27 teachers and 3 supervisors. Since the basic aim of these classes is the eventual integration of these children into formal education, the educational team of Palas is proud to state that as many as 19 children took this leap of faith - from non-formal to formal education this year to attend proper schools in neighboring towns. In addition to that, 12 boys were admitted into the Vishwa Mandal Boarding and 9 girls into the Anand Sadan Boarding at Shirpur. Furthermore, 18 new classes were started this year.

### Contribution by parents

An average monthly contribution of Rs.5 per child in cash or kind (farm products) was made by the parents to the teachers. Total amount collected from January to June = INR. 7700.00

In a way it speaks for itself, making explicit that the parents want their children to get educated and live a dignified life.

### Teachers' efforts

The teachers and project coordinators have moved further into the interiors, where some teachers have to walk 12 to 16 km every day. No other Zila Parishad school or organization has yet reached there. In spite of miles of walking, the teachers collect the children and teach them with great interest, commitment and dedication. Through these projects, the children have improved a lot in Marathi, Maths and English and moreover, have gained self-confidence. **The oldest teacher at Palas is Tarasing Chaitram Pawara**, who has been with Palas since the last 20 years. Despite being a polio patient, he is totally committed and reliable. He shows keen interest in learning new ideas, methods and implementing them in the classes. In the past few years, more than 20 of his

## PROJECT- PALAS

students have graduated onto the formal system of education, and one of them has become a teacher in a government school.

**Another success story** is that of **Ravindra Harsing Pawara**, who studied at Palas, at Bomlepada and is now doing a doctorate in Zoology from Amalner in Maharashtra.



### **Ravindra Harsing Pawara**

Ravindra studied from June, 1991 to May, 1994 in our Palas class and thereafter was admitted in Class 5<sup>th</sup> in June 1994 in Rohini D.R.K school.

In 1999, Ravindra cleared his 10<sup>th</sup> grade with 64% and was followed by securing 46% in his grade 12<sup>th</sup> in field of science. He further went on to graduate from Shirpur with 58% and completed his post-graduation in Amalner with 68%. Now he is pursuing his doctorate studies from North Maharashtra University in Zoology.

Ravindra says, *“Whatever we are today it is because of Palas and our committed and beloved Michael Guruji. If many other villages were to have dedicated teachers like him, many more Adivasi children would now have been shining examples. The teachers of Palas go where no one dares to go”.*

The site visit for 2013 was carried out in December by Mr. Anup Mehta. He visited few schools and also met with the teachers, supervisors and students. He has detailed his findings in the site visit report, which is available on the Asha website.

The educational team at Palas is grateful to Asha Zürich and hopes for continuing support to continue the good work done so far. They would also appreciate some help in fulfilling some additional goals such as increasing the number of teachers and supervisors by 10 percent, celebrating Children’s Day, arranging uniforms for children, organizing excursions for teachers to cosmopolitan cities nearby to increase their exposure and lastly, to set up libraries in each village which may cost INR. 2000.00.

- Varsha Gandhi

## PROJECT- SACSAS

**SACSAS ACADEMY** is a secular organization striving to provide quality education to children in the remote villages in Manipur.

SACSAS Academy, New Dampi Branch in Manipur started its operations in 2009 with Asha Houston acting as the steward for this Project. The entire school building construction at New Dampi was sponsored by Mr. Martin H. from London. Asha Zurich became a part of the project in 2010 to fund 50% of the recurring costs comprising of the salary of the teachers, study tools, uniforms for students, text books, school maintenance and scholarships.

This school in New Dampi village caters to 9 surrounding villages and has a strength of 165 students who study in classes from pre-nursery to class VI and is the biggest among all the schools operated by SACSAS.

### Functioning of the school

Mr. SurjitKumar, the on-ground coordinator of the SACSAS Academy has been coordinating all the five schools including the new one at New Dampi. 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 including the one in New Dampi is taken up by the local people. 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 to build up the spirit of self-governance and sense of responsibility in the minds of parents and villagers for their children's education.

New Dampi School has appointed a School Committee, which comprises of the village king or any family member of the king and some parents of the children of New Dampi village and surrounding villages. The Committee charges a nominal monthly fee of 5-10 INR from the parents of the children for the payment of the watchman's services. 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 is addressed by running a charitable hospital named "National Charitable Hospital" over the last five 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 in a way that children passing out of the SACSAS academy can directly enter mainstream schools. For 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 really a source of motivation and entertainment for the kids in the area with winning students given books as prizes. It conducts regular meetings with parents of students and the guardian committee. This is essential to address the problems faced by kids and also brings about a sense of responsibility in the minds of the villagers where the school operates.



# PROJECT- SACSAS

## Site Visit in 2012 and School Functioning Video (2013)

Site visit was done in August, 2012 after 2 years of Asha-Zurich's involvement in the project by Ms. Romita Dutta, who visited the school during her vacation to India.

To quote her, *"I was touched by the simplicity, sincerity and the level of commitment of this project. The school is functioning very well. It is bringing an educational awareness amongst the villagers. The students have good discipline and they are well motivated. The school is providing an excellent opportunity for these very poor children and it is run professionally."*

She detailed her findings in the report she shared with us, which is available on the Asha website.



## Students and Teachers Statistics

2011- **164** students, **7** teachers (Including Head Master and Assistant Teachers)

2012- **165** students, **7** teachers (Including Head Master and Assistant Teachers)

2013- **162** students (initially), **2** dropouts, **7** teachers (Including Head Master and Assistant Teachers)

**6** students passed out of SACSAS Academy from New-Dampi Village and will be joining the nearest Government school.

## Budget proposal for 2014 and Future Proposal

Budget proposal for the academic year 2014 -> **INR 5,79,288.00**

Asha Zurich's share -> **INR 3,29,964.00** (50% of total cost + Scholarship for 14 students)

Asha Huston's SACSAS Project co-ordinator has requested Asha Zurich to manage two additional projects from SACSAS Academy for two years as Asha Huston is dormant at the moment.

This is under discussion at the moment.

- Sujit Acharya

### SPANDAN- NOTES OF HOPE

On 22. September, Asha Zurich's charity concert "Spandan – Notes of Hope" took place at the auditorium of the community center (Gemeinschaftszentrum) of Affoltern in Zurich.



The star attraction of the concert was the famous Pakistani Sufi singer, Ustad Shafqat Ali Khan who flew all the way from Lahore to Switzerland. Ustadji was accompanied by Hares Khan on the Harmonium, Yamin Chowdhury on the Tabla, and Hans Wettstein on the Tanpura. The magical voice of the Ustad, in sync with the ensemble, mesmerized an audience of about one hundred and twenty people for more than one and a half hour. Before Shafqat Ali took the stage, Hans Wettstein entertained the audience with his Sitar recitals of classical Indian Ragas.

The concert was attended by the Deputy Chief of Mission of Indian Embassy at Bern, Dr. Prasad, as well as a number of Zurich based artists of Indian classical dance and music. During the break, the audiences were provided with a South Indian Apéro which was entirely sponsored by Krishna's Indian Vegetarian Restaurant.

Asha Zurich's Spandan team planned and smoothly executed the entire event within only two and a half months. As the overall coordinator, I got full support from my fellow volunteers who walked the extra mile whenever needed. These included arrangements for the artists and the auditorium, negotiation with the sponsors, and spreading the word about the event. Through social networks, personal interactions and media advertisements, we were able to reach out to the lovers of Indian classical music beyond the Zurich-based Indian diaspora. This was reflected in the excellent feedback about the event that we received from our multi-cultural audience.

## FUND-RAISERS



It was Asha's fourth charity concert, and the second one in a row following Spandan in 2012. We raised close to 9,000 CHF in profit through generous personal as well as business sponsorships for the concert. This enabled us to cover the cost of two of our projects.

Organizing an event like Spandan strengthens team spirit and improves the public relations of Asha. We not only raise funds for our projects, but also popularize the beautiful Indian classical music in Europe. We hope to continue organizing such events in the coming years.

-Pratyush Das Kanungo

## FUND-RAISERS

### MARATHON



**“Let Us Run to Educate”** was the motto as 22 highly committed and determined runners from Asha Zürich participated in the Zürich marathon on 7. April to raise money for educational projects in India.

It was our first Fundraiser of the year and turned out to be our most successful fund-raising activity for the year. The profiles of the runners were publicized through Facebook and a special website, where every runner got his or her fundraising profile. This was then used by them to persuade their friends, colleagues and families to donate to Asha by “sponsoring” their runs. The yellow shirts of Team Asha took over the Zurich city and canton on the day of the event and made an excellent public impression about running for a cause.

The event was initiated in 2012 by Tulika Aggarwal and Rahul Lahoti, taking inspiration from other Marathon programs run by other Asha chapters in USA under the Team Asha umbrella. In 2012, 8 runners in 2 teams participated in the Zürich Marathon but the motivation to run for a cause was so great that in just one year the number of runners almost tripled to 22 in 2013. Swati Barve and Imran Fanswala ran full marathons and the other runners ran in 5 teams for 4, 9.7, 10.8 and 17.7 kilometers respectively. The youngest runner, Raghav Maheshwari was only 14 years old then, but he ran 17.7 km contributing about CHF 1000 largely through donations from his peers at school.

Additionally, Tulika ran the marathon in Seattle to raise funds for Asha Zürich. This year with 6 teams already registered, the Asha Zürich Marathon is expected to be a major contributor in 2014 towards the funding of Asha Zürich projects.





## FUND-RAISERS

Asha Zurich would like to thank the runners of 2013 : Akshata, Anuj, Ankita, Indranil (Team 1), Varsha, Rakhi, Nitesh, Anindya (Team 2), Rajesh, Luca, Daniel, Raghav (Team3), Madhubrata, Pradeep, Aditi, Atit (Team 4), Doris, Mitra, Abhinav, Elisabeth (Team 5) and Imran and Swati (full marathon).

What motivates these runners to undergo hardcore training and run in the mostly unpredictable and inhospitable April weather? Let us hear from the runners themselves:

*Tulika : 'During my association with the program, I have met so many volunteers who start with saying they can't even run a kilometer but then as time progresses, I see them run 4 - 10 - 17 - 26 or even 42 km just inspired by fellow runners and in the spirit of the cause. And we soon realize that the biggest beneficiary in the program is the runners. We get to participate in an endurance sport, train with very like-minded people, get the satisfaction of crossing the finish line, and as if that was not enough, the excitement continues as our friends and family donate to support our run.'*

*Swati Barve: 'Why Zurich Marathon? I am a Run-o-holic and I guess my way of thinking is that if I'm going to be doing that then it would be morally incorrect not to use that same passion and that same drive to try do a little bit of good in the greater world. A good cause makes it all worth it!'*

*Akshata: 'Running has never really been my thing. The only time I actually 'ran' in the past was when I was late for a bus or train! This is my first attempt to be a part of a marathon. Running for a cause one believes in makes the process more meaningful.'*

*Aditi Maheshwari: 'I like running and running for a noble cause motivates me further. If running 10.8 kms can help me raise at least 500 Swiss francs, then why not?'*

*Madhubrata: 'Knowing that my contribution will bring about a smile on faces of children who deserve it so much, is a satisfying feeling.'*

*Atit Patel: 'I never thought that I would take running so seriously and even make an attempt to complete a half marathon. Recently, I have just come across about ASHA Education who is actively working for the betterment of underprivileged children in India.'*

*Doris Hofer: 'As I have been travelling to India regularly for 18 years I am well aware what the situation there is. Funds are needed for educational projects, and as all other Ashaites, I try my best to raise these.'*

And lastly, our youngest runner

*Raghav Maheshwari: 'I am a 14 year-old student, and I have the privilege to study at the Zurich International School. I am a member of the cross-country team in school, and it is my passion for running that led me to Asha and the Zurich Marathon team event. Although I had never run 17.7 km, it was a challenge that I took to help Asha and all it stands for. It was my first year in taking part in this event, but I am certain that I will return next year, to help unprivileged children of my age in India receive an education.'*

Almost all the runners who participate once, like Raghav, are motivated to run again ---"Run to Educate!"

## FUND-RAISERS

Smaller, albeit significant contributions to our yearly budget requirement were made through various collaborations and some very creative ideas!

### MANTRA AND MEDITATION CONCERT

After Asha Zürich Spandan concert held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, we were contacted by a number of artists willing to collaborate with Asha and one such collaboration materialized on 30<sup>th</sup> November at Volkshaus Zürich. Talented musicians from Germany, Nitinshri and Shanti performed a **Mantra and Meditation Concert** on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 at Volkshaus Blauer Saal. Their music includes beautifully crafted symphonies and heavenly chants that transformed the small, intimate audience into a profoundly meditative mood and made them experience the joy of inner peace and the beauty, grace, power and bliss of sacred mantras. They also sold copies of their Mantra and meditation album "Saral". Part of the sales proceedings was donated to Asha Zurich.

The experience and the motivation behind it, in their own words:

Shri Nelson Mandela has said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Following the same line, Asha Zurich and its volunteers are inspiration to all of us. We feel privileged and honored to get into collaboration with Asha Zürich."

-Nitinshri & Shanti

### MAKAIBARI

This initiative is the brainchild of one of our most dedicated volunteers, "Tea -fairy ", as she likes to call herself, Doris Hofer. Doris Hofer has been participating in Asha Zurich's Charity As Your Hobby program for several years, but felt that donating was too anonymous and remote, and wanted to contribute more actively towards the cause. She has been travelling to India for 18 years, and on a recent trip to Darjeeling, the fragrance of Makaibari Tea inspired her to come up with a unique, creative fundraising idea.

As Doris says, "After having had a cup of tea at the Makaibari offices I was greeted by Rajah Banerjee. During the conversation, I realized that the MakaiBari Tea Estate really is a very unique enterprise. Rajah follows Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic methods and a form of integrated forest management called permaculture. Besides this, Rajah had an indubitable streak of altruism, which resulted in me suggesting an Asha-Makaibari partnership wherein the profit generated from the Makaibari tea sold by Asha goes entirely to Asha Zürich. Since then I have sold the delicious Makaibari tea to colleagues and friends and at the market. I have also established contacts with restaurants and tea boutiques and received some very promising responses."

"The Asha-Makaibari partnership shows two things: Firstly, you cannot lose anything by asking someone to contribute to charity in one or the other way, but you open yourself chances for many possibilities. Secondly, there are countless ways to raise funds. Choosing one which appeals to you and taking responsibility for it is quite rewarding." For more details on this initiative, please go to [www.teafairy.ch](http://www.teafairy.ch)

-Doris Hofer

## FUND-RAISERS

### CHAT WITH CHAAT

Fund-raising through selling food has been one of Asha Zürich's successful initiatives since its conception, and the year 2013 was no exception either. As many as 5 food stands were organized this year, and food ranging from South-Indian Dosa, Mumbai street food, Delhi Chat and traditional styles of Swiss cakes were sold at these stalls.

The first stall was organised for the **Vasant Utsav of Indian Association of Greater Zurich** on 16. March. The stand offered Dosa prepared by Laxmi and Seema who were assisted by a number of Asha volunteers. The stand was a financial success and spread awareness amongst the Indian diaspora attending the event.

As in previous years, Asha Zurich also had a presence at the September and October Weltmarkt at Marktplatz Oerlikon. They were led by Kirtimalini Gadre and Doris Hofer respectively. Grilled Indian style sandwiches, Gajar Halwa and Makaibari tea were sold at the first one and an astonishing assortment of homemade cakes by Doris at the second one.

In addition, Asha made two other food stands, both led by Kirti, at the Krishna temple (ISKCON) of Zurich on the occasion of Janmashtami on 28. August and at an Indian classical music concert at Rietberg Museum on 9. September.

### HENNA AT IAGZ VASANT UTSAV

On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Asha organized a Henna stand at the Vasant Utsav of Indian Association of Greater Zurich. Our creative head Shalmali Patkar was the "Mehandi- waali" and was flocked by women and little girls all afternoon. The stand was a success and all proceeds were donated to Asha.

### DONATE YOUR BIRTHDAY TO CHARITY

Using Charity Birthday, a web portal, where you can donate your birthday to charity, one of our volunteers, Shalmali Patkar raised approximately SFr. 400 on her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday! We from Asha Zurich wish her very best for the future and for her noble cause.

### DIWALI GALA AND CHRISTMAS MARKET

On the 17. November Smita Satish and Renu Simek had their stands for cards and gift items at the Diwali Gala organized by Indian Association of Greater Zurich at Kongresshaus Zurich. They donated part of the profit to Asha.

Asha collaborated with Chime Orpa to run her stand at the Christmas market at Zurich's Niederdorf on the 7. December funds were raised by selling Makaibari tea and gift items from Renu Simek. Renu also sponsored 40 Christmas cards for Asha, which were sold at 3 CHF apiece.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PLANNED EVENTS OF 2014

- Cooking Course at Malabar Indian Restaurant
- Zurich Marathon
- Asha Disco
- Weltmarkt
- Chat with Chaat
- Cultural Show
- Christmas Dinner

Event dates and locations will be announced at least a week prior to the event on our website and Facebook page. Stay tuned!



# VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL

## NEW VOLUNTEERS

Another achievement of 2013 was an increase in our volunteer base. Monthly meetings, which were attended by 8-10 people at the beginning of the year, progressively grew in attendance to 18-20 people towards the end of the year. The new volunteers brought with them a new zeal, fresh ideas and a refreshing enthusiasm. We would like to welcome all of them and hope for the continuing growth of our “Asha Family”, as we like to call it, in the coming years as well.

What motivates them to join Asha and what do they like about volunteering for Asha?  
In the words of some of our most active new recruits of 2013:

### **Susanne Wein**

*“My name is Susanne Wein and through my dear friend Kirtimalini Gadre, I became a volunteer of Asha. She introduced me to the work of Asha and I felt inspired to join in. Already during the first meeting I felt like being with friends, even though we all had just met. I could see very quickly the dedication and passion of the other members to plan and organize the Spandan fund-raising concert. Often the meetings would only finish when the best solution for a particular situation was found; always keeping in mind the responsibility towards the organization. I enjoyed helping in the organization of the concert and was also the host for the evening. I am looking forward to further projects in the coming year.”*

### **Fitzi Hans-Jürg**

*“The atmosphere at the meetings, with all the volunteers organization is warm and welcoming and a lot of fun. The reason why I joined to Asha is I want to contribute to this cause in a practical manner and provide my support (at first in a small way and then step by step in a bigger way) as well as I can.”*

### **Samyuktha Pillai**

*‘I started volunteering for Asha Zurich in 2013 and have had a wonderful time being part of the organization. Their monthly meetings ensure that the volunteers are kept up to date about the developments in the various projects. They also allow people to voice their opinion and concerns about the different aspects of the organization including planning of upcoming events, fund raising etc. I would strongly encourage anyone who has a little time to spare to attend at least one of Asha Zurich's meetings and consider volunteering for a worthy cause.’*

### **Renu Smek**

*“My Journey in Asha.... It's just a beginning! Asha has been a “Dream- come- true destination for me”, as I have been interested in charity work since my school days. Here in Switzerland, I had been looking for an organization where I could continue this passion, until I found Asha Zürich. On my very first meeting in Asha itself, I felt so inspired that I decided to sponsor the Christmas cards for 2013. Being a new entrepreneur, I have decided to contribute to Asha by giving a certain percentage of the profit to Asha. I also publicizing and raising funds in events such as Mantra & the Christmas Market in Niederdorf where I had direct contact with the general public.”*

### **Pavana Urval**

*“The dynamism and dedication of the Asha Zurich team is truly inspiring! It is wonderful to be associated with a team that actively seeks, creates and uses every possible opportunity to further the cause of the organization. At the Weltmarkt in October 2013 at Marktplatz, Oerlikon, I had the opportunity to experience first- hand the immense good-will and reputation built by Asha Zurich over the years. It was very heartening to speak with regular patrons who sought out and visited our stall, and spoke very highly of Asha Zurich.”*

### **Siny Thomas**

*“It is definitely a good experience to be part of Asha Zurich since it is associated with such a noble cause. The meetings which I attended were good too as they give a total insight on what all is happening. Asha Zürich is a well- managed team effort although all volunteers obviously all have alternate professions to handle simultaneously. I would definitely love to remain a part of Asha in the future.”*

# TREASURER'S NOTE

## FINANCIAL REPORT

2013 made the highest total so far in Asha Zurich finances. We had a good fund-raising record for collections through events for a single year. We increased our funds by benefitting from the long left sleeping funds from the US (global funds shared by all chapters). We made a net surplus of **CHF 4,612.00** (excluding the US funds). With the US funds we have a surplus of **CHF 16,128.00**. So we are left with a generous bank balance of **CHF 64,824.00**. This is purely due to the selfless and sincere efforts from all volunteers. United we won! We should all be proud of this achievement and aim to outdo this in 2014.

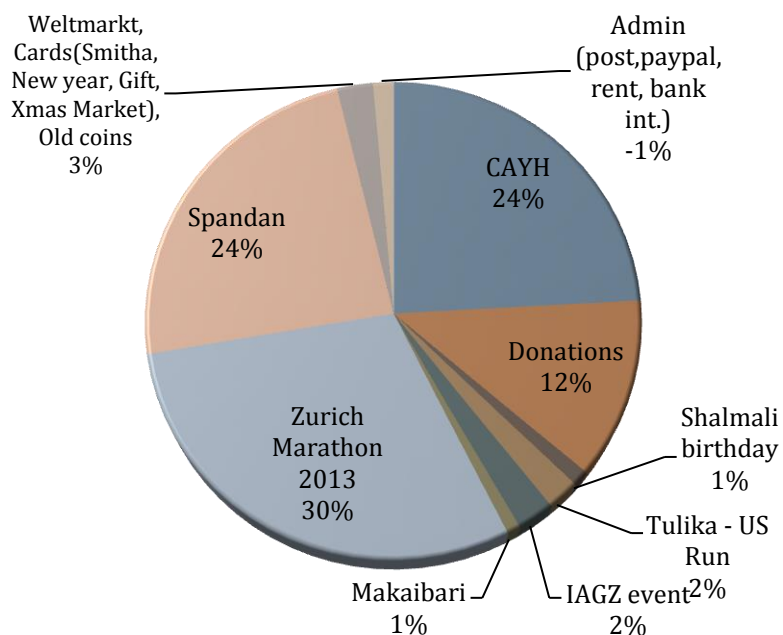
<b>Opening Account Balance (01/Jan/2013)</b>	<b>48,420</b>
<b>Receipts + US Funds(11516)</b>	<b>57,908</b>
<b>Project Disbursements</b>	<b>-33,761</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>-7,744</b>
<b>Receivables &amp; Payables</b>	<b>-275</b>
<b>Net surplus</b>	<b>16,128</b>
<b>Net surplus without US Funds</b>	<b>4,612</b>
<b>Closing Account Balance (31/Dec/2013)</b>	<b>64,824</b>

We had two major events which were a huge success:

### **Spandan – Notes of hope.**

Asha Zurich volunteers and well-wishers participated in **Zurich Marathon 2013** and raised funds for Asha.

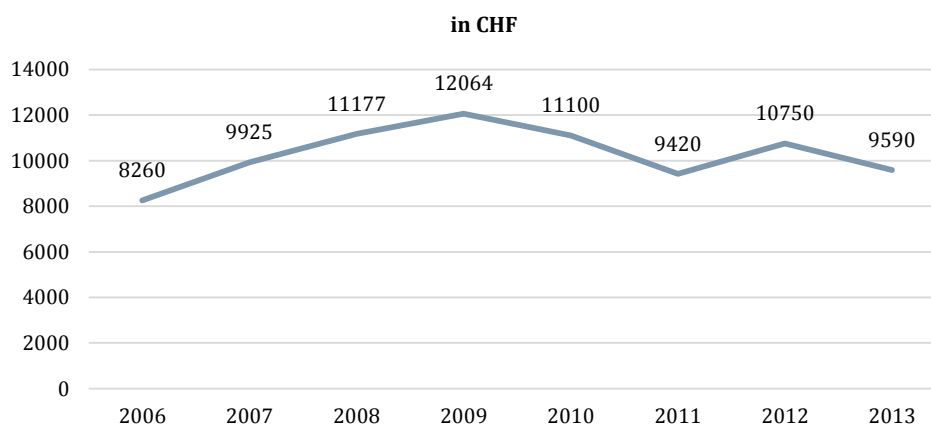
Apart from these two events, we had various small sized events and fund raising ideas which contributed positively to our funds this year. A big thanks to all the volunteers!



## TREASURER'S NOTE

Details	Receipts	Expenses	Net
CAYH	9590		<b>9590</b>
Donations	4825		<b>4825</b>
Shalmali birthday	415		415
Tulika - US Run	822		822
IAGZ event	950		<b>950</b>
Makaibari	2068	1730	338
Zurich Marathon 2013	12952	1153	<b>11799</b>
Spandan	13696	4201	<b>9495</b>
Weltmarkt, Cards(Smitha, New year, Gift, Xmas Market), Old coins	1024	60	964
Admin (post, paypal, rent, bank int)	51	600	-549
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>46392</u></b>	<b><u>7744</u></b>	<b><u>38648</u></b>

Charity As Your Hobby (CAYH) is a scheme started by Asha Zurich in 2002. In this program, donors contribute a fixed amount of funds periodically (usually monthly). This ensures a constant inflow of money and allows Asha Zurich to plan for projects in advance. CAYH donations declined this year compared to 2012 due to certain donors leaving the country.

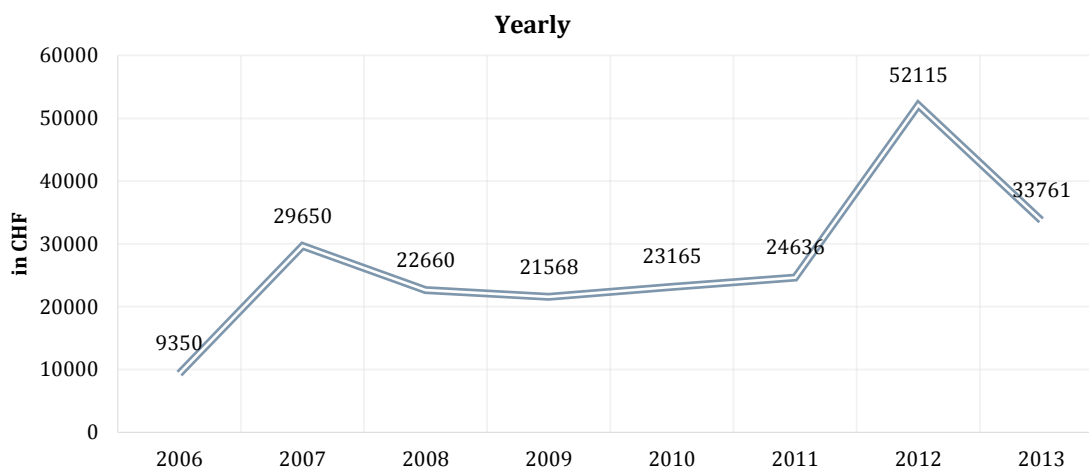
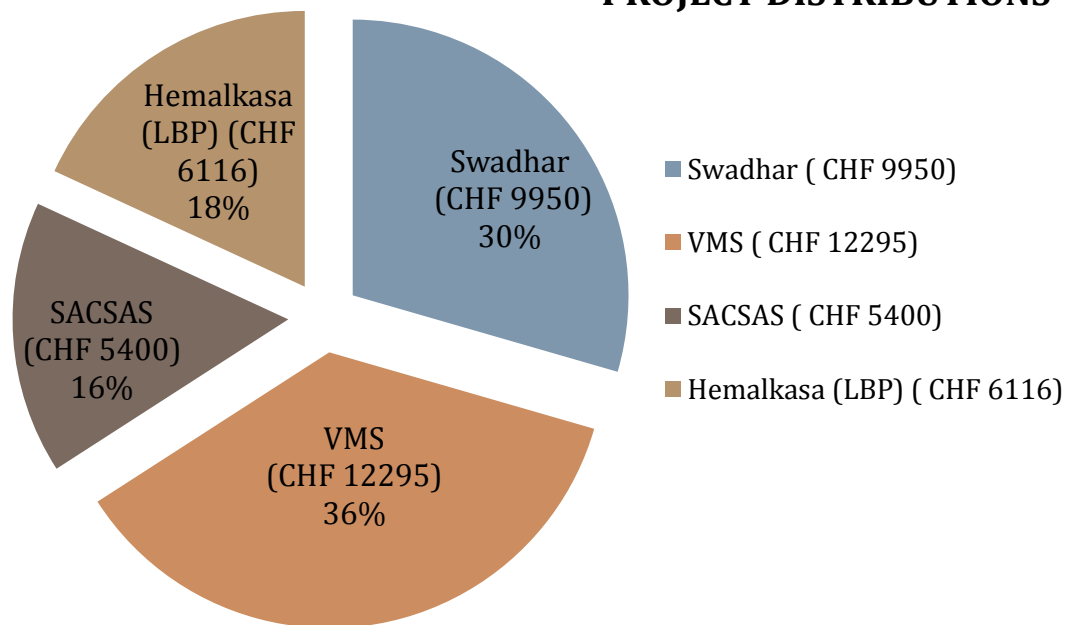


Graphical representation of CAYH over the years

## TREASURER'S NOTE

Most administrative expenses were, as usual, contributed by Asha Zurich volunteers. In 2013, Asha Zurich disbursed a total of CHF 33761.00 to its various projects. This amount looks less than last year's disbursements due to currency fluctuations between CHF / INR.

### PROJECT DISTRIBUTIONS



One time donations and CAYH went down in 2013 but diverse happenings boosted the same such like Gift Cards, IAGZ event, Shalmali's birthday, Tulika's Marathon Run, Makaibari, Smitha's cards, Xmas market and New year card sales. Overall it was an excellent year for Asha Zurich Chapter!



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TREASURER



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## DONATE TO ASHA

Bank:	UBS, Zurich
Organization:	Asha Zurich Weidmannstrasse 14, 8046 Zurich
Account no.:	206-259021.40Q
Clearance no.:	206
IBAN	CH29 0020 6206 2590 2140 Q
BIC/SWIFT:	UBSWCHZH80A

# Vol nteer

Asha Zurich needs yo **U**

Donate your time and skills to support the education  
of underprivileged children  
Volunteer with Asha Zurich

[www.asha-zurich.ch](http://www.asha-zurich.ch)

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have audited the attached Balance Sheet. of **"ASHA Zurich CHAPTER "** as at **31<sup>st</sup> December 2013** & also the attached Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date annexed thereto. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Asha Zurich committee and my responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on the audit.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards. Those Standards require that audit is planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that the audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

1. I have obtained all the information and explanation which to the best of my knowledge & belief, were necessary for the purpose of the audit.
2. In my opinion, proper books of accounts as required have been kept which give all information required . The accounts have been maintained on Cash basis.
3. The Balance Sheet and the Income and Expenditure Account dealt with by this report are in agreement with the Books of Accounts .
4. In my opinion and to the best of my information and according to explanation given to me , the said accounts give all the information required to give a true and fair view :
  - i) In the case of Balance Sheet of the state of affairs of Asha Zurich as at **31<sup>st</sup> December, 2013.**
  - ii) In the case of Income and Expenditure Account of the excess of Expenditure over Income for the year ended on that date.

Authorised Auditor of Asha Zurich

  
(Sachin Mehta)

Date : 06/02/2014