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### Aspire to be more

Every child on this planet has the right to education and knowledge for a comfortable life. India like many other countries is struggling to provide this very right to its children. These children are often denied education due to social pressures and inaccessible geographic conditions and hardly seem to have a bright future ahead of them.



The recent popularity of the Oscar-winning movie Slumdog Millionaire has captured the hearts of many around the world. People are now more aware that children are denied proper education in rural and urban towns alike. Making a difference through education has always been ASHA's goal. For the past 10 years now, Asha for Education has funded close to 93 education projects focusing on children from the slums. This mammoth task has been achieved only by the continuous efforts and hard-work put in by scores of volunteers across the chapters around the world.

According to the World Volunteer Web nearly 4 billion people are now literate in the world. Literacy for children, youth and adults is still an unaccomplished goal. As high as 114 million kids worldwide are still not enrolled in primary schools. This simply means one in every five children is deprived of the most basic education. The target of governments and development agencies under the Millennium Development Goal 2 is to ensure that all children everywhere go to primary school by 2015.

Some food for thought before you step into our pages full of an exciting 2008 for Asha Zurich chapter.

I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.

--Lily Tomlin

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can

--Edmund Everett Hale

#### What Sets us apart?

Asha Zurich, like all our other chapters worldwide, has no paid staff and no office rent.

Hence we are able to keep a very low overhead for administrative expense. This minimal overhead is typically covered through contributions from volunteers. **This is a key factor that distinguishes us from many other organizations.** 

Asha-Zurich has been started by few a students and professionals from Zurich. The aim of the group is to mobilize the Indian and Swiss population to collectively support and provide financial assistance to grass-roots level education movements in India.

To maximize the effectiveness of its efforts, Asha-Zurich seeks to support educational projects in rural and economically backward areas. Members of Asha attempt to maintain a close personal involvement with the organizations and projects that are sponsored.

#### The specific objectives of Asha-Zurich are:

- To support social development projects in India.
- To collaborate with other non-profit organizations for providing wider support.
- To promote awareness of social issues in India.

### Executive Committe 2008 -2009

President: Baiju John

General Secretary: Ishaan Mehta

Treasurer: Kirtimalini Gadre Bhattacharya

**Coordinators:** Seeba Jacob, Deepa Gokarn, Priyanka Chahar

Editors: Sujit Acharya and Akshata Kumta Photographs: André Urech & Elia Marinucci

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supported by Asha Zurich.

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### From Our President



*It's my pleasure to introduce the Annual Report of Asha Zurich for the calendar year 2008.* 

We continued to fund the three projects – Ma and Jananee in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal, Akshardeep in Pune and Vishwamandal Sevashram - Dhule in Maharashtra. All these projects are progressing steadily and Asha Zurich is happy about the involvement that is bringing significant changes in the lives of the children supported.

In the past year, Asha Zurich was involved in several small scale fund raising events - thanks to the initiative and enthusiasm of our volunteers. We participated in most of the Weltmarkt events at Oerlikon held in the summer. I would like to extend my special thanks to all the volunteers for their participation, in particular Deepa Gokarn, Kirtimalini Gadre and Vishwa Herle for all their enthusiasm.

Another important participation of Asha Zurich was in "Gruezi India". Our participation was targeted towards publicity and spreading awareness of our activities to further strengthen the organization both financially and with volunteers. We were largely successful in our efforts- thanks to all the volunteers who helped keeping the stall active over a 3 day period. I do like to extend my gratitude to "IAZ" for providing us the stall at a reduced price and "BollyMode" for the significant contribution from the sale proceeds at the stall. Final event for the year was the Disco, staged successfully - thanks again to the efforts of all the volunteers.

Asha Zurich was successfully involved in raising funds towards Work an hour (WAH) initiated by Asha Worldwide, contributing almost 10% of the total collection. Special thanks to Pramod Prasanth for all his efforts. The collection will be used to support 15 projects in India.

Looking forward, I would like to request all the volunteers to involve themselves more proactively, attend the monthly meetings every alternate month at the least.I would really like the volunteers to bring in new members to keep up the spirit and ideas. Possibilities of large scale fund raising events should be continuously discussed.

Several new volunteers joined Asha Zurich which clearly are positive signs. Sadly we have not been able to actively pursue several leads we had collected from various events and need a rethink in our efforts there.

I would like to make a special mention of Viswha Herle for his tremendous efforts and enthusiasm towards Asha Zurich in the past year.

I strongly believe that with continued support and efforts, we can progress to support newer projects and can make a stronger impact in the life of the destitute children.

**Baiju John** President, ASHA Zurich

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

-- Margaret Mead

## From Our Secretary

### Disco Event - Aaja Nachle '08:

Asha Zurich conducted a successful Bollywood Party called Aaja Nachle 2008, on Saturday, 22nd November 2008. All the proceeds of the event went towards ASHA's funding. Everyone rocked to the popular Bollywood music by DJ Chilli and DJ Happy.

#### **Dhoom 2:**

Owing to the success of Dhoom in the year 2007, ASHA Zurich also organized one of its highlight events Dhoom 2 to celebrate Vaisakhi along with the Indian Association Zurich. The event was held on 26th of April 2008 at the ETH. All the volunteers of ASHA worked very hard to make this a memorable event and try to generate maximum funding towards ASHA's projects. These discos generated close to 3000 CHF, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of the crowd.

### 'Gruezi India' Festival:

ASHA participated in the Gruezi India festival celebrating 60 years of Swiss-Indo friendship in Zurich. ASHA had put up a stall for its introduction and awareness. It was a good forum to attract funding from interested members, at the event there was a spontaneous donation received from a single person amounting to 1000 CHF. Our projects for the year were benefited through this generous donation. There was also a stall of Indian Exhibitors selling Indian Handicrafts who contributed towards ASHA amounting to 750 CHF.

#### **Basel Tea Stall:**

Inspired by the success of ASHA's food stalls at Weltmarkt, some enthusiastic volunteers decided to set up a small tea-stall selling Indian Tea and Indian Biscuits and creating awareness about ASHA's projects and

attracting funding. Many students, social workers and people walking by were curious to know more about us. After all selling tea at -5 degrees of the November 2008 winter was not a waste of time. It was a great learning experience to all of us. Although it was a small initiative ASHA managed to generate about 200 CHF.

#### Indian Food Stall, Weltmarkt, Oerlikon:

ASHA participated thrice in the year 2008 in the Weltmarkt events. Many people ate for a cause on the 3 events held in May, June and July 2008. Everyone enjoyed the delicious Chole-Tikki, Samosas, Chai and Mango-Lassi. This event has made ASHA generate an average of 1000 CHF for every event. These events encourage a lot of interaction with multicultural people and is also a good forum to conduct awareness of ASHA's cause.



Through all these events and ties with other organizations, ASHA Zurich is steadily reaching a small and dedicated community of like minded people within Switzerland. Founded in 2002, ASHA Zurich is still keeping up the work towards its cause of providing underprivileged children in India with education.

on behalf of Ishaan Mehta General Secretary



# Project Update: Akshardeep

Pune, Maharashtra

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.

-- John Lubbock

Armed with the noble idea of educating the underpriviledged kids of **migrant and sex workers**, Swadhar, an established organization in Pune, initiated a program called Akshardeep in 1998.

Akshardeep is an alternative school programme specially meant for the children of age group 6-12, running in PMC (Pune Municipal Corporation) and PCMC (Pune Chinchwad Municipal Corporation) in the state of Maharashtra.

ASHA Zurich supports 10 classes in PCMC area and has been funding since 2003. **391825 INR** (Approx. 8500 CHF) was transferred to the project in the year 2008. Acceptance of the project by FCRA (Foreign Regulation Contribution Act) in December 2008 is a milestone achievement which will be of really great help for transferring funds directly to Swadhar Pune in the future.

The progress report received from the onground coordinators for the year 2008 was impressive. The details can be summarized into the following:

- Total number of children educated through this programme were 238 out of which 207 were covered in new classes.
- Education committee consisting of experienced educationalists and social workers formed to evaluate Akshardeep's work for the last 10 years and plan the future course of action for the next decade.
- Clear directions were given to the teachers to address the difficulties like transportation, necessity of birth certificate and baby sitting while mainstreaming.
- 104 students have been so far mainstreamed in the PCMC area into the corporation schools and 32 have been put into private schools.
- A regular followup was done by the teachers by visiting the schools and houses of the kids admitted newly to the PCMC corporation schools. This ensured that the kids were able to attend the classes. The children who couldn't go to regular schools, were taken in NFE classes which commenced from 11th June, 2008.

• Due to some unfortunate circumstances, the second half of the year was a bit disappointing with 3 children dropping out from the schools, thus bringing down the number of children educated from 238 to 235.

# **Happy Moments**

- All the Festivals and the National Days were celebrated in the classes. To have a practical exposure to the postal and the banking system in the area, a visit to the local Post Office and Bank was organized on 25th and 26th September.
- Sports day was organized on 15th November which saw an enthusiastic crowd cheering the kids trying to make a mark in their life.
- With the theme "We are all one", Annual Day was celebrated on 10th Jan 09.
- ASHA never concentrated on the kids alone. To have an overall development of the kids, it's essential that the teachers are well equipped with all the skills. To boost this, various programmes were initiated in the schools like:

Interactive training on Communication Skills was conducted for Akshardeep Staff on 4th Nov, 08.

"Creativity – How to use it in teaching" training session on multi-level teaching in NFE classes was held on 5th Nov, 08. Various other teaching skills were conducted in the months of November and December 08.

**Regular meetings** were held every Saturday to cover all aspects of the project – including the progress of the children, increase in attendance, dropout percentage and planning for the subsequent week.

A trip was organized for the teachers and the staff of Akshardeep to Krishnai Water Park on 4th Feb, 09.

#### Challenges faced and resolution

Difficulties in supervision due to increased number of classes led to setting up of standardized procedures for assessment, evaluation and accountability of the staff

The teachers are working on the standardization of the syllabus and it's implementation. This process will take it's final shape only in the month of March, 09

#### Site Visit

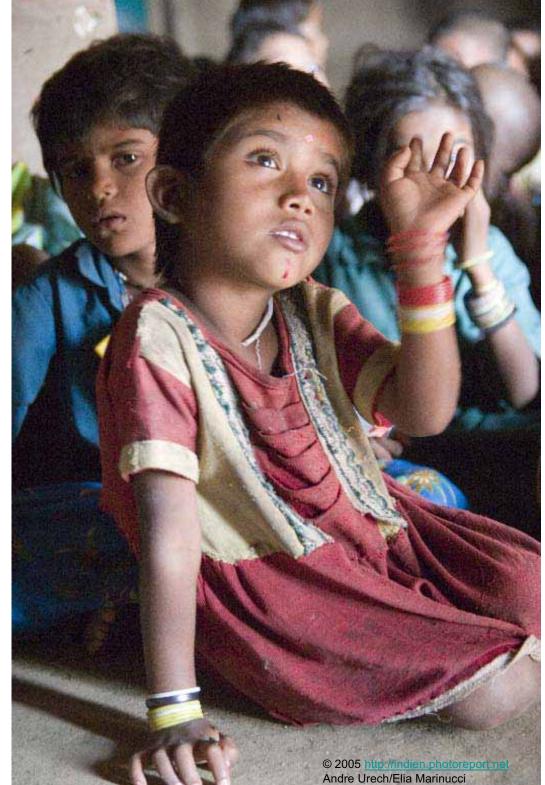
For any project to run smoothly, it is essential to have a proper accountability of the work done and the expenditure incurred.

Site Visit was conducted in June 2008 and was arranged by Mr Guruswamy (Asha Pune). This visit was done by Mr Ajit Bhand (ASHA Oklahoma), Mrs Anjali Bapat (Swadhar Pune) and Mr Bagav (Akshardeep Supervisor). It was a great achievement for ASHA because it's basic aim is still upheld in this project.- "Focus on mainstreaming of the children to regular schools". This is really a great news for all of us".



Prepared by: *Deepa Gokarn*Project Coordinator, *Akshardeep Pune* 





### Project Update: Vishwa Mandal Sevashram (VMS)

Dhule, Maharashtra

The objective of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.

-- Robert Maynard Hutchins

The *Shirpur Vishwa Mandal Sevashram (VMS)*, a Jesuit-supported non-missionary trust, runs an ambitious development programme in the hills of rural Maharashtra. With a network of over 25 learning centres in tribal villages of the region, VMS uses its educational foothold to draw the village community into small steps of self development with programmes of organic farming, microwatershed development, credit groups and women's initiatives.

Vishwa Mandal Sevashram has been successful in taking education to first generation learners and to an area where education is not being adequately addressed by the government. Additionally, VMS' educational programme is based on the premise that education must have direct applicability in the daily life of the learner. Classes at VMS learning centres are held in the children's mother tongue (unlike in government schools) and offer perspectives on dealing with natural resources, human rights, health, agriculture and women's issues. The syllabus uses the formal system as a reference framework and includes – but is not limited to – literacy in the regional language (*Marathi*), general information, health topics, songs, stories and games. Children actively participate in tree planting, vegetable patch gardening and herbal learning. An emphasis is placed on picture-illustrated content in teaching aids, in order to reduce the burden on learners from oral-traditional backgrounds.

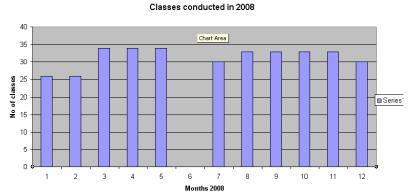
**ASHA Zurich** continued the funding of Shirpur Vishwa Mandal Sevashram (VMS) for the fourth consecutive year and is very happy in the progress of this project.

During the first half of the year, 8 learning centers were added in the interior areas near the foothills of Satpura range of mountains bordering Madhya Pradesh on the Maharashtra side of the border. The number of Adivasi children joining the learning programme has been on the rise, a promising sign. There has been continued support from the parents in the children's effort and have offered a monthly nominal fee to the teachers. Free classroom space continues to be made available in each of the village itself.

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Chart below shows the number of classes for the twelve months from January to December 2008. The initial months show a trendy rise in the number of classes conducted in the school which more or less remained constant at the end of the year. Due to vacations in the month of June, no classes were conducted in that month.



An average monthly contribution of Rs.5 per child in cash or kind (farm products) was made by parents to the teachers. Total amount collected from JAN to JUNE = 7700.00 INR. This amount is the peoples' contribution to the teachers. In a way it speaks for itself, making explicit that the parents want their children to get educated and live a dignified life.

We continue to support the project in 2009 and wish the very best for Fr. Augustine in this noble cause. The second installment from last year has not reached the project although it has been transferred from the Asha Zurich account. The transaction is been investigated by Fr. Augustine in India and by our Treasurer here in Zurich.

Some of the notable events and positive developments from last year are monthly trainings of the teachers where senior Resource Persons continued to

help the new recruits to acquire skills in communication, addition of 8 more classes to the existing ones, parent's days celebration, introduction of new learning materials, children's day celebration, social awareness programmes through plays to instill the feeling of belongingness etc.

All these developments have definitely shown us a light that says "Yes, we can!!!"



Project Coordinator: Seeba Jacob



# **Project Update: Ma and Jananne**

Jalpaiguri, West Bengal

Hope is the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity. ~Robert G. Ingersoll

During the winter of 2007, Asha Zurich started to fund two-day care centres in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. These centres were run by an NGO called Samagra Uttarbanga Loka Kalyan Kendra (SULKK).

The purpose of the day care centers was to not only provide basic education to slum children and children of migrant labourers but also as to act as a crèche for their younger siblings. About 70 children are at present in these two centers. Besides basic education, other facilities such as mid-day meal, regular health check-ups, toys to play, and a real play ground for the kids are provided.

These two successful centers generated a lot of interest in another area and upon request from the local community, a new centre called Dhatri was set up. The Dhatri centre, which was initially organized in a temporary shed, has now moved to a local club building. This centre, like Ma and Jananee, has a cooking facility with gas connection to provide mid-day meal to the children.

Overall, this project caters to about 111 children with about 8000 CHF/year funding by Asha Zurich. This funding also includes special scholarships for bright young girls.17 children are getting such scholarships. All the centers are running well.

#### Site Visit: December 2008

A site visit was done by one of our volunteers Mr. Shirsendu Basu in December 2008 and he describes the centre "Ma" as follows: "The kids are between 1.5 to 6 yrs old. A doctor visits once every week. The center seems to run well with proper education in the morning and games in the open terrace in the front of the school. The food (kichuri) is healthy prepared with rice, vegetables and soybean balls do provide good nutrition to the children and moreover they like the food. There is a sufficient cooking facility now and providing warm food has definitely increased attendance. A Water Filter has been provided for the kids. The education that is being imparted properly was expressed in the enthusiasm of the kids who performed songs, poetry and dances. They are also learning prayers and good manners. Clothes are provided twice a year - once during the Durga puja(Dasheras) and the other in winter".

#### Problems due to lack of FCRA Certificate

Although the organization, SULKK, had no FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulatory Act) certificate from Govt. of India, Asha Zurich was funding the project via its sister NGO called SAMATAT. However, at the beginning of this year SULKK informed us in having difficulties in obtaining a FCRA certificate from Govt. of India. The Govt. also objected the way SULKK was obtaining foreign funds. Due to these problems, we could not transfer funds to SULKK and the project was almost dying. As we got to know more about the problems the children and workers of the project were facing due to lack of funds, some volunteers of Asha Zurich decided to continue the funding on a private level. At present (2009) this project will not be funded by Asha but through individual donations of some volunteers and other members. We hope that, by doing so these 111 children get their daily meal, education and health-checkups.

Prepared by: Vishweshwara Herle Project Co-ordinator: Priyanka Chahar.

### **Financial Report**

**During the year,** along with existing Projects *Dhule* and *Akshardeep*, a third project *Ma and Jananee* was also funded in 2008. The closing balance as on 31st December 2008 stood at CHF 27646.66. In this report, the main features of the financial transactions (2008) are being presented.

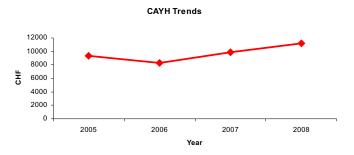
#### Balance sheet as on 31st December 2008 (CHF)

Opening Balance UBS A/c 1	17195.51
Opening Balance UBS A/c 2	10161.45
Received	23689.70
Disbursements	23400.00
Closing Balance UBS A/c 1	14592.83
Closing Balance UBS A/c 2	13053.65
Fund Balance (2008)	27646.66

#### Income:

Charity As Your Hobby (CAYH) is a scheme started by Asha Zurich in 2002. In this program, donors contribute a fixed amount of funds on a periodic (usually monthly) basis. This ensures a constant inflow of money and allows Asha Zurich to plan for projects in advance. There has been a continuous increase in the CAYH donations over previous years because of the good level of publicity done for Asha's purpose and an increase in the number of Asha volunteers.

# CAYH donations for the year 2008 were at their highest (CHF 11,177) since 2002.



Another source of income was the one-time donations received from well wishers of Asha including some stalwart volunteers. These donations also include contributions raised by individuals, clubs, schools etc., at their personal or social gatherings. In 2008, there was a rise in the onetime donations as compared to previous years. We are sincerely grateful to our donors for increased trust in us and value their donations.

# A sum of CHF 6,089 was received as one-time donations, as compared to CHF 4,115 in 2007.

'Zug Women's Association' has been one of the most generous one-time donors this year. Many small events conducted throughout the year have improved ASHA's fund-raising initiatives. The receipts from these events have amounted to CHF 6,354.70. Although, there were no large-scale fundraising activities undertaken in 2008, a number of small-scale programmes were organized with the help of Asha volunteers. These events include, The Bollywood Party 'Dhoom II', "Aaja Nachle", Weltmarkt food stall and a Bake-sale event in the schools of one of our young volunteers. The net profit earned from the two Bollywood Discos was CHF 2,743, while the Weltmarkt food stalls (held thrice in 2008) generated a profit of CHF 2,879

#### A summary of Receipts are shown as below:

#### Receipts for the year 2008 (CHF)

CAYH	11177.00
One-time donations	6089.00
Events (Disco, Weltmärkte,	
Bake-sale, T-shirt, Birthday)	6354.70
Interest Earned	69.00
<b>Total Receipts (2008)</b>	23689.70

### Expenditure:

Although we seem to have disbursed more funds this year than the last, the scale of income has been on the same. In 2008, Asha Zurich disbursed a total of **22,670 CHF** towards its projects. We supported the two regular projects, *Akshardeep*, *Vishwa Mandal Sevashram (Dhule)* and a new project *Ma & Jananee* which was taken up at the beginning of 2007.

Administrative expenditures such as printing and posting came to **731 CHF** 

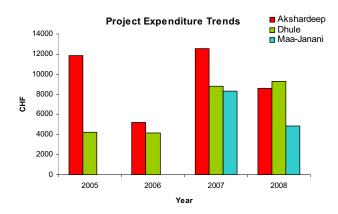
While the donations are completely utilized for project funding, the administrative expenditures were, as always, covered by donations from some of the Asha volunteers.

#### **Disbursements (CHF)**

#### **Projects**

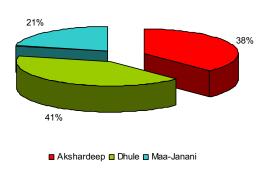
Akshardeep	8560.00
Vishwa Mandal Sevashram	9280.00
Ma & Jananee	4830.00
Administrative expenses	730.00

#### Total Disbursements (2008) 23400.00



The above trends show the Expenditure towards the Projects over the past 4 years. The spending towards Dhule Project has gone up over the last year. This years spending towards projects is as shown below:

#### 2008 Project Funding



Figures reported here correspond to the period 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008. Periodic publications from Asha Zurich in the form of the newsletter *Zuriodhay* provide intermediate information regarding events organized and projects taken up by Asha.



Kirtimalini Gadre Treasurer

# sha for Education

Visit ASHA @

www.asha-zurich.ch

hasic education in India



many other organizations.

Asha for Education is a non-profit organisation dedicated to socio-economic change in India. We believe that education is a critical element of socio-economic change. Asha receives top 4\* rating by independent charity evaluation agency

Asha Zurich, like all our other chapters worldwide, has no paid staff and no office rent. Hence we are able to keep a very low overhead for administrative expense. This minimal overhead is typically covered through contributions from volunteers. This is a key factor that distinguishes us from

Asha Zurich promises our supporters that 100% of their con-

### News & Events

Posted on 21 Feb 2009

Sparshan (Touching Lives) presents a bengali musical evening with Srikanto Acharya.

When: Saturday, 27th June 2009.

Where: Grosser Saal, Evangelische Reformierte Kirche, Seebach, Zurich, Hoehenring 56, 8052, Zurich

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#### Contact Asha Zurich

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www.asha-zurich.ch zurich@ashanet.org

Donate to Asha Zurich

Bank: UBS AG, Zurich Organisation: Asha Zurich

Address: Ackersteinstr. 133, 8049 Zurich

Account Number: 206-259021.40Q

IBAN: CH29 0020 6206 2590 2140 Q

Swift: UBSWCHZH80A

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- I would like to:
- Become a member of Asha Zurich
- Volunteer time for Asha Zurich
- Visit Asha projects in India
- Donate to Asha
- Be informed about events organised by Asha Zurich

Name:	Phone:
Address:	

# Vol nteer

Asha Zurich needs yo

Donate your time and skills to suport the education of underpriviledged children.

Volunteer with Asha Zurich.

www.asha-zurich.ch/volunteer

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