



# Asha Insights: Autumn (Q3) 2015

Asha Zurich is a chapter of Asha for Education, a world- wide organization that works dedicatedly to catalyze socio-economic change through the education of underprivileged children in India. We have no paid staff, no office rent and hence very low overheads, typically covered through contributions from volunteers. This is a key factor that distinguishes us from many other organizations. In 2015, Asha Zurich is sending more than 1,200 underprivileged children to school in five projects with an annual budget of more than CHF 50,000

## Our Achievements

### Site visits to four projects

We are very happy to inform you that we have successfully organized site visits to four of our projects in the third quarter of 2015. We have received highly satisfactory reports, as well as suggestions for improvements from our volunteers who made those field trips. Brief overviews are provided under the Project Updates section.



### Fundraisers in Q3

#### Food stand with Chat with Chaat

On 26. September, Asha Zurich co-hosted a food stand together with Chat with Chaat at GZ Oerlikon. The event was attended by 226 people and served as a good platform for Asha's publicity. 20% of the profit generated from food sales was donated to Asha.



### Project updates

In 2015 Asha Zurich is supporting five projects. Following are updates from specific projects:

#### Palas Schools

Asha Zurich's partner Vishwamandal Sevashram (VMS) facilitates these non-formal education centers for children from the Bhil tribe in Dhule district of Maharashtra.



In September this year a site visit was conducted by Abhay Agarwal, a friend of Asha. He generally praised the project and was impressed by the commitment of the teachers, considering the remote location of these schools. As highlighted by the feedback from Abhay, as well as from the previous visits and suggestions made by

the coordinators, an additional budget of INR 400,000 was approved in the October meeting to provide 2 sets of uniforms to each student.

### **Save Children Save Society (SACSAS)**

The Save Children Save Society Academy (SACSAS Academy) is doing an excellent job by offering education to the children coming from the interior hilly areas of Manipur. The Zurich and Houston chapters of Asha are jointly supporting this noble work of SACSAS Academy by providing financial support to New Dampi, Wangoo and Loilamkot branches.



Asha volunteer Tapomayukh Bhattacharjee visited these schools in July, 2015 and shared with us the enthusiasm and happiness he witnessed among the kids. The children are attending their respective schools regularly despite the inconvenience of getting there due to poor road-conditions. It also makes us extremely happy and proud to see the children take up higher studies in keeping with the momentum imparted to them by the SACSAS schools. Apart from their regular curriculum, the children also attended educational excursions during summer.

### **Lok Biradari Prakalp**

The project is located in the remote tribal village of Hemalkasa, Maharashtra.



In August this year a site visit was done by Subhankar Roy, a friend of Asha. Following are few points observed by Subhankar during his visit:

1. Innovative ways of teaching by engaging the students with practical demonstrations for each subject, specifically for science and math. A theme is chosen for every week. For example, if the theme is water, all the counting is taught using quantity of water as numbers.



2. Volunteerism developed in students through a concept called "Sram Dan" (one hour every week devoted to various activities of the hostel and the school). They are also being taught some skills through this "Sram Dan" activity, for example crafting products from bamboo.

3. Students are being taught to be concerned and connected with the environment. In the program called "Vruksh Bandhan" students tie a Rakhi to a tree spreading the message to conserve forest. Also a rally called "Vruksha Dindi"



was organized by the school on the eve of the “Adivasi Day” to celebrate the forests and spread the word to conserve it. When going back home e.g. for the summer vacation, every student takes one small tree with him/her and conserve it at home.

4. The school has excelled in sports as well. The school’s volleyball team won a gold medal at the Taluka (district) level and two students received Bronze medals at the state level games held in Nagpur.

### **Boys Town Society**

Asha Zurich has been supporting the Francois Meyer Nursery and Primary school of Boys Town Society with more than 200 children since the beginning of this year. The school is located at Tirumangalam village in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu.



A site visit was done in late July by our Webmaster Rajesh. He rated the project very highly and recommended better hygiene and computer facilities as possible improvements. We would prioritize them in the next funding. In addition, the on-site coordinator Dr. Raja also visited Zurich and attended our monthly meeting in September. He presented the way the organization works, as well as enlightened us with their success stories over the years.

### **Ved Vignan Maha Vidyapeeth**

The school, located in Vadakkur village of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, has already been open since June. Our project partners, the Art of Living Foundation, who run the school, sends regular updates from the site. The photo from the site



depicts the celebrations on the Indian Independence Day. An Asha volunteer from Zurich, Molin D’Souza, visited Art of Living’s headquarter in Bangalore in August this year and was shown a similar Ved Vignan school nearby. All Ved Vignan schools follow the same model and syllabus. The feedback from Molin was overwhelmingly positive.

### **How can you help?**

Would you like to help us achieve our mission?

How about making a onetime donation once a year or making small donations every month through our Charity As Your Hobby program. As little as CHF 20 can support the cost of education and food of a child for a month.



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

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

**Vol nteer**  
**Asha Zurich needs yoU**

Come volunteer with us and be a part of the change.

- Attend our monthly meetings.
- Help us organize fundraisers.
- Spread the word about Asha.
- Please write to us at [info@asha-zurich.ch](mailto:info@asha-zurich.ch).