

Third progress report January – September 2009

Providing basic education to poor, deprived and vulnerable children in slums of Delhi.

About the project –

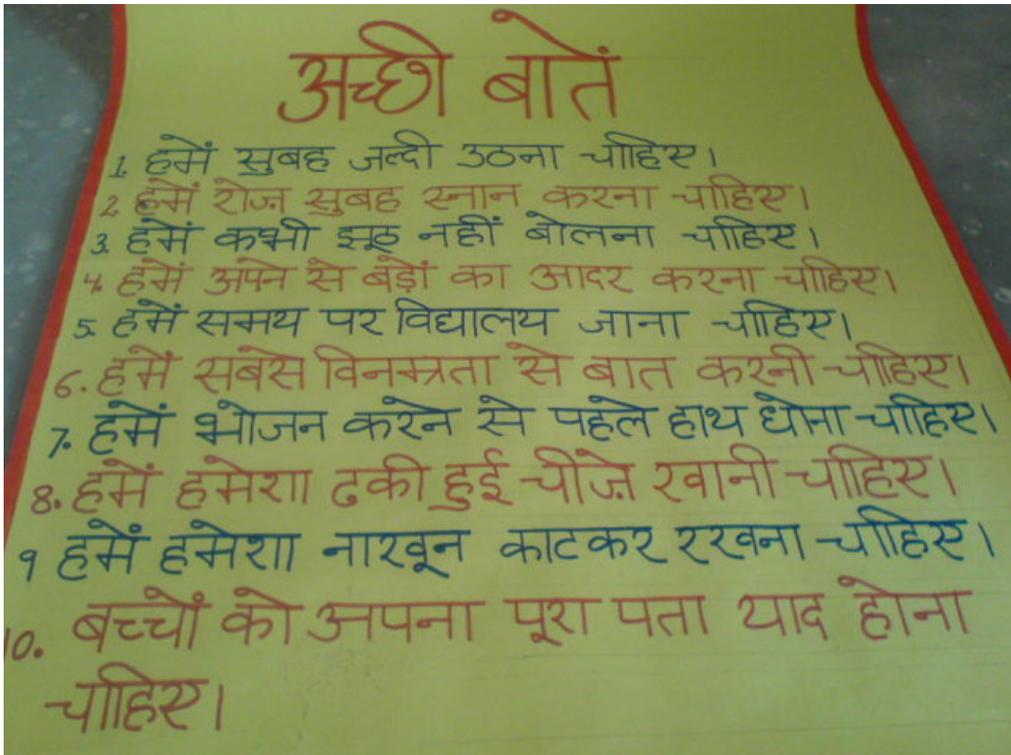
Noon.ch and ASHANET have been kind enough to support the learning centers project for the second consecutive year. Both Noon.ch and ASHANET share the total cost of running the four centers and each provide funding assistance upto 50% of the total cost for running 4 learning centers. As part of the project, funds have been provided for meeting teachers' salary, centers' running cost, for purchase of books and stationary for children, for organizing some events for children and for meeting the project related overheads.

Progress so far –

The reporting period had a mix of achievements and challenges.

Weekly meetings – The teachers indicated that they needed separate time for developing teaching learning material for teaching children. Since it was a good suggestion, it was decided that every Saturday all teachers will meet at the coordination office and spend the day for developing materials. This helped in many ways. Teachers collectively developed various materials. In fact shared working brought out many new ideas and helped in sorting out some generic problems related to the learning centers. Teachers got the opportunity to exchange their experiences.

The best outcome was that teachers learnt to share and exchange their materials. In some instances, they developed just one set of the material and exchanged with each other during subsequent meetings.







Summer vacation – This summer season turned out to be one of the hottest seasons in the past four decades. Hot weather forced the Delhi government to close down the schools a week earlier than usual and opened them a week later than the usual vacation period. Schools were closed early. And the hot summer continued till June end and so the Delhi government decided to keep the school closed for one more week, beyond the usual vacation period. And then there was swine flu epidemic. Altogether this summer children had tough time fighting heat. Some children went away on vacation to other places mostly to their home towns, while others preferred to stay back in their homes and so there was very less attendance at the centers. So it was decided that the centers' timings will be reduced to two hours and the timings were also shifted to morning hours. One more change that was introduced was that it was decided that children should be given a break from the routine work. It was unanimously agreed that at all centers teachers will engage children in extracurricular activities such as handicraft making, quizzing, reading story books, and likewise. This helped to keep children's attendance at a good average and helped all of us to know more about children – about their likes and hidden talents. We realized that it was a good strategy. Na din fact a unanimous decision has been taken that every year in summer vacations; children will be engaged in these kinds of activities rather than focusing on academic learning and reinforcement. The one big advantage that we could see coming through as a result of this strategy was that those children who went away during vacation time did not loose on course.

Celebration of Independence Day – This year we celebrated Independence Day at all four centers. Children prepared short programs such as songs, dances, and speeches. At each of the centre the national flag was unfurled and the respective teacher took the salutation. The local people including the parents of the children were present during the celebration of the Independence Day. All children were given sweets after the celebration.

Shifting of center – For quite some time the center at the Dera – Fathehpur village had been facing problems. It was facing all kinds of problems – instability of teacher, frequent shifting of room, and internal politics among the local people was affecting the children. All efforts were tried out to make the local community groups aware of the objective of our setting up center at this village but it did not help in any way. We in fact tried to involve local influential people to sort out the issue but sometimes a qualified teacher was not available in

the local area while on other occasion a decent ventilated room closer to the main road was not available. Parents were not willing to send their kids to interior area (which was although a much safer place) but was a little inside the village. So finally with a very heavy heart we shifted the center. We moved to Bapu camp.

Bapu camp is a slum adjoining Sambhav colony (we already have one center at Sambhav colony). We moved here in January and since then there has been absolutely no problem. The local community is supportive; we have been able to find a good well ventilated accommodation for running the center; and children have been coming continuously. During this period of nine months we had to change the centre only once because the landlord was asking for increased rent which we did not want to give. We looked for another accommodation in the nearby lane and shifted there. The best part is that all those children who were coming to the earlier centre very willingly came to the new location. In other words, there was no drop out.

Children's progress –

At all four centers, children are doing fairly well in their schools. This year all children from our four centers got promoted into next grades in their respective schools. And the credit goes to our center teachers who put-in so much of effort with children and helped them to cope with their school studies. Teachers requested for reference books which we provided to them; they took reference from these books and helped children to prepare better for their exams. The children also put in their best effort; they regularly came to the centre despite of their long school hours and extra load from their class teachers. It is heartening to note that children have been enjoying coming to the centre. And this is evident from the fact that there is a good attendance at the centers everyday. The progress is slow with children but in a way it is quite satisfying because it is helping to lay a sound academic foundation for children.



The reason for the slow progress is the poor academic or no academic background of the parents of these children. There is no academic environment at home so parents don't encourage their kids for studying; neither do they extend any help to their kids in studying. So for children also, education is not a serious task. Hence for our centre teachers it is a double task of first continuously motivating children to come to the centre and secondly to help them to learn correct. Our teachers are learning by experience on how to engage children in educational activities as per children's age and their needs. And accordingly they help children to do their home work, and provide them with extra remediation support.

At present all four centers are running at the same time, that is, from 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Challenges –

- a. Finding a good teacher – Of late, there have been quite a few changes in the teaching staff. And this has been quite a learning for us. We appointed young girls as teachers. They were energetic, active and very engaging with children but the biggest drawback was that they didn't stay for long in the job. The moment they got better opportunity elsewhere they resigned from the job of a teacher. In other words there was no stability of the young teachers. This very much affected the children as they would get attached to their teacher and would badly miss her in case she left. So we decided to look for a teacher who was middle aged, qualified, experienced and lived in the same area.
- b. Accommodation for center – Running the centers in slums has its own challenges. Recently there was demolition of illegal construction in the Bapu camp slum. The result was that suddenly the rentals of the accommodations went up very high. The displaced families were willing to pay higher amount in order to be able to stay in the same area. Our landlord asked us to vacate the room immediately. We then kept looking for a room but it took us quite a toll to find a new room in the same area.

Visits to the Centers –

1. Visit by Andrew Orihuela – On Tuesday, 14th July 2009, Andrew Orihuela visited Concern for Humanity. He had got the reference for our project from ASHANET. We took Andrew to our all four centers where Andrew spent time with our children. Also, he discussed with us the challenges that we face in our work in the area of remedial education. Andrew Orihuela is currently teaching at a public high school as part of the Gyeonggi Province English Program in Korea. He has conducted musicological research as a Fulbright Scholar in Latin America and has been actively involved in arts outreach programs to marginalized youth in Los Angeles, California. He is currently investigating the role of alternative education in ministering to marginalized and impoverished communities in international education.
2. Visit by Ravi of ASHANET – On Saturday, 25th July, 2009, Mr. Ravi visited to our centers. The purpose was to review the progress at our four centers so that the funding for the next year could be approved. During the visit, first we went to the Sambhav Colony and Bapu Camp centers as these were the new centers which had not been visited earlier. Ravi spent time with

children, interacted with them and provided useful suggestions for improving the interaction with children and for making the teaching-learning process more effective. At Bhatti Kala village Ravi recited a very good Hindi poem with children. The children got so involved in the activity that within 15 minutes they all memorized the poem with actions. Ravi was satisfied with the progress at the centers and based on the visit we received the other 50% from the ASHANET for the year 2009 – 10.

Expense statement – January – September 2009

S.No.	Expenditure Heads	Expense statement (January – September 2009)
1.	Salary of program coordinator - @ Rs. 3,500 p.m.	28,500
2.	Salary of 4 teachers @ Rs. 1,800 p.m.	65,800
3.	Salary of 4 assistant teachers @ Rs. 1000 p.m.	5,000
4.	Honorarium for accountant	6,000
5.	Rent of centres @ Rs.800 per centre	11,250
6.	Coordination office maintenance cost @ of Rs.1800 p.m.	16,015
7.	Centre support cost (water, electricity, and daily cleaning) @ Rs.200 X 4 centres	6,000
8.	Improving facilities at learning centres @ 2000 per centre	10,331
9.	Teaching learning material @ Rs. 250 per child X 100 children	15,290

10.	Independence Day celebration	1,640
11.	Part audit fee to auditor	4,273
12.	Project monitoring expenses	6,523
13.	Miscellaneous @ Rs.500 p.m.	4,847
	Total	181,469