



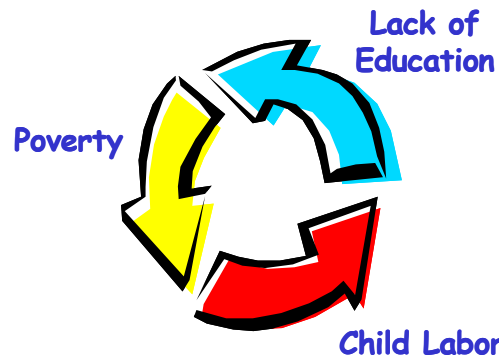
Asha for Education™

P.O. Box 322, New York, NY 10040-0322 USA

www.ashanet.org/nycnj

New York City / New Jersey

Welcome to Asha NYC/NJ! We are a volunteer-driven action group of mostly students and working professionals in the metro New York region.



Help us take him here



Our mission statement: To catalyze socio-economic change in India through the education of underprivileged children.

Asha for Education was founded in the summer of 1991 at the University of Berkeley by V.J.P. Srivastavoy, Sandeep Pandey, and Deepak Gupta. These individuals had a simple vision - to educate underprivileged children in India. They strongly believed that education is the critical requisite to bring about social change. They named the group Asha, meaning *hope*, to signify the hope they wished to bring to the underprivileged children of India.

A few years later, a group of students at Columbia University and NYU got together to support a project called Timbaktu, which was literally in the middle of nowhere. More than ten years have passed us by: Asha NYC/NJ has worked with over 22 projects, and raised over \$350,000 to support them. Volunteers have come and gone, but Timbaktu still remains with us. People moved on and took a part of Timbaktu with them. Currently Asha London, founded in 2001, supports Timbaktu along with Asha NYC/NJ. As we try to point out to people, you can check out of NYC/NJ any time you like, but once you visit a project and work with it, you can never leave!

The biggest accomplishment of Asha has been to bring together a dedicated team of individuals, from all walks of life, who actively work to help change the lives of underprivileged children in India. More than 1000 volunteers worldwide have made Asha a part of their lives and dreams. Awareness of a problem is one of the keys to unlocking its solution. By volunteering with Asha for Education, many of us have cleared the smog of our own rigid beliefs, misconceptions, and apathy towards the situation in India. Asha provides a medium for individuals who step out of the quagmire of day-to-day routines and come together in addressing these issues.

Last updated: Feb. 25th, 2004



Asha for Education's goals are:

- To support educational and literacy projects in India
- To raise awareness of social issues associated with illiteracy and poverty in India
- To collaborate with other non-profit organizations to provide wider support for these projects

When you think Asha for Education, **THINK:**

VOLUNTEER

Asha is volunteer-driven. There are no paid staff members. Current volunteers work with newer volunteers to transfer their knowledge and experiences.

EDUCATION

Why Education?

- Awareness of Rights
- Ability to Exercise Civic Rights
- Improved Access to Opportunities
- Economic Mobility
- Improve Gender Equality
- Overall Development

AWARENESS

How can I keep in touch with the realities on the ground?

ACTION GROUP

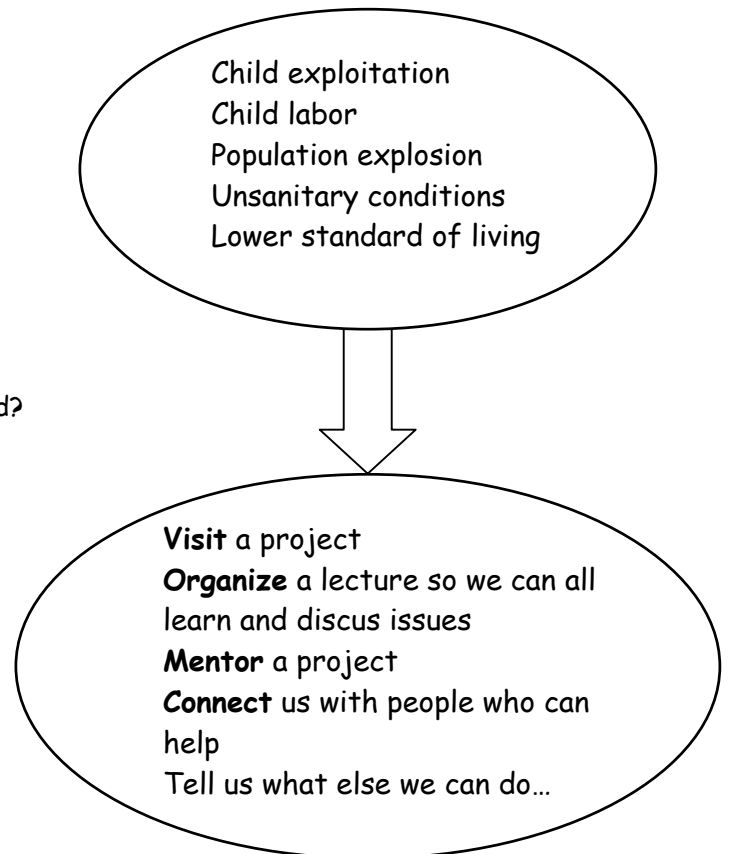
We don't do rallies and we don't do dharnas. We want to educate children. We find the best way possible to make it happen.

FUNdraining

We raise money by hosting events, concerts and through direct donations - what some people call the fun stuff at Asha.

ZERO-OVERHEADS

100% of all donations to Asha for Education go to our projects.



Asha NYC/NJ's Current Projects

The [Timbaktu Collective](#) in Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, encourages the practice of permaculture - a sustainable and eco-friendly form of agriculture, organizes women's sangams to deal with problems faced by women, and runs an alternative education program for children. Many of the villages in this region are poor because of the traditionally unreliable rainy season, exacerbated by the degradation of the land as a result of abusive agricultural techniques.

[Sarada Kalyan Bhandar \(SKB\)](#) in Midnapore, West Bengal, has three primary areas of work: education, healthcare, and promoting self-independence in women. SKB has started an after-hours school program where the students work on their class preparation. Over a decade, the pass rates have increased from 30% to over 95%. SKB also provides primary health coverage, awareness, and training to the villagers. SKB provides women from underdeveloped villages support in the form of food, lodging, education fees and other bare necessities while they pursue higher education.

The [DoorStep School](#) in Mumbai conducts free informal education classes for out-of-school and working children in the slums of and on the pavements of South Mumbai. With the "School on Wheels" bus, DoorStep makes education accessible to a larger number of children. The bus drops the children off to school and acts as a classroom for 5 sessions during the day.

[Anawim](#) is dedicated to the socio-economic development of coastal Dalit villages in the Tuticorin District of Tamil Nadu. Together with Asha, Anawim has set up Asha Junior Centers in eight such villages. These centers provide educational support and enrichment activities to the children in the villages. Each center is also associated with a village women's group, which runs a microcredit fund that will eventually sustain the Asha Junior Center. Asha NYC/NJ is funding the Asha Junior Center in Mangalwadi.

The [Vivekananda Educational Society for Children \(VESC\)](#) in West Bengal currently runs two schools at Jagaddal and Sonarpur, located in the outskirts of Calcutta. The children who attend these schools come from extremely impoverished families. These children, driven by economic pressures, would invariably be forced to work at tea stalls, cycle repair shops, waste paper collection units and fisheries. The schools run by VESC have managed to keep the enrolled children from exploitative child labor.



Asha NYC/NJ's Current Projects

Jagrati Bal Vikas Samiti (JBVS) runs the Swami Vivekananda Vidyalaya at Lodhar, Uttar Pradesh. They also create educational books and posters to distribute to government schools and social organizations connected to education. With their science laboratory, a full-time person involved in this activity shows science experiments in six schools in the neighborhood. They also have a class in agriculture to foster respect for labor in the students.

The National Association for the Blind (NAB), in Valsad, Gujarat, works with children and young adults who are visually impaired. There are also some children who have other physical disabilities. NAB provides education to the children. This includes reading, writing, arithmetic, science, geography, and other subjects. They provide accommodation to those who are disabled and cannot afford to live on their own or live too far away to use the facilities. NAB is currently working on building a girl's hostel.

The **Tamil Nadu Science Forum (TNSF)** in Chennai District, Tamil Nadu, prepares educational and science videos that can be used in schools and by NGOs in villages. Over the years the TNSF has built a teachers network of over 600 teachers and resource people who can train teachers in their area of expertise. These areas include problems with teaching math in primary schools, low cost science experiments, and health education.

The **Seva Chakkara Orphanage School (SCOS)** in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, is a voluntary service and charitable organization with the object of uplifting the downtrodden, poor, handicapped, mentally retarded and destitute children through residential education and help create a caring and humane society. The children in the school are also part of our Support-A-Child program. SCOS also helps elderly people and women who have been abused by their husbands.

The **Sarvodaya Parivar Trust** founded a boarding school for the primary education of tribal children in mountainous villages near Valsad, Gujarat, in 1994. The school now teaches students from grades 1 to 7 geography, science, and music in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic.

For more information about these and other projects funded by Asha, visit <http://www.ashanet.org/nycnj/projects.html>



PROJECTS FAQ

I. What is a project?

With respect to Asha, a project can be defined as providing financial support for a task undertaken by an NGO working on educational activities in a community. It also constitutes Asha volunteers working closely with the community and the NGO. Asha strives to identify non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in India that work on educating underprivileged communities in the rural and urban areas in India. By education, we do not restrict ourselves to literacy-based education. We look into all forms of education that act as a powerful agent of social change and empowerment.

II. How does one find such projects?

Asha chapters receive project proposals from different non-profit organizations in India. Volunteers of Asha go through these proposals carefully, and correspond with the organization, soliciting more information where required. Various factors are considered like the past history of the organization, objectives of the project, proposed plan of action, number of children covered, number of people involved in its implementation, an itemized budget, and any other relevant information.

III. How do you evaluate it?

An Asha volunteer visits the project site (at his/her own expense) to evaluate first-hand the organization, the site and the feasibility of the proposed project. It is only after s/he and the chapter volunteers are completely satisfied that the project is approved for funding. Asha chapters are fairly autonomous and it is up to them to choose projects independently or work with other chapters jointly in funding projects. Asha strongly encourages volunteers and people from the local community to recommend projects that they have first-hand information about and which could be monitored by people they know well in India. This process typically takes about 3 months.

IV. How are these projects monitored from here?

Asha requires the organization conducting the project to provide complete financials, narrative reports (and photographs, if possible) on the progress of the project at least once a year and up to four times a year. In addition, Asha volunteers going to India visit project sites unannounced to evaluate for themselves the progress of the project and verify the reports sent by organization. Asha reserves the right to terminate funding at any time if it is not completely satisfied with the situation at the project. Realizing that the children involved are the ones most affected if such a situation arises, Asha volunteers invest a great deal of effort in choosing the projects and the organizations implementing them.

FUNDRAISING

So how do we raise the money for all this? We organize various events and activities throughout the year, attend shows and festivals to publicize our activities, and invite donors to contribute to our projects. Our fundraising activities have THREE goals:

- Raise money for our projects
 - Measured via net profits generated from the event
- Increase awareness about our activities
 - Measured via number of people attending the event
- Get more people involved in our activities
 - Measured via number of people signing up to attend meetings and review projects

Past Activities

These are some of the things we've done in the past: visit www.ashanet.org/nycnj/events.html for more details.



What

In a major coup, we managed to host an event with Mira Nair at the time that *Monsoon Wedding* was being released. She graciously gave us permission to screen *Salaam Bombay* and at the end of the screening, she spoke for 30 minutes and took questions from the audience. This event had an amazing turnout and Mira joked: 'You guys should have charged at least \$15 for me.' In retrospect, we definitely should have!!

When

This was our first event for 2002 and was organized by the Columbia crew at Asha NYC/NJ. Also, we were just recovering from 2001 and the 9/11 lull in the city; this was a good shot in the arm and gave us a BIG boost for the rest of the year.

Harbingers of Hope

Racing to Educate



What

Our marathon training program is an innovative fundraiser initiated in 2000. Participants experience the unique challenge and inspiration of training for and running a marathon, while raising funds for basic education in India. Runners undergo a professional training program under the guidance of seasoned coaches, and are provided with accommodation and transport to/from the marathon, not to mention support during their training regiment from enthusiastic Asha volunteers!

When

Asha NYC/NJ started its first marathon program in 2002, with five runners who ran the Richmond and New York marathons and raised over \$18k. Since then, we've more than doubled the number of runners, who have run in the New York, Philadelphia, Long Beach and Bayshore marathons and raised over \$30k. Training starts in the beginning of May



What

Though we have historically tended to feature classical musicians in our concerts, we recently reached out to a younger crowd by booking Penn Masala, the popular Hindi "a capella" group of *American Desi* fame. Penn Masala had recently released their third album and had been singing to sold-out audiences across the US, UK, and India for many years. The group enthralled us with their talent, jokes, and antics, while the audience couldn't help but get involved - clapping to the beat of the music, singing along, even dancing at the back of the auditorium!

When

This was our Fall concert in 2003. The concert attracted what was possibly our largest turnout ever (over 750 people attended) and definitely added some "masala" to our concert series!

What else are we up to?

Spring and Fall Concerts

We traditionally hold two large concerts every year, in the Fall and the Spring. In past concerts, Asha has featured everything from renowned classical musicians, such as Amjad Ali Khan and Hariprasad Chaurasia, to off-beat jazz bands like the fusion group Natraj. Our concerts give us a chance to reach out to a large group of people and spread the word about Asha in a big way, in addition to raising some money and having some fun along the way.

Diwali Ball

In October 2003, right in the wake of our Penn Masala concert, we held our first ever Diwali Ball at Diwan Restaurant in midtown Manhattan. Over a hundred people turned up in their best attire for a fun-filled and high-energy night of dinner and dancing, topped off with a hilarious performance by the comedian Aladdin. We hope to build on this success and make this one of our regular events.

Corporate Sponsorships

After years of pursuing corporate sponsors and wading through lackluster financial markets, we recently succeeded in attracting two large corporate sponsors -- New York Life and Western Union. We hope to improve our positioning with corporates in general and keep up the good work on this front.

Support-A-Child (SAC)

We set up this program at the Seva Chakkara Orphanage and 72 children were supported in less than 2 months. SAC has been a huge hit, as it gives donors a chance to form a close connection with one particular child.

Penny Drive

In 2003, we held a drive to collect spare change to support our cause. The coins really added up - this effort raised several thousand dollars.

Buy-A-Brick (BAB)

This program was founded to help us to fund the building of a school for the students of Sarada Kalyan Bhandar. So far we have been able to raise \$31,050 of a total goal of \$50,000.

Functional Structure of Asha NYC/NJ

To join, send a blank email asha-nycnj-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Projects Group

Projects Coordinator

Saurabh Dani saurabh_dani@yahoo.com

- Monitor current projects by communicating with the projects, making site visits, and reviewing progress reports
- Advise current projects and serve as a channel of ideas and best practices across projects
- Review new project proposals for potential funding
- Prepare and update project posters, web-page content, etc.
- Asha Stars are responsible for the follow-ups on their project
- Complete paperwork with foundations and other benefactors of Asha

Fundraising Group

Fundraising Coordinator

Anand Temburni atemburni@crystalcodingconcepts.com

- Organize fundraising schedule, with a goal of a fundraiser every 3 months
- Coordinate the activities and tasks for the fundraisers
- Explore new fundraising ideas
- Approach corporations for sponsorship
- Search for new donors & maintain relationships with existing ones
- Merchandise inventory and ordering

Publicity Group

Publicity Coordinators

Nidhi Chaudhary nidhic01@hotmail.com

Sandeep Duttgupta duttas@pfizer.com

- Set up booths at festivals and community events.
- Obtain advertisements for fundraising events.
- Create press releases for our activities and events.
- Prepare & distribute publicity material - brochure, banners, fliers etc.
- Search for new donors & maintain relationship with the existing ones.
- Merchandise design.

Operations Group

New Member Contact

Tara Bhandari tara.bhandari@gs.com

Webmasters

Colleen Corradi colleen@tin.it

Sharada Narayana sharada.narayana@citigroup.com

Treasurer

Nagendra Krishnapura nrk1@columbia.edu

General Chapter Coordination

Bhawna Ojha bhavie@yahoo.com

- Send regular updates to the Asha-wide community
- Publish Asha NYC/NJ's quarterly newsletter - "Asha Jyoti"
- Maintain Asha NYC/NJ's website
- Maintain volunteer email lists
- Maintain communication with other Asha chapters
- Maintain financial accounts, send "Thank You" letters and receipts to our donors
- Check Asha's P.O. Box for mail

What can I do NOW?

This is what NYC/NJ needs help with urgently:

- **Project custodians**
If you are interested in working closely with one of our project partners in India, or know of a new project that you feel is worthy of support, come forward and become a project custodian.
- **Publicity and awareness volunteers**
Ensure that NYC/NJ has a presence at major festivals, put up booths, create marketing and publicity materials, etc.
- **Webmasters - Admin**
We are constantly in need of people with technical savvy and some spare time to update our web pages regularly. Many of our current webmasters started from scratch so if you ever wanted to learn HTML, Perl, etc., come join the club!!
- **Graphic designers** - Design publicity materials such as posters, web pages, flyers, etc. Paul McCartney said it best: "HELP, we need somebody, not just anybody... we need someone..."
- **Event Volunteers**
We are always looking for a hand to find sponsors, help at an event, and come up with new fundraising ideas. We definitely need lots of help here!

Drop us a line at nycnj@ashanet.org and tell us what you would like to do.

JOIN THE ASHA FAMILY TODAY!

