

AARTH - ASTHA
Quarterly Report October – December 2008

Administration

- ◆ Checking and sending mails.
- ◆ Updating files related to incoming mails, outgoing mails, Proposals, Telephone, Computer, Meeting-Workshop and all other administration files & Registers like Attendance, Inventory, Helpline & salary register.
- ◆ Keeping a Master file for the entire current project proposals.
- ◆ Checking and maintaining the working of computer / Internet / printer / telephone etc.
 - Disconnected landline telephone connections at Govindpuri and Lalkuan and provided mobile facility.
 - Renew Annual Maintenance of one of the computer at Aarth.
 - Repaired the computer for children.
 - Bought two new mouses (computer input device).
 - Bought speakers for two computers.
 - Astha telephone was out of service. Made complaint and rectified.
- ◆ Keeping the accounts: Preparing vouchers & keeping a daybook and submit the same to the Centre by monthly basis.
- ◆ Maintaining the inventory system i.e., requirement of stationeries / provisions and purchasing the same and keeping and updating inventory register.
- ◆ Collecting stationery requirements and provide stationeries to all the projects.
- ◆ Payment of bills telephone, water, electricity, printer cartridge, courier etc
- ◆ Making & issue of salary cheques
- ◆ Supporting all the computer related works

Information Collection

Resource Library

- ◆ Maintaining the system & updating resource materials / books / newsletters / newspaper clippings:
 - Setting up Resource Centre, sorting and arranging of books/ Journals /Reports etc under different sections
 - Keeping list of books/periodicals
 - Keeping lending details of books /periodicals
- ◆ **Collection of Resource materials in this quarter:**
 - **Training materials from IICP Kolkata**
 - Physical Assessment – CD English
 - Physical Assessment - Book English

- Physical Management – Book English
 - Chalo Ek Sathe Pareh – Booklet Hindi
 - Developing Head Control - Hand Book Hindi
 - Developing Sitting - Hand Book Hindi
 - Developing Standing and Walking - Hand Book Hindi
 - Motor Development - Hand Book Hindi
 - Cognitive Development - Hand Book Hindi
 - Play – Hand Book Hindi
 - Everyone Is Talking. Making communication English
 - Count Me In – CD English
 - Silent Voices – CD English
 - Kya Baat Hai –CD English
 - Let's Read English
 - The Monkey & the Crocodile (Story Book No.2) English
 - Money English
 - Time English
 - Calendar English
 - Getting Ready for Numbers English
- **Silent Revolution**, Proceedings of the conference on Augmentative and Alternative communication, Vidya Sagar (Formerly Spastic society of India)
 - **Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Child Study centre** – Report 50 years of togetherness with children 1955-2005
 - **Teaching materials for students and teachers in learning centre**, U.E.E.Mission, SSA
 - **Indian Journal of Gender Studies**, special issue Disability, Gender and Society, Sage publications
 - **Gender, subjectivity and Sexual Identity:** How young people with disabilities conceptualise the body, sex and marriage in Urban India- Renu Addlakha, Occasional paper, Center for Women's development studies.
 - Some extracts from **A Toolkit for Inclusion International Members: To promote the implementation of UNCRPD – A awareness material for use by SNAC, SNAP and SAMARTH** project holders, National Trust.
 - **My Name is Today** – Children in news, Child protection, Butterflies
 - **Materials on** Best practice session on skill development, Employment, community based processes & Early intervention – Sir Dorbaji Tata Trust meeting at Bhopal.
 - **SPARC – INDIA**, School for potential advancement and restoration of confidence -Annual Report, 2007-2008

Aarth (Astha) – National Trust Abiline

Highlights :

1. The script for the Interactive Voice Recording System was finalized and should soon be available for use by prospective callers.
2. Team Aarth-Astha participated in an Information Mela organized by Saksham at the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Child Guidance Centre, Lady Irwin College which was well attended by parents/guardians of children not only studying at the centre but also in other Special/Integrated/Inclusive schools in Delhi.

Meetings & Workshops: Conducted & Attended

- **Aarth-Astha has been conducted** a two-day workshop on the 'Status of Inclusive Education in Delhi – Steps to move forward' under the Action Aid Project on **24 & 25 November 2008 at 9 am to 4 pm at PRIA.**
- Ms. Radhika Alkazi attended **meeting of partners of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trusts and Allied Trusts** on 18th and 19th of December 2008 Hosted by Arushi, Bhopal.
- VSO has been conducted '**PROGRAMME AREA REVIEW WORKSHOP**' on 18th and 19th of December 2008 at Ranchi. Ms. Shabnam Aggarwal attended the workshop on behalf of Aarth-Astha.
- **THE SAKSHAM MELA:** Team Aarth-Astha participated in a one of its kind information dissemination mela organized by Saksham at the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Child Guidance Centre in Lady Irwin College, Sikandra Road ,New Delhi.

This was well attended by parents and guardians, of children with disabilities, not only from the RAKCGC but also from various other schools in Delhi with special sections.

The queries included those on Assessments both Functional and Academic, possibilities for Pre-Vocational/Vocational Training including Names and Addresses of Institutions imparting such training, Medical Treatment and Second Opinion on Diagnosis, Disability Certificates, Legal Guardianships, Employment Possibilities among other things.

Parents have been calling the helpline from time to time for clarifications or information on various issues related to disabilities.

- **WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATING DISABILITY ISSUES IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:**

The workshop was organized by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority on November 7,2008 at the Delhi Secretariat.

It was a workshop that was well attended by persons with disabilities as well as organizations working for their cause.

The workshop oriented the participants towards the problems faced by persons with disabilities and suggested structural and spatial modifications that could be made to facilitate movements and quick evacuation from confined areas, in the event of a natural calamity.

They also invited suggestions from the audience, to be sent or forwarded to DDMA by post or through e-mail.

- **WORKSHOP ON AUTISM:**

A two days workshop was organized at VIMHANS on Autism on Nov 21 – 22,2008.

This included information sharing about the Autism Spectrum Disorder – the early signs, diagnosis, assessment, early intervention, behaviour modification and sensory integration issues.

The workshop proceedings also touched upon the importance of regular therapies that could be used to teach such individuals skills which if persistently followed could lead to the establishment of a vocation that could ensure long term economic and functional independence.

Ms Madhur Bhandari of Akshay Pratishthan and Ms Shubhra Mukherjee of Udaan shared their experiences of working with persons falling in the Autistic Spectrum and how activities could be modified to teach them eye-hand coordination and increase attention span.

The parents contributed by sharing their thoughts and personal experiences.

- **WORKSHOP ON RIGHTS OF THE GIRL CHILD:**

A workshop was arranged at the India International Centre On Dec 8, by the India International Centre, the Womens' Studies Unit of Janaki Devi college & Women's Coalition Trust on "**Where does the girl child stand on India's graph of human rights of children?**"

The workshop was well attended by people from different backgrounds most of whom were college students.

Ms. Razia Ismail Abbasi, of the Women's Coalition Trust conducted the entire session. We were appraised of the present status of the girl child. Though there are several provisions as far as women's rights go only a few have got implemented. Despite legal implications, female feticide is on the rise, thereby tilting the male-female ratio. The traumatic consequences arising from gender discrimination, domestic violence, rape and dowry related issues continue to plague young girls and women even today.

The whole group agreed, in principle, that fighting for their rights is an uphill and time consuming task.

Aarth-Astha was invited for active participation, which was agreed upon. It was also emphasized that Aarth-Astha would especially like to also work towards the cause of girls/women with disabilities and any participation from the student community to forward the cause would be welcome.

- **DELHI HELPLINES MEETING :**

The Delhi Helplines Meeting with Ms Rekha Wadhvani of the Telephones Helpline Association (THA- UK) was organized by TARSHI ,New Delhi on Dec 11,2008.

Rekha Wadhvani is currently the CEO of THA. The meeting was arranged to, learn about Rekha's experiences of running a Helpline Network including the advantages and challenges that the Telephone Helpline Association faces. Rekha who specializes in developing creative income schemes and ensuring that the organization is financially sustainable for the future.

Following Rekha's presentation, the participants introduced themselves and their areas of concern along with the challenges in running the same were discussed.

New Projects

- Sent a project proposal to SSA on Creating Inclusive Environments in Education; collaboration with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Delhi, to work towards the provision of quality inclusive education. We have received consent letter from the U.E.E. mission and would like us to focus on the area of Madanpur Khadar and Sangam Vihar.
- Sir Dorabji Tata Trust proposal on Aarth-Astha Disability Resource sent again after the changes suggested by SDTT.

Current projects

Inclusive education

In the month of October, analysis of the survey of 250 families was done completely. Tables were formatted and all percentages were calculated. The tables were formatted with different perspectives.

By the end of October, Focus group discussions were started, which continued for the entire month of November. These focus Group discussions were done in the community on major issues that have come up from the community itself, through the survey and meetings. One of the purposes of these discussions was to create awareness and mobilize the community so as to realize the right to education and its importance for their children. These discussions were to facilitate the group to come up with their own views about the issue, and also giving them information and motivating them to act for their children's right to education specifically. Different strategies were used while conducting these discussions like doing small skits, using posters and charts, telling example stories, giving problem solving activities etc

Major findings from these focus group discussions, which were conducted on topics like importance of education, dropouts, security of children, children with disability and their education, Inclusion, girls' education, quality of education, facilities in schools, role of parents and community in children's education, and rules and regulation followed in the schools, are as follows:

- Parents want good education for their children, but they are not aware of their role in attaining it, beyond sending their children to schools. There is a feeling that the child is entering the school means he/she is being given proper education. Very few parents are actually aware of what is being taught to their children. The reasons were found to be: uneducated parents and lack of importance among parents themselves.
- Parents are eager to know all the possible actions that can be taken to assure good quality of education for their children in schools. But it would take time to make them actually act for the same.
- It was seen that parents are not very open to go to schools to ask basic queries related to their children. Although parents do have concerns regarding how the child is performing, when and what amount of fees is to be given, when are the parent-teacher meetings held etc., but they are reluctant to go to schools directly.
- Another prominent finding was that children drop out of schools primarily due to situations at home like poor financial conditions, parent's sickness, taking care of siblings, etc, for which children are expected to leave school and extend their help at home. It was seen that mostly girls dropped out of schools for such family requirements.
- There are serious concerns related to safety of children, whether in homes, on roads or at schools. Especially for girls, many have dropped out because of this safety concern.
- While discussing the role of family and community in children's education, there were many questions that parents had so as to clarify that how should they behave with their children.
- While talking about disability and education of children with disability, many parents were of opinion that how would these children manage at school, who'll take care of their special needs? They said that schools do not cater these

children well. They do not even give admissions to all, only physically challenged children are able to attend.

- While talking to a group of young school going girls, exercise was given to them so as to think about certain changes and modifications that they feel would help children with disability. The same point was reiterated that children with disability should be attending special school meant for them. They would benefit from them in a better way.
- A need, for more sensitization and awareness about education of children with disability and the concept of inclusion, was felt in the community.

In the month of the October, with the PIL put up by Shri Ashok Aggrawal, highlighting the fact that the students with disabilities do not get a barrier free environment in Government schools, they are also not provided with special books and guidance for the education, a streamlined action oriented focus was provided to the project. Aarth organized a two-day workshop on 'Inclusive Education in Delhi – Steps to move forward' to have concrete suggestions from varied experts. Members of the disability sector, as well as representatives from private schools, the IEDC cell of the Delhi government and the Education Department of the Delhi government attended this workshop.

There were discussions on the following areas:

- Inclusive Education, its Philosophy and implementation and some debates.
- Making school buildings child friendly with some very innovative ideas from the experts regarding easily accessible schools to all, which can be incorporated without any major re- construction work.
- Voices of young adults with disability so as to share their experiences at special as well as regular school system in terms of positives and negatives of each set up. Their sharing gave the group a better understanding of actual issues of concern of people with disability.
- Child friendly curriculum, some innovative modifications with respect to Inclusion
- Insights from schools practicing Inclusion

To initiate and strengthen the partnership between schools and community, a group discussion was done along with one schoolteacher. People got a chance to get answers for their queries directly. There were many queries in relation to how child can be re-admitted after a long vacation, how can child write his exam if he/she has missed on due to illness, what fees is to be given, how a child can take a leave for one day, after how many days and under which circumstances the names would be cut.

Collection of various schemes for education of girls, children with disability, and children from SC/ST and Minority background also continued in the month of November with simultaneous translation in Hindi. Along with schemes, information based on the need felt in the community was also collected and included in a leaflet form.

'Taare Zammen Par' was screened for about 150 people, from both Govindpuri and Lal Kuan, including parents and children. The film was screened with a purpose to reach out to more people and take their views on inclusion and education of children with disability. Many people could relate to the movie, especially the ones with disability and the ones who had some person with disability in their family.

Pictures were taken to capture few aspects of barriers that all children face while accessing their right to education, with specific focus on children with disability. Issues of safety and transport along with family situations leading to challenges for children to attain education were mainly captured in these pictures.

This Action Aid project on Inclusive Education has got over in December.

UNCRPD Toolkit is near to finish. Work on the toolkit took a backseat in the quarter with so much other work on other projects like Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and SSA proposal.

Staff

Ms. Suchita Kumar has been appointed in Helpline.