



July 15 - September 15

**Empowering rural India. One child at a time.**

**[www.workanhour.org](http://www.workanhour.org)**



## About Work An Hour

Each year, people from around the world come together in a demonstration of great human spirit, to help educate underprivileged children in India.

Work An Hour, or WAH, as it is popularly known, is a summer-long, global, online fundraising campaign based on a simple concept. **Participants are asked to symbolically Work an Hour towards the cause of children's education by donating an hour's worth or more of their salary.**

This year, the event begins on July 15 and concludes on September 15 spanning through India's Independence Day on August 15 and Teachers' Day on September 5. Fifteen projects across Asha have been showcased in this year's WAH. Donors will have the ability & are highly encouraged to give to a project of their choice.

Asha's project partners selected for WAH, support typically require larger sums of money, more than what a single Asha chapter can raise, in order to facilitate fixed expenditure on items such as infrastructure, construction and other one-time costs and recurring expenses.

All Asha projects are closely monitored by Asha project coordinators to ensure that the funds are being properly utilized and the proposed benefits are actually being realized by the children in the project.

The first WAH campaign started in 1998, raised over \$30,000 from close to 700 donors. Last year, WAH raised over \$140,000 with a donor base of over 1,250 participants. Projects chosen in the past included a wide range of education initiatives, such as educating slum children, supporting schools for the disabled and non-formal education centers, educating children of sex workers, mitigating child labor etc. This year's campaign addresses the empowerment of rural and tribal communities.



## **2008 Theme: Empowering rural India. One child at a time.**

**In 2007, WAH raised over \$140,000 with a donor base of over 1,250 donors from around the world.**

To commemorate WAH's eleventh year of online fundraising, Asha for Education is highlighting projects in rural India. The Indian economy is primarily agrarian. Even through the current free market & globalization, more than 70% of the country still depends on agriculture and related industries based in the heartlands. While there are fantastic reports of economic growth and tremendous increase in GDP, over 27.5% of the people still live below the poverty line.

There are several sectors that assist in gauging the well being of people such as agriculture, education, economy, environment, health, human rights, poverty, Right to Information, Women's rights, Child rights etc. In all these baselines, rural India falls short of acceptable standards.

Economic policies of the government has left the Indian markets open for industrialization, while promising jobs and increased remuneration in return. However, these perks have come at the cost of damage to the environment, thereby risking the health & wrenching basic necessities such as drinking water and cultivable lands. Previously existing modes of livelihood have been wiped out by the installation of some of the industries.

Ongoing agrarian crisis over the last two decades has seen a spate of farmers' suicide. Several noted observers like P. Sainath, have attributed the crisis to inadequate social infrastructure available at the village and district levels. While the cost of cultivation has increased, there is uncertainty in the agricultural enterprise that leads to fluctuations in the market. This consequently has driven the farmers to extreme poverty & indebtedness. Needless to say, all other aspects of life which is dependent on money are adversely affected. Children of rural communities in particular suffer due to the state of their parents poverty through hunger and ill health, so also from lack of social support infrastructure in terms of schools, books, teachers, grievance centers etc. They lose out to their peers in the urban areas should they choose a different way of life. India is also yet to emerge from social prejudices which marginalize communities of people, the tribals and Dalits in particular. Constitutional rights and laws exist to allow them privileges. However there are gaps in the Government's efforts at their implementation.

In October 2005, the Right to Information Act (RTI) came into effect. Although this Act has its weaknesses, it has been viewed as a landmark in India's drive towards an open and accountable government. Similarly, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (NREGA) which was enacted by the Govt in August 2005, guaranteed one hundred days of employment, at a minimum, in every financial year to members of any rural household who are willing to do unskilled manual labor. Several groups, both individuals and agencies have tried to put

**Planning Commission, Govt. of India, estimates more than 300 million people live Below Poverty Line**



RTI & NREGA to use in striving for a more just administrative system.

**Education is seen as a way to empower people to take measures and fight for their rights.** Since literacy rates in rural India are abysmal and adult literacy much more difficult to achieve, children's education takes priority with the help of the National Policy for Compulsory Education 1986, for children under 14 years of age.

Asha for Education recognizes gaps in India's efforts to combat the problems in rural India and seeks to fill them by supporting grassroots, community-based NGOs that work to strengthen the educational needs of India's children. By increasing access and opportunities to education for all children in India and rural communities in particular, Asha for Education volunteers believe that a better standard of living can be achieved for the rural population. Our 2008 projects, detailed below, are based in rural parts of the country and focus on innovative ways of strengthening the school systems through better infrastructure, adequate supplies and teachers. By supporting these 15 projects, participants from around the world are contributing towards not only educating a child, a village or a community - but also indirectly towards ending the ills of child labor. WAH presents a unique opportunity where participants' own income from work can help alleviate a problems encountered by children in marginalized communities.

## 2008 Projects

### 1. Asha Samajik Vidyalaya

**Location:** Mahe, Samastipur, Bihar. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Philadelphia

Asha Samajik Vidhyalaya was started by Manoj Kumar, an Asha for Education volunteer in 2005 to initiate the process of education amongst the mushar and chamar community in Gonwara. Child labor is prevalent in brick kilns in the region with untouchability, exploitation, poverty, illiteracy and consequent lack of awareness plaguing the community. The vision that Manoj brought to the community was to use education as a tool for initiating a social movement thereby empowering such marginalized communities. The center acts as a bridge school to integrate children into the government schools.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Support teacher salaries and other education related materials including books, uniforms, health camp for children and other reoccurring expenses.

**Budget:** \$5,235 US

### 2. Balia Gram Unnayan Samity

**Location:** Hoogly District, West Bengal. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** UIUC

Balia Gram Unnayan Samity (BGUS) was formally established in 1979 and is based in Balia village of West Bengal with ten centers in the neighboring villages. It works in diverse spheres encompassing education, health, sanitation, nutrition, income generation, agriculture and environment among the underprivileged in the Haripal Block of Hooghly district.



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**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable funding the construction of a reading room/ computer center and additional money will go into re-construction/ infrastructure development of two pre-primary schools. **Budget:** \$29,850 US

### **3. Gram Vikas Trust - Balwadi Project**

**Location:** Bharuch, Bharuch District, Gujarat. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Dallas

In the drought prone coastal community of Bharuch district, the population is primarily dependent on farming and yearly monsoons. Due to uncertainty in the environmental conditions, the farmers are forced to migrate to nearby areas and work in the mines and factories. The direct result is high drop out rate of children from schools and low literacy rates in general. This is where Gram Vikas Trust comes into the picture with the goal of enabling self development, action and empowerment of the community through education.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Help with construction of Balwadi on Lakhigam and provide for basic furniture and educational toys for the children.

**Budget:** \$11,675 US

### **4. Jeevan Gnanodaya**

**Location:** Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Cornell and Atlanta

The focus at Jeevan Gnanodaya is children with hearing impairment. Over the last two decades, the organization has identified children with acute hearing loss and provided them with hearing aids & other learning materials; the need for formal education at the center is addressed through speech therapy. Currently, through an initiative along the lines of ITI, Jeevan Gnanodaya has helped students graduate with vocational skill set, making them highly competitive & widened their spectrum of choices to include employment in factories with better remuneration.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable funding for furniture at their facility & a van to shuttle their students to the ITI training center.

**Budget:** \$15,825 US

### **5. Jeevan Sadhana Vidya Niketan, Shanti Sadhana Ashram**

**Location:** Shantivan, Guwahati, Kamrup District, Assam. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Irvine

Jeevan Sadhana Vidya Niketan is the educational wing of Shanti Sadhana Ashram & has been active in the Tribal areas of Assam since 1989. Marginalized as these communities are, poverty is rampant & literacy rate is a paltry 20% or less. Most people in this area migrate for employment. Children in particular become embroiled in an undesirable situation, are forced into labor and in time, it becomes difficult to extricate them from this mire since they miss school for extended duration & get left behind by their peers in formal schools.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable construction of the two schools in Uloni and Dikchak.

**Budget:** \$8,895 US



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## **6. Kaorakhali Jana Sevashram**

**Location:** South Twenty Four Parganas District, West Bengal. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Minnesota

Kaorakhali Jana Sevashram (KJSA) was established with a view of providing education to the children of Kaorakhali village. The schools run by KJSA provide pre-primary education without which a number of children would find entrance to government primary schools extremely difficult. Pre-primary education instills a love for learning in the children and provides them with an introduction to reading, writing and arithmetic. KJSA schools are the only such institution available in that area.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable funding for ongoing efforts in fulfilling the organization's short term goals in constructing toilets & providing for mid-day meals.

**Budget:** \$12,000 US

## **7. Mandra Lions Club**

**Location:** Puruliya District, West Bengal. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Stanford

Mandra Lions Club (MLC) was a youth group that has been involved in many projects related to the betterment of socio-economic issues faced by the community, education of children in areas both remote and rural. MLC had become a representative of the West Bengal Education Network (WBEN) as well as National Alliance for the Fundamental Rights to Education (NAFRE).

**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable funding for teachers salaries & some recurring expenses

**Budget:** \$10,630 US

## **8. Mukti**

**Location:** Sundarbans, West Bengal. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** NYC/NJ

In the Sundarban, where land and fresh water is limited by the surrounding salt water, crippling economic hardship is their primary hurdle for neither do the communities reap more than one crop a year nor do they find accessible markets for their produce. Obvious side effects of being financially challenged such as absence of any health care facilities within a 3 to 4 hour radius & access to education are quite evident. This is where Mukti (Freedom) comes into play.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Provide a much needed library to house the book bank. This building will also serve as a place for students to study and provide resources for adults in health & agriculture.

**Budget:** \$15,625 US



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### **9. Ratanmani Vidyalaya**

**Location:** South Tripura District, Tripura. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Canada

Ratanmani Vidyalaya provides non-formal education for children in and around Baishnabpur, Sabroom Subdivision of South District of Tripura, who dropout of school for various reasons. This school was recently recognized by the State Government as a formal primary education school.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable construction of an additional building for the school and further expansion of hostel facilities for the children.

**Budget:** \$9,050 US

### **10. Sanatan Rishikul Ashram Seva Trust (SRISHTI)**

**Location:** Sambalpur, Sambalpur District, ORISSA, Tripura. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Cleveland

SRISHTI serves the underprivileged Kissan, Munda and Oram tribes living within a forest reserve area. SRISHTI established the first high school in the gram panchayat, started an environmental awareness program and brought the much needed health program to the community where malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy are rampant due to malnutrition and lack of hygiene.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Support the salaries, midday meals and other recurring expenses.

**Budget:** \$11,150 US

### **11. Shristi Special Academy**

**Location:** Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore, Karnataka. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Austin

Shristi Special Academy enables independence among the mentally challenged, developmentally delayed, and those with autism and attention deficit hyperactive disorders of all ages.

Shristi's programs are characterized by personalized individual interventions for each child and a holistic approach, which includes all areas of growth and development.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Support the ongoing and new efforts of Shristi at the Autism Unit which is teachers' salary & construction of their new facility.

**Budget:** \$17,500 US

### **12. Srividyaashram Nursery and Private School**

**Location:** Papanasam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Central NJ

Srividyaashram Nursery and Private School brings quality, modern and value-based education to the much neglected rural area. The small hamlet nestles on the banks of the River Cauvery, 21 kms from Kumbakonam on the bus route to Thiruvaiyaru, inhabited predominantly by agricultural laborers with options only for seasonal employment.

**Your contribution through WAH:** Enable construction of an additional classroom at the school.

**Budget:** \$9,000 US



**Asha for Education**

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### **13. SVYM-VTCL (Viveka Tribal Centre for Learning)**

**Location:** Heggadadevanakote, Mysore District, Karnataka. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Boston MIT

With the holistic vision of empowering the community, SYVM started the Viveka Tribal center for Learning bringing the much needed education to the tribal community. The Viveka Tribal Centre for Learning at Hosahalli, a semi-residential school provides quality education to over 400 children. This school serves all tribal colonies in H.D.Kote district. Facilities such as Classrooms, Laboratory for Experiential Learning in Science, which would have otherwise been outside the reach of this school are available to the students only due to generous contributions from donors.

**Your contribution through WAH: Fund** the Mobile Science Lab initiative at Viveka Tribal Training Center.

**Budget:** \$9,823 US

### **14. SVYM- VTTRC (Vivekananda Teacher's Training and Research Center)**

**Location:** Heggadadevanakote, Mysore District, Karnataka. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** San Diego

The same organization, before too long, realized yet another key challenge - trained teachers willing to work in tribal areas were hard to find. This brought about the genesis of Vivekananda Teacher's Training and Research Center to train tribal students and enable them to get a formal qualification in teaching. This will not only help improve the quality of learning amongst the tribal children, but also provide much needed employment opportunity to the upcoming generation of tribals.

**Your contribution through WAH: Fund** Teacher's Training costs for 20 students at Vivekananda Teacher Training and Research center.

**Budget:** \$6,500 US

### **15. Vigyan Ashram - Center of Science and Technology**

**Location:** Pabal, Pune District, Maharashtra. **Supporting Asha Chapter:** Seattle

Vigyan Ashram was established on the principle of Rural Development through Education Systems (RDES) and eventually into Introduction to Basic Technology (IBT) as a means of enabling technology transfer through education. The model is currently implemented in more than 25 schools across Maharashtra.

**Your contribution through WAH: This** residential school needs up-gradation of its hostel facility in addition to support for teachers' remuneration & other recurring expenses for this year.

**Budget:** \$34,538 US



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## **Rural India – Fact Sheet**

50% dropout rate among children in rural India before they reach Grade 5. (UNESCO)<sup>1</sup>

The largest number of working children – 127 million – age 14 and under is in the Asia-Pacific region. (ILO)<sup>1</sup>

On any given day more than 25% of rural school teachers in India, fail to show up for work (WB)<sup>2</sup>

One farmer in India commits suicide every 30 minutes. What happens to their children? (P. Sainath)

Approximately 16.64% of villages in the country do not have facilities for primary schooling. (UNICEF)<sup>3</sup>

Of India's 700,000 rural schools, only one in six have toilets deterring children especially girls from going to school, and if enrolled, in remaining there. (UNICEF)<sup>4</sup>

1. "Facts on Child Labour." International Labour Organization. June 2004  
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/download/child/childday04.pdf>

2. Years 2004-2005. World Bank.

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/36660\\_Teacher\\_absence\\_in\\_India\\_EEA\\_9\\_15\\_04\\_-\\_South\\_Asia\\_session\\_version.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/36660_Teacher_absence_in_India_EEA_9_15_04_-_South_Asia_session_version.pdf)

3. "Global Campaign for Education – more teachers needed." UNICEF. April 24, 2006.  
[http://www.unicef.org/india/education\\_1551.htm](http://www.unicef.org/india/education_1551.htm)

4. "Primary School years." UNICEF, [http://www.unicef.org/india/children\\_166.htm](http://www.unicef.org/india/children_166.htm)



## About Asha for Education

Asha for Education is a global non-profit organization dedicated to catalyzing socioeconomic change in India through the education of underprivileged children. The organization is registered as a 501(c)3 organization in the United States and all donations are fully tax deductible (tax ID number 77-0459884). Donations made in other countries are tax deductible as per the local laws.

Asha for Education has been an innovative supporter of secular and non-political educational projects throughout India for the past 15 years. Created by three students at Berkeley in 1991, the organization has amassed a group of people, from all over the world, seeking to foster idealism and egalitarianism. It has become a magnet for students, young professionals, and those who simply want a chance to contribute to the betterment of the world. There are currently over 60 chapters worldwide, with 45 in the United States alone.

Comprised of over 1,000 volunteers, Asha for Education has raised over \$12 million in the past fifteen years, and supported over 400 projects all over India. With minimal overhead costs, mainly borne by volunteers, the organization is able to send 100% of donations directly to projects. But Asha for Education is not just a funding agency; it is also a partner with those grass-roots organizations who are doing the daily work to make a change in their communities and in their country. Asha creates a relationship, built on trust, friendship, and shared ideals, with our project partners. Volunteers must personally visit a project site before funding can commence, and thereafter, a steward will regularly communicate with local directors and leads to provide support, advice, and most importantly, act as humble cheerleader of the incredible work they are doing everyday.

Charity Navigator, the premier independent evaluator of charities in the US, has for the past three years awarded Asha for Education with its highest four-star rating in the categories "Top Ten Charities Worth Watching" and "Top Ten Slam Dunk charities." This accolade recognizes Asha's low overhead costs, efficiency in fundraising and our donor privacy policy. For more information, please visit <http://www.ashanet.org>.

## Contacts

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