

Proposal title: SHIKHA

Name of the NGO : Development Action Society

Supported by : SUAS

Date of project period : January '06 to March '07

Date of report: 30/01/07

Executive Summary : DAS has been working in the field of education, health and vocational training for the marginalized children and their families since a decade in southeast Kolkata (ward nos.105,106,107,108,91,58,57) and in the Panchayat areas of Ucchepota,Kalaraitgram,Kantatala and Paschim Chariswar. DAS is also tracking in 29 KPSC (Kolkata Primary School Council) schools ensuring retention of 3020 primary school goers.

The areas, where DAS is working are mostly rural in character but some of the areas have been added on to Kolkata Municipal Corporation area. The people work in unorganised sectors. The basic development infrastructures like health, education and communication are woefully inadequate in the designated target area. The inhabitants have migrated in most cases from deeper hinterland in search of livelihood. Being afflicted by poverty, education and health care are way down in their priority list in which a single square meal remains a dominant factor. The community literacy level is low,pre-occupation of parents to achieve a subsistence leads to utter neglect of children, health and hygiene is rudimentary.

The local self govt. bodies lack both the inclination and financial capacity to introduce the much needed community development programs in the near future.

DAS has used rights based and service delivery approaches to address the needs of the target population.DAS's education, health and vocational training interventions to the target population have been sustainable in respect of 45.6% students academic performance to enter formal school, 50.3% improved health status of both women and children and enhanced earning capacity of 40.2% women to augment their family income.4 women support groups formed to address problems in the near future. The deliverables to supplement the core components to ensure holistic development have been in the form of trainings, awareness and advocacy on different issues to achieve the goal of improving the quality of life through education, health and community mobilization thus, sustaining the positive effects by empowering the women through vocational training.

DAS complements the Govt's SSA objectives(Govt policy) of bringing and preparing out of school children the (NFE) with the main objective of mainstreaming and retaining children in Govt.school, the ultimate beneficiary of the NFE program. Hence, this year, DAS reached out to **593** non – school going children through 6 pre-school and 4 preparatory centres further enrolling and re-enrolling **190** out of school and drop-out children at the beginning of the session in our different centres.**121** children are retained through the two tutorial centres at Ucchepotagram and Arupota (Kishalaya and Nabadeep) .Mainstreaming and retaining children in formal schools is a challenge to DAS due to SSA's major failings. It doesn't have a strategy to retain children in school. Many schools have unqualified para-teachers hired on contract whereby the quality of

education suffers as SSA is obsessed with numbers, enrolment figures are often fudged to hide drop-outs and poor attendance rates. Retaining children in formal schools is a continuous and constant challenges due to absenteeism and the problems the children face, taking care of siblings, has to work, teacher-student ratio is abysmally poor. Most of the parents cannot produce birth certificates at the time of admission that results refusal in formal school. At the same time the parents are unable to support the hidden costs involved in the free primary and upper primary education system.

Children's Parliament, a forum of 55 budding children encode their problems existing within their community. They are being trained on Life skills to cope with life situations and also share with them about their rights on a continuous basis. The peer group formed with 3 girls from Nabadeep further train the peers of different centers on HIV/AIDS. These interventions have largely been possible because of community participation and ownership to a great extent.

Some of the learning is summarized as thus:

Most of the hard earned money by both the spouses in the target areas is spent in consumption of liquor which leads to family violence. Unity and cohesion is non-existent within the community. So there is no collective voice either demanding basic rights or against violence/atrocities on women and children. Women bear the responsibility of the family and children thereby being empowered through skill development but yet to collectively address problems specifically related to health and education. The reality for many of the economically deprived families is that both parents and children are unable to see the relevance of education in their day to day lives. Even the formal school going children get demotivated due to lack of knowledge base or learning blocks developed initially at the primary stage as being promoted to next class every year without assessment that leads to in competency thus drop-out in upper primary and high school. DAS would attempt to create self-managed collective groups of women whose skills shall be developed with additional inputs from DAS, there by strengthening their economic capacity to have a greater voice.

In this project, DAS attempts to look at education, health and vocational trainings for enhanced sustainability trying to overcome the challenges by making the community participate to take the leading role to be pro-active to forge mechanisms in development initiatives through team building.

2.HIGHLIGHTS

2.1 Organizational: After working for few years in the mentioned field area, it has been observed that still some out comes of the previous intervention related to education, health, vocational training and empowering women have remained unachieved at least upto the desired level. Through the process of project implementation it has been perceived that education, health and vocational training alone are proving to be inadequate for the target areas fraught with problems. There is a need to conduct a comprehensive baseline survey using scientific methodologies and thereby re-integrate other intervention addressing cross-cutting issues that has a direct bearing on the core components of education, health and vocational training.

A strong realization has emerged through interactions and field level operations, to continue the interlinked support systems for individual development through

- **Education:** DAS efforts to provide support to the formal education system to target, enroll and retain vulnerable children in schools. Efforts to emphasize in the communities – a child's right to education and quality of education.
- **Tutorial centres(back-up support) :** Reduce drop-out rates through this support. Empower the first generation learners and this support also act as a common platform to share their problems. After they graduate can start to sustain the center by acting as coaching teachers.
- **Child protection:** Will be institutionalized in all the centers and community based mechanisms will be developed to protect the safety of children.
- **Health and Hygiene:** Clinics and health camps ensure better standard of living. The purpose of health care in communities is for prevention,treatment,and promotion of health. Develop linkage with Govt. hospitals by training community health workers that will be sustained through community initiative.
- **Vocational training for sustainability and self help group's:** Implies empowering women of the community to improve their quality of life holistically through enhanced participation and collective effort.DAS's approach is based on principles of responsible well being to sustainable development and transformation through skill development thus forming SHG's.
- **Child tracking both in primary and upper primary schools:** Prevent drop-out rates to ensure retention in formal Govt. schools. Networking with Govt. officials, meeting with teachers of respective schools.
- **Constructing School building at Makaltala:** DAS mandate, emphasize on its vision of promoting education for vulnerable children thereby focuses on promoting right to education for children by operating a school for 80 children in the dilapidated local facility in Makaltala supported by SUAS which remained non-functional for many years. There is no primary school accentuating the high-out of school rate for children prevalent in the area. Thus there is a need to construct the school-building anew after demolishing the existing broken-down structure which may strengthen the regular school for the children as well as a community centre from which many development actions could be initiated.
- **Resource cum Training centre:** In its years of work in south-east Kolkata,there is a need to constantly supervise the programs in our work area and to involve the community in the implementation process with adequate measures and strategies for capacity building in various aspects of holistic community development. There is an urgent need to have a central resource centre that will compile and consolidate the invaluable work done so far. The resource cum training centre will document these past experiences and provide framework for future action. It will also train marginalized women to generate increased income for improving their quality of life. It will also function as a training centre for the continuous up gradation of the skills of the teachers and other staff in pedagogy, curriculum, organize various training, conduct workshop, meetings with stakeholders. The resource cum training centre will act as a platform for the community people to come together for the much needed sharing and exchange of thoughts and ideas on developing paradigms. This centre will be utilized for documentation, library

for children and all level staff, computer learning centre for the disadvantaged and emergency support centre for traumatized children.

➤ **Reaching the unreached in unserved remote areas of Kolkata**

2.2 Fund raising: DAS raises major funds for projects, community contribution towards programs, individual donors support the staff welfare fund, corpus fund, building fund and general donation to meet the short gap period of fund approval and sanction.

Funding for projects 2006:

<u>Name of Projects</u>	<u>Amount(in Rs.)</u>
1) SUAS (Ireland)	15,86,300.00
2) GOAL (Ireland)	16,65,520.00
3) REACH (India ,sub grantee –Cini Asha)	7,75,048.00
4) SAVE THE CHILDREN (UK)	3,50,000.00
5) NCLP (South-24 parganas)	2,44,400.00
6) SHIKSHALAYA (West Bengal)	1,47,800.00
7) SHIKSHALAYA –MID DAY MEAL	57,178.00

Individual donation

1) STAFF WELFARE FUND	3,01,318.00
2) CORPUS FUND	1,86,656.00
3) BUILDING FUND	69,000.00
4) GENERAL DONATION	1,31,870.00
5) COMMUNITY DONATION	40,274.00

2.3 Curricular: The core team reviewed the existing curriculum for its relevance to the students context, prepared the syllabus, and TLM developed to adapt the learning material as per the needs of the students. Lesson plans are prepared by the teachers for effective teaching in the pre-school/preparatory /NOS and coaching classes. The teachers use lesson designs in achieving specific learning out comes. They also use a range of teaching methods using a variety of learning aids. Continuous and comprehensive assessments are done to evaluate the progress of each child. The term exams determines their appropriate levels.

Education(Non-formal):

Number of preparatory centres	- 4
Number of pre-school	- 6
Number of NOS	- 1
Number of children	- 593

Education(formal):

Number of tutorial centres	- 2
Number of children	-190

2.4 Extra curricular:

Centre wise:

Sl.no.	Name of schools	Activities
1	Anadalok pre school	Games(indoor and outdoor),Singing, Zoo visit
2	Kishalaya school	Games(indoor and outdoor),Singing, Zoo visit

3	Nabanir school	Drawing competition,games,Singing,Zoo visit
4	Mukulbithi school	Drawing,Singing,Sports,Science city visit
5	Nabadeep school	Drawing,Singing,Sports,Zoo visit
6	Nabaujjal school	Drawing,Singing,Sports,Zoo visit

Workshops held:

Sl.no.	Workshops/Trainings/ Awareness/Advocacy	Held at	Number of Participants	Month/Date
1.	Health training	Makaltala	50 mothers	2.2.06
2.	Health training	Arupota	33 mothers	27.1.06
3.	Coaching Teacher's training	Office	23 teachers	12.1.06, 13.1.06
4.	HIV/AIDS training by peer group	Arupota	10 children	20.2.06, 21.2.06 22.2.06
5.	HIV/AIDS training by peer group	Anandapur	12 children	6.3.06, 7.3.06, 8.3.06
6.	Children's parliament meeting	Office	22 children	12.5.06
7.	Life Skill Training	Ucchepota	30 children(10- 18yrs)	31.5.06, 1.6.06, 2.6.06
8.	Children's parliament meeting	Office	20 children	28.6.06
9.	Children's parliament meeting	Office	24 children	8.8.06
10.	Awareness programme on education and cultural programme	Arupota	Community people	10.8.06
11.	Life Skill Training	Arupota	13 children(10- 18 yrs)	16.8.06, 17.8.06
12.	Children's parliament meeting	Office	14 children	21.9.06
13.	Report writing training of teachers	Office	15 teachers	27.10.06
14.	Health training	Makaltala	25 mothers	21.11.06
15.	Children's parliament meeting	Office	49 children	10.11.06
16.	Children's Parliament visit to Digha	Digha	55 children, 6 adults	27.11.06 to 30.11.06
17.	Health training on health&hygiene,HIV	Ucchepota	29 mothers	16.12.06

18.	Awareness on necessity of education	Ucchepota	Community people	24.11.06
19.	Awareness programme on child labour	Chowbaga	Community people	4.12.06
20.	Report writing training to core staffs	Office	7 staffs	16.11.06
21.	EDP training cum exposure to science city		49 mothers	31.12.06

Community Participation:

Communities	Number of mother's meeting	Number of club meeting
Anandapur	6	4
Arupota	6	5
Makaltala	5	Nil
Chariswar	6	3
Chowbaga	5	3
Ucchepota	4	4

2.5 Vocational training:

- (i) Number of vocational centres: 4
- (ii) Number of trainees: 49
- (iii) Break up of trainees per vocational training centre with trades:

Name of centre	Trades	Number of older girls/women
Suchetna	Tailoring, embroidery, cutting and stitching	8
Shilpi	Chalk making, mattress making	20
Sujog	Jute handicrafts, candle making, soft toys	9
Shristi	Jute handicrafts and advanced jute crafts	12

- (iv) Income from sale proceeds: Rs. 74,691.00
- (v) Labour charges to the skilled women: Rs.26,636.50
- (vi) Outcomes(Indicators) :
 - * Involvement in income generating activities
 - * Ownership and control over assets
 - * Perception of own well-being
 - * Participation in local exhibitions
 - * Mobility

2.6 Health:

Month	Makaltala patients	Diseases treated	Chariswar patients	Diseases treated
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January to December	501	Common ailments(highly prevalent skin disease)	76	Common ailment(highly prevalent abdominal problems and ear infections)
			Number of cases referred - 2	

3. Challenges and Solutions:

- The class IX students of Kishalay coaching had difficulty in understanding the pure science subjects and English due to lack of knowledge base of the on going teacher .This backlog in the subjects is being tutored by placing efficient teachers. Honorarium of the teachers has been adjusted from the unspent balance.
- The KALAM means “pen” Youth groups objective is to identify disadvantage children, who can express their thoughts and ideas in the form of poems.2500 children from different NGO s participated in this activity named ‘KHOLA BAKSHA’.From our work area itself 600 children participated. Four of DAS children’s poem ,2 from Kishalay coaching centre and 2 from Anandalok centre have been selected which will be published in the ‘KHOLA BAKSHA’ magazine.
- Exposure-The exposure visit to the zoo had been arranged for the SUAS sponsored children wherein children from Shikhalaya were included As this project has no provision for recreation .
- The three days workshop for 55 children on Life skill and Comics had been arranged in Digha (outstation) away from their home and regular schedule. To learn and to combat the problems existing within their community. The purpose “learning to live where you are to make it a better place”.

4. 2006

Term dates: I st term examination : 21st August ’06 to 25th August ‘06

II nd term examination : 4th December’06 to 15th December ‘06

III rd term examination : 2nd April ’07 to 10th April’07

Other important dates:(celebrated)

- 1.Netaji’s Birthday – 23.1.06
2. Republic day - 26.1.06
3. Saraswati Puja - 3.1.06
(Goddess of learning)
4. Re-union programme – 22.7.06
5. Annual sports - 29.12.06
6. Teacher’s day - 5.9.06

- 7. Children's day - 14.11.06
- 8. World women's day – 8.3.06
- 9. World Aids day - 1.12.06

4.3 High level objectives/priorities

- 1) Ensure retention of mainstreamed children
- 2) Comprehensive Baseline Survey
- 3) Strengthen the capacity of teachers
- 4) Strengthen the capacity of administrative staff
- 5) Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders, women's group
- 6) Ensure better quality of health by training community health workers
- 7) Construct and equip the Mukulbithi Centre
- 8) Construct DAS Resource cum training centre
- 9) Reaching the unreached in Kolkata
- 10) Tracking in Government schools in South east Kolkata And Panchayat areas.

APPENDIX

1. Success factors of projects include:-

- Committed Personnel for projects – implies principles, minimum standards and indicators that is used for planning, monitoring, review and evaluation.
- Committed group of DAS staff – build the team to work consistently with the community.
- Internalize and institutionalize more deeply into the organizational policy, child protection policy keeping the Mission and Vision of DAS. DAS's Mission is to enable sustainable development in the community through systemic intervention and its vision is to create an environment through Life skill education to tap the treasure within ,the learning potential that is present in every human being.
- DAS's philosophy is maintained amongst all staff (i.e.) not just to educate but also to educe the latent powers of the child by creating a creative and active learning environments.
- Constraints and compromises in projects are met by the team in terms of shortage of time and rapidly changing situations. Timelines of achievements are met within the short period.
- Team(DAS) as trainers in certain thematic areas committed to develop the potential in children.
- Factors to improve:
 - Organisation has to give more emphasis on Accountability. To provide information on effectiveness/efficiency to demonstrate that activities have achieved their objectives.
 - Management support : To provide inputs to the implementation of ongoing initiatives, to inform decision making process.

Learning: To draw lessons on past and present activities with a view to learning why some achieved their objectives or unintended out comes in order to plan future activities.

2. Social changes in the community

	Early Activities	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Community level	Inform community people about initiatives	Large no. of community people come to meetings	Community's attitude shifting to indicate it is getting better	Inter group relations harmonious Improved outcomes on education, health and well-being.
Organisation	Team building to initiate the process	Project well functioning with good leadership	Visible programme successfully implemented	Project has provided reform in the community
Personal network/family	Self help groups formed on the basis of access to fare financial services	Increased participation of the community	Increased informal groups more willing to ask each other for help	Community residents feel comfortable acting when neighbour does something wrong
Individual	Leadership development programmes	Enhanced participation	Leadership emerging in the community activities	Stakeholders running most of the significant cultural, social and political activities in the community

3. Children's parliament

Common changes in the behaviour & attitudes of young parliamentarians.

Are able to communicate effectively in a variety of ways and situations.

Able to confidently participate ,interact and take responsibility in the family.