

Suas Over Head Grants Report

1. Executive Summary

The involvement of volunteers and student trainees at the inception of Prayas in 1988 is an excellent example of the zealous workforce shown by the partner members to give Prayas a name that it owns today. Prayas therefore encourages volunteerism and places volunteers and student trainees from different backgrounds in the various activities of Prayas at grass roots and policy level. This program provides the privileged society an opportunity to serve the not so privileged ones. The volunteers in Prayas are given freedom of expression and ideas and are expected to share novel productive ideas for the betterment of the under privileged children.

Prayas Suas Partnership started in the year 2004 with Suas Volunteer Programme and since then we have received approximately 60 volunteers from Suas through three volunteers programme. These volunteers bring in a lot of enthusiasm and dedication to serve the marginalized sections of the society.

Over the years we have found these volunteers as bright and motivated young people, full of character and promise, who will want to enter fully into the life of the new community and make a noticeable contribution. We are aware that, these volunteers can do wonders with little guidance and support from the organization.

Each volunteer works as teaching assistant in Prayas learning centers besides being associated with other departments/units of Prayas. They help in day to day activities of the classroom, taking children for extra tuition and coordinating extra curricular activities in learning centers, such as sports, drama, origami etc.

Along with the Volunteer programme, Suas also supports the activities through Suas Over Head Grants. Suas Over Head Grants started from March 2006 – March 2007. During the 2005 programme, Prayas received an amount of Rs. 3, 18,000 (approx) to supplement the programmes being implemented by it. Some of the programmes, which were suffering due to the need of further financial support, received a boost with the support

provided by Suas. The benefits of the volunteer programme are availed by the children long after the volunteers have gone. This kind of support speaks volumes of the effort and goodwill of the volunteers. This year Suas has also contributed Rs. 2, 32,000 for the Prayas Educational Resource and Training centre. This centre will directly help in providing quality education services to children. These learning centers do not have adequate funding for the aspects given below, which are also essential for the holistic development of the child. Therefore the support of Suas helped in overcoming these activities which has helped improving the teaching learning environment, motivate both students and teachers.

The main activities included are:

- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Picnics cum Educational trips
- Excursion for the Educators
- Mainstreaming
- Vocational Training
- Health Camps

2. Highlights

To achieve literacy in real terms focus should be on equal development of both scholastic and non scholastic abilities of a child. The Project provided each center with a number of resources- such as story books, materials to conduct **extra-curricular activities**. These resources allowed the teachers and children to work on the number of extra -curricular “fun” activities which are essentially for the holistic development of Child.

For the extra-curricular activities, various activities like workshops for educators were organized. The topics included were preparing Teaching learning Materials for the Educators. These materials enhance the teaching learning process. Also, due to lack of funds, several learning centers were lacking certain basic essentials such as First- Aid Box, Sports kit etc. The Prayas Suas partnership programme enabled Prayas to procure these items for the children. The learning centers were also provided with story books and SCERT syllabus books. This fund helped in establishing a child friendly joyful learning centre in its true sense.

The Project provided Picnics for each centers. Knowledge about ones owns environment is necessary for holistic development. Children visited museums, zoo, India Gate, Doll Museum or different historical places. During these trips, the children were provided with food packets. The trips proved to be an enriching and exciting experience for children.

Since these children are from marginalized sections of the society, visiting these places was dream for them. Therefore, this trips under the Prayas Suas partnership programme was a dream come true for these children. The total 900(approx) children actively participated in Picnics.

The fund for the educational cum exposure visit for teachers in these learning centers will provide them the much needed holiday from their daily work and an opportunity to rejuvenate themselves to work harder. The teachers were taken to different organizations working in the field of education to learn their best practices and incorporate them in the ongoing educational programmes. The Project also supported a bi-annual excursion for the teachers. By providing a modest group outing, the teachers recieved a well - earned break and the opportunity to interact in a non-formal setting.

Two excursions were scheduled during the project:

S.No	Venue	Date	No. of educators attended
1	Sohna	12.04.2006	40
2	Bawana & Jahangirpuri	17.01.2007	40

As known the learning centers are established in communities which are in the low income group, so the level of drop out is very high due to financial constraints .For the same reason a lot of difficulties are faced to bring the child into school or mainstream the child into the formal education system. The Project also supported the hidden costs of mainstreaming of a child for the family who are unable to pay the admission fees at the time of admission. These costs often act as a barrier to poor families. It has helped in increasing the number of enrollment of the children in MCD Schools.

During the last admission session more than 90% of the children were mainstreamed to the formal schools.

Along with the routine studies there is also need to develop the hidden talent in children. Routine studies make the children monotonous. For that vocational training is added in their curriculum, a music teacher is appointed who teaches children vocal music and dance according to the interest of the children. The classes are held twice a week in each center. It relaxes children mind and also help the children to develop their hobby. This also helps in providing the children platform to develop their talent.

Many children in the world grow up in poor environmental conditions, have limited or no access to health services and live in impoverished households. These children are especially susceptible to waterborne disease, are more likely to have deficient diets and stunted growth and are less likely to survive childhood and enter school. To ensure each and every child is attending school regularly, it is important that the child is healthy and fit to do so. The communities in which these learning centers are established are generally illiterate and are of very low income group so their awareness on health and hygiene issues is very poor so no effort is taken by them to ensure a healthy childhood for their children. These communities do not pay attention to minor ailments Therefore health camps conducted at regularly intervals will ensure that every child is healthy ,early detection of diseases so that referral services can be provided and prevent further serious health problems. The Project provided health camps (Quarterly) at each centers. It has provided a very positive impact on the attendance of the children at the centers. Also we have provided financial help to two children at our leaning centers. They were provided with medical assistance as well as financial to continue their medicine. A girl named Mahi admitted to the hospital for a week was suffering from some liver infection, as parents were unable to pay the fees. Help was provided to the parents and some amount of fees was paid. Now Mahi is healthy and attending school and also she is mainstreamed to the formal school in class II. The partnership helped a lot in overcoming the problem and as a result the lingering issue of low attendance was controlled to some extend.

Numbers of health camps are held. All together more than 800 Children are benefited from health camps.

3. Challenges and Solution:

- One very important challenge we come across is Migration. There are number of dropouts in our learning centers because of the migration problem. Which seems to be a persistent problem and at times it is beyond our control (permanent migration). Though we try to curb problems related to seasonal migration through counseling, the inconsistency in the process effects the attainment of the objectives of the programmes.
- Provision of better health services to the children. The children are not taken to the doctor until they are taken ill seriously and their day- to -day minor illnesses are ignored till the time they need serious intervention. This affects the physical as well as the mental well being of the children in an adverse way. The Prayas Suas project has been able to bring relief to the children studying in our centres. Prayas Suas partnership can further incorporate the provision of medical services in the area, perhaps we would be able make a difference in the health conditions of these children.

Future Priorities

- Retention of mainstreamed children in formal schools
- Remedial support to mainstreamed children
- Reaching out to the unreached segment of out-of-school at-risk children
- With the government recently implementing the Child Labour Prohibition Act and the incorporation of children working as domestic child labour and children working in roadside hotels, a large number of children are now out-of-work while still being out-of-school. Prayas has started some initiatives for these children in the form of providing educational services, rehabilitation and vocational services but wishes to reach to more of these children who have been left wandering in different parts of Delhi.