



# *Asha for Education*

## **Eindhoven**

*Eindhoven, The Netherlands.*  
<http://www.ashanet.org/eindhoven>

## **Asha FAQ**

### **1. What is Asha for Education ?**

Asha is a non-profit voluntary organization, dedicated towards increasing literacy among children in India. Its charter is to increase awareness among local communities and provide financial assistance for education to poor and underprivileged children in India. Asha works with grass roots level organizations that conduct educational projects in rural and economically backward areas. The basis of this pursuit is the firm belief that an educated population is a critical requisite as well as an effective catalyst for social and economic change in India.

Asha was started in 1991 when its founding chapter was formed by a group of students studying in the University of Berkeley. The group was named 'Asha' to represent the hope that had brought these individuals together and the hope that education would bring into the lives of children in India. Today it has more than 40 chapters in the United States and chapters in Canada, UK, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Singapore, Switzerland and of course India.

By the end of 2001, Asha has supported more than 100 different projects in many states in India, including the North East. Close to \$1,500,000 has been sent to these projects since 1991. Asha has seen exponential growth in the last 2 or 3 years, raising almost \$1 million in that time.

### **2. How is Asha different from other organizations that have a similar charter?**

Every organization has a focus. Asha's commitment is bringing hope into lives of children in socially and economically backward areas of India by providing much needed education and in some cases, basic amenities also. In fact, Asha often works with other organizations, jointly funding projects or referring and receiving ideas for projects from them. Asha is a zero overhead voluntary organisation. Every cent of your donation goes for the purpose it was meant for.

### **3. How does Asha choose projects?**

Asha chapters receive project proposals from different organizations in India. Members 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 of action, number of children covered, number of people involved in its implementation, an itemized budget and any other relevant information.

Finally, an Asha member visits the project site (at his own expense) to evaluate the facts about the concerned organization, the site and feasibility of the proposed project. He prepares and submits a site visit report, which is then discussed among the volunteers. Through democratic voting the project is approved for funding. The chapters of Asha 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 members and people from the local community to recommend projects that they have first-hand information about and which could be monitored by individuals whom they knew well in India.

### **4. How does Asha monitor projects and ensure that the funds are used correctly?**

In order to monitor the progress of the project, Asha requires the organization conducting the project to provide complete financial and narrative reports along with photographs couple of times every year. In addition, members of Asha going to India visit project sites unannounced to evaluate the progress of the project and verify the reports sent by the organization. Asha reserves the right to terminate funding at any time if it is not completely satisfied with the progress.

Realizing that the children involved are the ones most affected if such a situation arises, members of Asha invest a lot of effort in the initial stages itself while choosing projects and evaluate the credibility of the organizations involved.

### **5. How long does Asha fund each project? What happens to the projects after that?**

Project proposals usually specify the duration for which funding is required from Asha. At the end of the term, some of the projects attain self-sufficiency through support from the Indian government. Some are taken up for financing by other organizations who are satisfied with the progress that has been made and some of them apply to Asha again for funding. Keeping in mind the need to broaden the scope of its impact in India and the need to ensure that existing projects continue to thrive, Asha decides on a case-by-case basis the appropriate course of action. This could be either continuing support for the project or recommending it to other chapters of Asha and/or other organizations that Asha works with.

## **6. How much of donor contributions go towards the organizational costs of Asha?**

None (0%). Asha has a dedicated set of volunteers who bear the cost of all administrative expenses from their own pockets. So one hundred percent of your contributions go towards supporting these projects in India.

## **7. How can I contribute towards Asha's efforts ?**

There are several ways in which you can contribute towards Asha:

- Become a volunteer and contribute your valuable time towards fund raising activities, publicity, event organization, project evaluation and site visits.
- Pledge a monthly donation.
- Make a one time financial contribution.
- Buy Asha Merchandise.

Now you can send an online donation through <http://www.ashanet.org/donate>

## **8. How do I learn more about Asha and its activities?**

Please join us in our regular meetings (email: [eindhoven@ashanet.org](mailto:eindhoven@ashanet.org) or call 0614753105). We meet every Sunday at 5:00pm. We have general meetings where we discuss status/update of the different activities we are working on currently. Meetings are very informal.

Asha has a completely flat structure. Every member has equal voting capacity on all issues. We do, however, have some guidelines on voting on projects and a new volunteer has to attend a number of meetings before being able to vote. We require this just so a new member can achieve a level of familiarity with Asha.

In Asha, every volunteer is a member. There is no official membership criterion. It is purely voluntary, so you can be a part of the group when you have the time to help out and be dormant when you don't. Coming to a meeting is a great way to make new friends too!

## **9. What lies in the future for Asha?**

In the future, Asha hopes to continue playing an important role in the socio-economic development of India.

Asha's vision is outlined below:

- 2050: Universal Primary Education in India.
- 2010: At least one model project in every state.
- 2002: Comprehensive report on Asha-supported projects.

Asha has a lot of very committed volunteers across all chapters who are willing to put in the effort required to bring about a change for the better in India. Over the years, Asha has succeeded in touching the lives of thousands of children across India through the various projects that it has supported.

However, we also realize that there is still a lot to be achieved since there are millions of children in India who do not have access to basic education. Debates and discussions are continuously underway among the volunteers about ways in which we can make a greater impact on the situation. As part of this learning process, we are undertaking projects to evaluate our efforts over the past decade.

In the end, we hope to be able to better understand the impact we have had and where we should focus our efforts. The future holds significant challenges for all of us as a people. Our dream for the future is to make Asha's existence unnecessary.

**Stichting Asha Eindhoven**

<http://www.ashanet.org/eindhoven>