

Inauguration of ASHA Eindhoven – a report

1 May 2003, Eindhoven
by Kiran Rao

ASHA Eindhoven is a secular, non-profit organisation for supporting the education of underprivileged children in India.

The inaugural event of ASHA Eindhoven began at 1600 hrs on 27 April 2003 in *Het Studentencafé AOR*, J.F.Kennedylaan 3, Eindhoven. The café is run by students of TU/e and the Fontys hoogschool, Eindhoven, and was given to us free of charge. Most of the guests – numbering around 100 were there on time for the big event. They came from Eindhoven, they came from Nijmegen, they came from Groningen, and they came from Leuven (Belgium). The Leuven guys were representing ROSE, an organisation with aims similar to those of ASHA.



Jwalant and co. singing “maanavtaa ke...”

Our compere for the day was Rachna Goel. The event started off with the song “*maanavtaa ke man mandir mein jnaan ka deep jalaa do*” by Jwalant Mishra, Saif ul Waheed (who was also our official photographer) and Kiran Rao. This was immediately followed by the traditional lighting of the lamp by children (Kruthika, Priya, Virat, Aakriti) helped by Jaya Madhavi.

The chief guest for the day was *Ms. Heleen de Leeuw*, a dutch lady who runs the *Deepa Foundation* single-handedly.

Deepa Foundation supports many education-related projects in the Mysore-Bangalore area of South India, by raising funds in The Netherlands. Heleen and her family-members were presented with bouquets by the same children.



Traditional lighting of the lamp by Kruthika, Priya, Virat and Aakriti – with a little help from Jaya Madhavi



Vishal presenting ASHA’s philosophy

Vishal Choudhary, the coordinator of ASHA Eindhoven, gave a presentation about the organisation. It was a very informative and inspiring talk, with results from detailed studies of the current state of education of underprivileged children in India. He described the vicious circle formed by lack of education, poverty and dependence, and argued that education is the magic wand with which to break this circle, as is also vouched for by Prof. Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel prize in economics (1998). Vishal gave an informing account of ASHA’s philosophy, its humble beginning in UC Berkeley in 1991, its way of working, large volunteer base, succesful projects and progress. He also gave a picture of the many fund-

raising events conducted by ASHA Eindhoven in its first three months of existence.



Heleen de Leeuw talking about Deepa Foundation

This was immediately followed by a touching talk by Ms. Heleen de Leeuw with details about the Deepa Foundation, her motivation for social work in India and her way of working. She also gave many useful suggestions on raising funds in The Netherlands.



The menu!

This was followed by a poster session arranged by Manish Garg and team, depicting the problem of education of underprivileged children in India, ASHA's philosophy, ASHA's way of working, projects and worldwide volunteer base. Delicious bhelpuri, mathri, rosogolla and gulab jamun were served to the guests by Jwalant and team, with captivating Indian music in the background. Many interested people came forward to get involved with ASHA in various capacities – as monthly donors, as one-time donors, and some for getting actively involved in fund-raising

activities. On the whole, ASHA Eindhoven got off to a wonderful start.



The poster session



Bhhelpuri...Mmmmmmmmmmmmm!



A lady volunteering for Asha Eindhoven