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| Final Logo_02.jpg | | | | | | | | **SUPPORT A CHILD’S EDUCATION NOW**  Register at: [**www.shikshasankalp.org**](http://www.shikshasankalp.org) |
| **Bi-monthly E-newsletter** | | | **August 2010 (Volume-3)** | | | | **Editor: Pooja Bhatia** | |
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| Rahjasthan, India, illiterate family (names unknown) | | | | **DID YOU KNOW?**  **…that India accounts for one third of all illiterate people in the world?**  India currently has the largest number of illiterate people – nearly 380 million – in the world. It accounts for nearly one third of the world’s illiterate population. With a literacy rate of only 66 percent, India is much below the world literacy average of 84 percent. Although the percentage of illiterates in India has been falling, the absolute numbers have risen steadily since independence.  *Source: Wikipedia, “Literacy in India”* | | | | |
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| **PROGRESS UPDATE**   * **Shiksha Sankalp Foundation** is now registered in India as a Trust. **Shiksha Sankalp Incorporated** - another NGO with similar objectives has already been registered in USA as a charitable corporation. * **Applications for Tax Exemption** in India under Section-80G, and in USA under Section-501c(3) being initiated shortly. * **Development of an Internet based Information System** to ensure complete transparency and accountability initiated. * **Indira Camp No.4 Vikas Puri** in West Delhi selected for conducting the first pilot intervention based on a detailed survey. | | | | | |  | | |
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| To support the education of children from poor families, register at [**www.shikshasankalp.org**](http://www.shikshasankalp.org) | | | | | | | | |
| **IMG_3672.JPG**  *Slum children pose for a photo in front of Sulabh Shauchalaya (Toilet)* | | **Shiksha Sankalp’s First Module**  **Indira Camp No.4, Vikas Puri, New Delhi**  In order to select the location for our first pilot module, we examined ten slum areas in West Delhi. While some of the slums were too large (more than 1300 registered households), some were too politically entrenched and others posed logistical difficulties. We finally selected Indira Camp No.4 in Vikas Puri which offered a conducive size (341 households), politically neutral atmosphere, good community mix (hindus and muslims in equal numbers) and convenient logistics. | | | | | | |
| Shiksha Sankalp team conducted a detailed sample survey (25%) of the households in the area. We found that most men in the area are engaged in fish trading, driving, tailoring and other small-time jobs. While some women are working as housemaids in the neighborhood (22%), most of them are not gainfully employed. The average household income is about Rs.4400 per month – on which a family of 6-8 members is sustained. | | | | | **IMG_3678.JPG**  *A tailor shop in the module area. Tailors typically earn about Rs.2600 per month.* | | | |
| **IMG_3680.JPG**  *A typical lane in the slum area* | | Children in the area face a highly constrained academic environment at home. Nearly 60% of fathers and 76% of mothers are illiterate. Not a single parent in our 25% sample was a high school graduate. Parents who are themselves under-educated are incapable of guiding and assisting children in their studies at home. | | | | | | |
| Each dwelling unit is a single room of about 6’ x 8’ which caters to a family of 6-8 persons. The room has kitchen set-up in one corner, a single bed, sometimes a second-hand refrigerator and usually a television. Children find it extremely difficult to study in the small crowded household. | | | *IMG_3695.JPG*  *Interior of a typical slum household. Usually 6-8 persons live in such a house.* | | | |
| Almost all children are enrolled at neighboring government (MCD and Sarvodaya) or private schools. However, as shown in the graph below, many children in the selected slum area are enrolled for classes much below their age appropriate class. | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | For example, while 12 year olds should be ideally in class-8, in this slum area they can be found across all classes from 3 to 8. Similarly, class-6 should ideally have 10 year old students, but in this slum area, it has students who are anywhere between 10 to 17 year old. | | | |
| We have also carried detailed surveys of schools, banks and other NGOs in the area. We interviewed school teachers to understand factors behind poor academic performance of children from the target area. We confirmed that all the necessary documents for verification of identity, address, birth, school enrollment and grade promotion are available with most families in the area. Also, our survey revealed that nearly 23% of mothers in the area already have a bank account and most others were favorable to opening accounts if needed.  **Shiksha Sankalp is now registering class-3 students in the area for participating in the “LEARNING REWARDS” program. The program shall be formally launched in the month of October 2010.** | | | | | | | | |
| **KNOW MORE ABOUT SHIKSHA SANKALP**  **How would Shiksha Sankalp ensure accountability for outcomes?**  Under its flagship “***Learning Rewards***” program, Shiksha Sankalp would provide monthly stipend to children from poor families, commensurate with the degree of learning achievement. This would be an outcome based assistance scheme. Shiksha Sankalp would encourage families to take specific steps towards improving the learning performance of their children in order to achieve higher monthly stipend. In turn, the stipend amount would enable families to avail the necessary education services and aides from the market. Under this model, Shiksha Sankalp would ensure accountability for learning outcomes and continued schooling through the following:  **Standardized Academic Performance (SAP) Test:** Shiksha Sankalp would conduct SAP tests for all beneficiary students to measure their learning achievement. The test would be conducted twice every year for each grade at all modules. The incentive to be paid to each student would be determined based on a performance-incentive vector against the measured performance in the SAP test.  **Monitoring of School Attendance and Performance:** Shiksha Sankalp would monitor the monthly attendance and quarterly school test performance of the each beneficiary. Transfer of monthly incentive payments would be contingent upon satisfactory performance on both these criteria.  **Performance Feedback to Parents, Schools and Local Administration:** Performance of individual students in the SAP test would be shared with the parents. The aggregated performance of all Shiksha Sankalp students from a school may be shared with the school authorities; whereas the aggregate performance of all students in an area may be shared with the local authorities. By widely sharing student performance with relevant stakeholders, Shiksha Sankalp would reinforce performance accountability.  **Monitoring of Performance by Donors and Volunteers:** Shiksha Sankalp itself is accountable to the donors for measuring and monitoring the academic achievement of the beneficiary students. Therefore, Shiksha Sankalp would share information on learning achievements of the students with the respective donors through an internet based system. In addition, Shiksha Sankalp would leverage volunteers to maintain contact with beneficiary families to discuss performance and provide them guidance for strengthening academic learning of their children.  **All records pertaining to the SAP test as well as attendance and school performance would be duly posted on the Shiksha Sankalp website for login based access by relevant stakeholders.** | | | | | | | | |
| **MEET OUR TEAM MEMBERS** | | | | | | | | |
| **sagheer.jpg**  **Sagheer Ahmad** | **Sagheer Ahmad** is a Founder Director and Treasurer of Shiksha Sankalp Incorporated (USA). He has provided leadership support in legal registration of the organization and management of funds.  On the professional front, he is designing the next generation computer chips at Nvidia Corp in Santa Clara, Califonia. He holds eight US patents. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology Delhi and University of South California, Los Angeles. Earlier, he has worked with Sun Microsystems, Advance Micro Devices Inc, Infineon Techonologies, and STMicroelectronics. | | | | | | | |
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