

SRI RAM GOBURDHUN CHARITABLE TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT

2008 - 2009

Director's Message

April 2008 saw us fearing for our dreams. Our land seemed so near yet to far. But as always miracles came our way and thanks to our wonderful friends we were able to save our dream and purchase the land that would one-day house planet why!

The year gone by has been an exhilarating one. We managed to secure our land on April 20th a true day of celebration. It was then time to move to the next stage: seeking funds to build. A proposal was drafted, architectural plans drawn and the ball set rolling. But then recession hit the world and the plans had to be put on the back burner. We however remain hopeful.

The year saw many achievements. Our women centre grew in leaps and bounds and now has over 300 beneficiaries and a set of unforeseen circumstances and force majeure led us to set up our foster care programme, an inclusive residential programme where three young adults with disabilities and four young children lived together. It was a huge success and a validation of our dream of planet why.

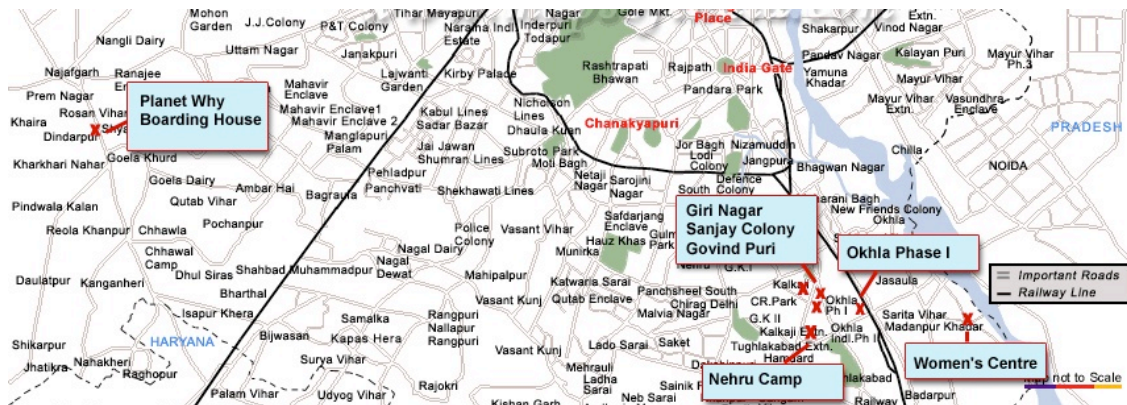
On the personal side the year saw two huge exploits. With Manu finding a home a pledge long taken was redeemed and the publishing of Dear Popples was the fulfilment of a long-standing dream.

In the summer of 2008 Project Why was filled with volunteers from the world over proving that we had truly gained popularity. In September we were part of an International Workshop!

Markets tumbling and recession looming large did dampen our spirits a little as we realised that garnering funds for planet why would prove more difficult than we thought. But dreams are meant to dreamt and we hold on to ours.

Anouradha Goburdhun Bakshi
New Delhi, May 2009

The Sri Ram Goburdhun Charitable Trust runs an education programme by the name of Project Why. At present it is its only programme.



OVERVIEW

The Sri Ram Goburdhun Charitable Trust using the name 'Project Why' is a non-governmental not-for-profit organisation engaged in education support and life-skills enhancement. The projects current focus is primarily on the slum and basti children of South Delhi.

[Project Why](#) began as a spontaneous reaction to help an unfortunate few, and has grown organically over the past nine years to become an extraordinary life-line that offers many children hope instead of despondency.

[Project Why](#) created both classes and teachers from resources in the slums and they quickly became full. So more had to be done, more money found, more teachers trained, more classrooms formed from the rubble. Today [Project Why](#) teaches 900 kids and provides employment to more than 50 persons from within the community.

More than this, Project Why comes to the aid of the communities' desperate cases. This is Project Why's spirit: to do what it can where it's most wanted no matter what the circumstance.

Project Why's reach is limited by expenditure, which of course is limited by income. It reactively spends what it receives and there has never been the possibility of a period of consolidation and saving – there are always desperate cases here needing immediate solutions.

THE MODEL

The original model of Project Why set out to empower under-privileged and illiterate/semi-literate parents to steer the educational needs of their children by using local resources.

By making use of local talent it has been proved that quality teaching in India can be offered in the most basic of locations and situations and does not require expensive infrastructure and formal training practices.

Project Why believes in the power of the virtuous circle: by planting the seed of empowerment in the right people within the community, Project Why aims at teaching them the means to find solutions themselves. These solutions portend change, leading to more empowerment till they ultimately are in a position to take control. This is the best way to bring real and long lasting change to the lives of those who live in our slums.

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The year saw our education programme continue in what has by now become a well-set successful model. Our children once again performed extremely well, and our programme remained dynamic and flexible, something that we feel is in great part the reason of the success of our work and has become a well-established and tested model to replicate.

Our sustainability efforts were well on track. After a small set back, we managed to purchase our plot of land and are now looking for funds to build planet why.

THE APPROACH

The project's current focus is primarily in the slums of South Delhi where it runs an education support program that has eight distinct modules:

For our entire education programme our approach remained the same: a judicious combination of education and life skill activities. Required course corrections were made as and when needed without disturbing the on-going work.

During this financial year we had the following programmes:

Main programme:

- 1 early education at Govindpuri (40 children)
- 1 early education Govindpuri Gali no 1 (22 children)
- 1 prep class (30)

3 primary extensions at Sanjay Colony, Govindpuri, Okhla and Giri Nagar (300 children)
1 day care for children with special needs (22 children)
1 secondary programme (150 children)
1 computer centre
1 Library cum cine club

Women Centre

1 primary + junior secondary at our women centre in Madanpur Khader (300)
1 stitching and tailoring calls (40 women)
1 beauty class (30 women)
1 adult education class (20)

Our other activities included:

3 month medical support for a mother with severe Bone TB
Nutrition for people with special needs (pregnant and lactating mothers, post operative cases)
Several awareness workshops

DETAILED ACTIVITIES

Educational Activities

Overall Situation – infrastructure

The *Special Section* and the *crèche* are located in our own premises

Our *Manav Kalyan* crèche changed location to another rented facility in Gali no 1 Govind puri (rented)

Our *prep class* functions from a room across our main centre (rented)

Our *Okhla* (no rent as in reclaimed garbage dump), *Nehru Camp* and *Sanjay Colony* primary (rented premises) centres remained unchanged

A new primary centre was opened at the women centre in *Madanpur Khader* (rented premise)

The *Senior Secondary* section remained in Giri Nagar, as did the *computer centre* (rented premise)

The *Junior Secondary* is in a small rented room opposite our centre (rented premise)

The *Women Centre* is located in Madanpur Khader (rented premise)

Our *foster care* was located in rented space across our main centre (rented)

Our *library cum cine club* is located in our old jhuggi now renovated

Overall situation -staff

Our staff strength is around 45 as we had to get some new staff for the women centre and the foster care.

Overall situation - content

As usual most of the time was spent on finishing curriculum and preparing for examinations that exist in the present education system.

However the elimination of examinations in the primary school has led us to institute a non-formal in house assessment schedule.

We also felt the need to add on environment programmes as well as introduce the children to civic responsibilities.

Mainstreaming children

This year we were successful in getting over 100 children admitted to regular schools. This is in keeping with the main objective of our organisation. In spite of existing Government policies claiming easy access to primary schools, the reality is often very different. Parents often become weary of the attitude and complex administrative formalities and give up. It has been our constant effort to convince parents on the necessity of educating their children and though its is a difficult battle we believe that even one family convinced is a step in the right direction.

Curriculum Support

Driven by the dual objective of containing and arresting school drop out rates and enhancing performance, our main stress was once more on our curriculum support programme. As in the past, the programme was flexible and adapted to the specific needs of the students.

primary school intervention

This year our primary programmes ran well, and once again all our children passed their school examinations.

We ran extensions in the following places: Sanjay Colony, Nehru Nagar, Okhla and Madanpur Khader

secondary school intervention

Our consistent results increased the number of students and we decided to separate the secondary into two sections (class VI to VIII and class IX to XII). Our teachers took extra classes enabling us to take students of the science and commerce streams.

We also began a junior secondary programme at our women centre.

Once again we had a 100% result.

early intervention programme

Our early intervention programme has been a great success with new children replacing those who got promoted to primary school.

This section is particularly important as toddlers are still not part of the free education programme and do not get pre-school learning.

The small prep class with a desk and chair format ensures that children do not feel lost when they enter class I.

A small curriculum was evolved keeping in mind the requirements of class I admission interviews.

intervention for children with special needs

Here again we have achieved great success. Our programme aimed at making these children as independent as possible is showing promising results. This year also saw a more organized approach to our vocational activities.

We laid emphasis on vocational activities such as cooking, beauty skills and stitching.

One of our hearing impaired students completed her beauty training and is now gainfully employed in a local beauty parlour and one more hearing impaired girl is training at the same parlour.

A physiotherapist visited the centre regularly as well as a speech therapist for the hearing impaired girls who got fitted with sophisticated hearing aids.

Our inclusive residential programme where 3 young adults with disabilities lived along side 4 small children was a resounding success.

We were thrilled that Manu finally had a home and a bed!

Other activities

Women related activities:

Our women and children centre completed its first year on October 15th 2008. It recorded a staggering growth as it now reaches out to over 300 children and 70 women. This centre has a dual purpose.

Its residential programme is based on a simple idea: *find your feet and then your wings*. It is open to women who have suffered major problems that has marginalised them (substance abuse, domestic violence, social abuse) and offers them a refuge where they can heal and acquire skills to make them economically autonomous. The centre offers temporary and permanent shelter options.

This year we had 2 women staying in residence though one of them had to go to a rehab centre again.

Activities were also launched for local women: beauty skills, tailoring, adult literacy and English conversation.

Weekly women meetings are held and address a wide range of issues: gender equality, girl child, saving, insurance, health, hygiene etc

Foster care and inclusive residential programme.

Our foster care programme launched in March 2008 was the result of a series of unexpected occurrences. The programme was initiated by a potential funder who later backed out but left us with the task of seeing the project through. The programme aimed at giving extremely underprivileged children the possibility to accede to the best education possible. Four children were selected. They spent one year in a residential programme and attended a preparatory school. In January 2009 they sat for the entrance examination to a Boarding School and passed the test. They will be joining their school in April.

Having a residential programme for the foster care children allowed us to also seed our first inclusive residential programme with three young adult with disabilities (Manu, Champa and Anjali) who lived along side the foster care children.

The experiment was extremely successful. The young adults with disabilities will continue living in a residential programme.

Library and cine club

One of our long time dream was fulfilled this year. Thanks to the generosity of the Omprakash Foundation we received 20 000 books that allowed us to create our own library. At first we had a small library in the women centre but then were able to rebuild our old jhuggi and set up a library there. Three French tag artists decorated the walls of the library.

In January 2008 thanks to Enfances Indiennes and Xavier Ray we got our own cine club named *Cinema Paradiso*. We now have regular movie sessions for the smaller children.

Life skills and problem solving

Life skills are according to us an intrinsic part of any self respecting education intervention programme.

We also began civics as a subject, where the emphasis was on defining duties and the role of the citizen.

Issues like water, environment and right to information were touched upon at all levels as it is felt that without such awareness education is incomplete.

Cyber WHY

Our computer programme ran smoothly. Internet and hardware classes continued with success.

The inverter installed last year ensured that classes could go on uninterrupted.

Cyber Why is opened to all at a small fee to ensure maintenance cost. Our hope of making it an income generating activity did not however meet with the success we had hoped for.

Nutrition

This year the nutrition programme once again extended only to special cases on a need basis.

Some of the children in the special section and the crèche are given regular lunches as their families do not send any.

Recreational activities

Slum children are rarely taken out. However outings are expensive and they are only possible with the help of friends.

Thanks to Enfances Indiennes and other friends the following outings were organised:

Prep and Crèche to the Children's park

Secondary and computer students to the cinema

Women Centre and Primary Okhla to the Science Museum

Special section to Delhi Haat

Junior Secondary to the Lotus temple

Crisis Intervention

This past year a few the emergency situations were dealt with.

Jhunnu suffered a relapse and had to be sent for a long-term stay at a rehab.

Neha was given three-month intensive care as she suffered from bone TB

Manu was hospitalised for TB.

Funds were collected for the reconstructive surgery of little Meher who had suffered third degree burns. The surgery is scheduled for April 2, 2009.

Networking

This year again it was our endeavour to try and extend our interaction with other organisations.

We were privileged to have been part of an international workshop, which was a co-operative venture between the thematic groups on Children's Capabilities and on Participatory Methods of the Human Development and Capability Association and Project Why. The workshop was held from September 4th to September 9th 2009 and was a great success.

In November 2008 Enfances Indiennes celebrated its fifth anniversary and a lovely evening was planned in Paris. It was a big success.

February 2009 saw another celebration in Koln. Shamika and Rani were invited to present project why.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has been a major concern of Project Why since its very inception as we are all aware of the extreme fragility of the funding model of the project, which is based on donations obtained almost on a day-to-day basis and requiring extensive efforts.

Our past sustainability efforts did not meet with any positive result.

For a long time we have been trying to find the one idea that would meet all requirements of a sound sustainability programme.

Planet why

The idea of Planet Why was seeded when one came across the Ninos Hotel in Cusco: a guest house for travellers the profits of which help sustain development activities in the area.

The paucity of safe and low budget accommodation in Delhi and our need for a residential centre for the children we know have no future made us veer towards this idea. Much brainstorming convinced us of its viability and the idea was shared extensively.

Moreover the new trend worldwide of Tourism with a Heart or Volontourism made us confident of our ability to fill a small 10 room guesthouse.

We had identified a plot of land in Shyam Vihar in January 2008. As we were let down by a potential donor we had to knock at every possible door to enable us to come up with the missing amount.

Our deadline of the 20th April 2008 was met thanks to the generosity of many friends who believed in us.

We then set out to get a building plan made. We wanted a green building and zeroed on the Laurie Baker institute who made us a plan and cost sheet. We have drafted a proposal and are in the process of seeking funds to build planet why.

The present recession has delayed our efforts though we still hope to be operational by end 2010.

The proposal is available at www.planetwhy.blogspot.com

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Sabrina and Chris our staunch supporters decided to record a song with the project children. They came in February and ran a workshop with the children to identify the dreams and aspirations of slum kids. The lyrics of the song were based on these dreams and the song was recorded professionally. The song *I wish* is available on you tube.

Graffiti artists from France came to project why and ran a small workshop with the children. They also decorated the walls of our brand new library.

WEB PRESENCE

The greatest achievement of the year was once again our increased web presence: a well visited website and a blog that now has a group of die-hard supporters. The blog enables one to share the everyday realities of our work and is thus a great diary of the trials and tribulations of working in an urban slum.

Our blog and site are updated as regularly as possible and have been linked by many other sites.

A photo gallery is also present so that people can get a feel of the project.

LEGAL AID

Monica Anand a young and dynamic High Court lawyer is our legal consultant. She advises us pro-bono.

FUNDING

As Project Why is above all a project from the heart, it grows organically as and when a new challenge has to be met or a new 'why' answered. This of course leads to an ever-increasing budget that needs to be met on a crisis footing.

We are extremely lucky and blessed to have supporters who understand us and come to our rescue each and every time.

Over and above the need for regular funds to sustain our day-to-day activities we had in March 2008 to find ways of saving our piece of land and raising over 70 lacs of rupees.

The following came to the rescue.

Abhigyan Jha, Enfances Indiennes, Asha Seattle, Dorothea Ruesch, A Kumar Chemical Construction Company, HVS, Gaia International, Stonefield and two anonymous donors.

Organisations

The following organisations help us sustain our old and new activities:

Enfances Indiennes, Asha Seattle, Asha Canada, NDTV, Omprakash Foundation, 3rd eye solutions, Asia Bike tours, Tourvital.de, Chemical Construction Company, Delhi Network, AWA, Kingston Grammar School

Sabrina and Chris two friends from Germany raised funds for us with a yearly concert in Germany

Harriet Page, a young 14 year old spend a few days at project why and promised to help. She managed to get us as part of the Charity activities of her school.

Individual donors

odette clark, margaret gruber, kiran frey, andrew mitchell, barbara macgeough, carl kackson, padma rangathan, jennie page, phillipe van den put, cesare santanera, anu agarwal, steve tan, namita gill, abhigyan jha, rahul batra, hillary moses, beverley heart, padma rangathan, andrew mitchell, sreenath sarikonda, manan patel, beate mayeri, meenakshi Kapoor, gareth moses, sreeja rege, cesare, roberto, mia, luisa, pradeep sethi, ajay hampapur, constance, namita gill, kilmeny fane-saunders, Suma Sivan, Jenni Page, Sivanesan Subramanian, Kashmira Patel, Andrew Mitchell, Jane Getley, utara Shahani, Srinagesh Loke, marla Foster, Sonal Omkar, Balaji Mirlaksrihnan, Ghosh Damyanti, Vijay kiran Kalivarapu, Phillipe van den Put, Jayesh deshमुख, Irene Mitchell, Sreeja rege, Joseph Thomas, Srinivas ravi, Loreta Penna, Ines Barozzi, Elena Parenti, Umberto Nannini, Roberto Giorgi, Rosella Massimi, Daniela Di Mario, Andreea Moniica Briciu, Ana Terenzi, Federico Valente Silvana Bruno, suma sivan, damyanti ghosh, manisah bajpai, eliazbeth grigg, meera and vikram seth, amanda jellin, damyanti, dev bhojwani, avni santani, heinrich wegenstein, savit tewari, libu balki, rajshree vasanthamma, damyanti, dev bhojwani, andy jellin, abhigyan jha, anu agarwal, effi jono, rahul batra, shankar narayan, avantika malhotra, Vijay Kiran Kaliravapu, ak, bhavin and alka, andrew mitchell, joseph thomas, nick ngaw. ravi srinivas, utara shahani, gaurav shah, libu balakrishnan, abhigyan and mrinal jha,

Guest and visitors

We had a number of visitors this year and many became friends of project WHY and great supporters:

Vikram Seth, Stephane Minoret, Prema Vishwanath, AWA, Japanese Women association, Rita Chopra, Mallika Chopra, Gotham Chopra, Hand Emde and friends, Megha, Manav Thadani, Shamsheer Singh, Myriam, Camille, Kiran Frey, Maggie and Brian Gruber, Bisham and Binoo Bakshi, Xavier and group from Enfances Indiennes.

Volunteers

Many volunteers came to help project WHY this year:

Sabrina, Mia, Joe, Marla, Isabelle, Stephane, Shawn, Lucy, Cecile, laetitia, Sara, Alienor, Sari group, Candice, Cyril, Audrey, Elise, Francois, Barbara, Harriet, Jennie, Colin, Nina, Flore, Jenine, Pramila, Hannah, Kishan, Ben, Caroline, Shamima,

***To all who helped, and stood by us we would like to say:
Thank You***

If you want to know more about project why visit

<http://projectwhy.org>

<http://projectwhy.blogspot.com>