



Suchana is a community group working in rural West Bengal, focusing on education and health. The Education Resource Centre grew out of the Early Learning Group which started in 2004. The resource centre is open 7 days a week, and aims to support literacy and make learning relevant, enjoyable and accessible to very marginalised children. Currently, about 180 children participate, facilitated by paid and volunteer teachers from within the community.

Our health project in six villages explores primary health in participatory ways and links villagers in with locally existing health services.

If you would like more information, please contact us at suchana.india@gmail.com

The Uttor Chandipur Community Society

Supporting a rural community: creative solutions to education and health

Newsletter Issue 12, October 2010

Christmas Cards are available!!

Cards are available in the following sets of six, with a choice of "With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year" or "Season's Greetings" inside:



"Our house"



"Village Celebration"



"Indian Elephant"

This series of 'Joyful Play' photo cards is available for year-round use, blank inside:



All cards @ £3.50 for a set of six.

Please contact Angela Stoddart:
angela@claresforstal.plus.com

We really appreciate hearing about other places or individuals who want to buy or sell cards.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

EVENTS UPDATE:

Programme news

Suchana's new work is now almost one year old, and the programmes have really taken shape. The **Preschool** now has 20 three-to-five year olds, about half from a big village which is new to Suchana's work. Nearly all of the children are Santali, and we are lucky to have Bhabini, a Santal teacher, to help them build their education foundations in their first language.

The **Tuitions** team now teaches 40 classes a week to children aged 11-15, helping them cope with their school curricula and thinking up ways of using Suchana's resources – such as the library and the internet – to bring their text books alive.

The **Computer Course** is teaching the third batch of children, with the younger ones eagerly awaiting their turn. In a way this is Suchana's most pioneering input – we still have not heard of any computer initiatives locally that are located actually in the villages, nor that are teaching middle school-age children. Alongside the children's course, we are now running a similar course for young adults from the villages – those who missed out on Suchana's other learning opportunities. This course, now in its second round, is charged at a nominal cost which covers teachers' wages.

The **Open House Library** is flourishing, and has made a visible difference to the children's relationship with books. It is always open when children come in for different courses, making the books accessible and inviting in a way that was simply not possible when they were only available twice a week.

The **Early Learning Group** has been carrying on its core work developing literacy, numeracy, environmental science, creative writing and art and craft with child-friendly methods.

The **Activity Groups**, a programme that grew out of the library activities and offers children 2-month courses in various crafts and skills, are just entering their third round. Children have so far learned Kora drumming, puppet making, bamboo basket making, photography, mask making, tie dye, loom weaving amongst many other skills.

Children's Mela

Saturday, 6th November 2011, from 3pm

For those of you nearby – please come to our Children's Mela, at Suchana in Khanjanpur. There will be lots of fun, games and food, all organised and run by the children: Steel-glass Skittles; Light-the-Candle; Apple Bobbing; Hari Banga; Tombola; Tyre Rolling; Lucky Dip; Jalmuri; Gugni; Balloons and more!!

Tickets: Rs 5/- for any 3 games, at the gate.

EVENTS cont ...

One of the Activity Groups, the Vegetable Garden Care group, produced a fine crop of maize in the fast-developing vegetable patch during the monsoon. With some extra friends, they carefully barbequed the cobs and gave everyone delicious tiffin during several sessions.



Harvesting the maize

In September, two students with special talents in art took part in a **Young People's Art Exhibition** organised by Shikshamitra, an alternative school in Kolkata. Besides the event being a very stimulating artists' exchange, both students sold art work to well wishers and collectors.

In a spectacular effort to recycle used clothes, **Mustard Seeds, Kolkata** organised a collection at **Calcutta International School**, and carefully sorted and sized the clothes. Packages sent to Suchana were then organised into outfits for individual children by Suchana's teachers, and these were given out in a lovely celebration assembly on 24th October.



Suchana girls in their 'new' outfits

Coming soon ...

Suchana's Sports Day has been brought forward this year to December 4th - this change will help us accommodate the significant changes in government school schedules this year: the new academic year in schools will begin in January 2011, instead of March.

In early January we will be starting six weeks of preparation for the Annual Show in February. Teachers are already busy preparing scripts, looking out for songs and mulling dance routines for our multi-lingual extravaganza of cultural exchange and learning.

Keep track of these and other Suchana events on facebook at 'Suchana Community'!

Thanks to everyone who makes Suchana happen!!

For donating gifts and items to sell in aid of Suchana: Avril Elvy, Avril Waters, Dorothy and Norman Crabtree.

For running stalls: Denise Turner, Frank Stoddart, Avril Waters and Alison O'Connor.

For all sorts of help: Mere's many coffee mornings, One World Fair, and donations; Rick Norman and Canterbury Fair Trade; Badlesmere and Leaveland PCC; Sheldwich School Eco Schools Committee, Mrs Garrett & Mrs Lam; Terry Woollard and Sheldwich Fete Committee. Heather Chapell; Teresa Anderson; Alison Swinney for selling, and introducing Suchana to Davington Primary School; Canterbury United Nations Association; Maddie Webster; Urmila Rajkhowa; Jo Richards and Faversham Fair Trade; Joy Sharman, Canterbury Methodist Church and Whole World Fair; and anonymous donors; Annie Gogarty and Anna Binnie-Dawson for selling lots of cards to friends.

Thank you to all who offered support and encouragement after the theft of our laptops in May, used work and home networks to seek replacement laptops; generously gave money for new computers, removed data and files and gave used ones, and brought them to Kolkata: Bunt Ghosh, The Revd Caroline Pinchbeck, Diane Roote, Jo Turkas, Barbara Elliott, Arthur and Marion Skinner, Nicholas Jordan, Pim, Andrew and Mark Baxter, Naomi Betts and Jo Downs, Daphne Vivian-Neal, Stephanie Woolf, Megan Reynolds, Lucy Owens, Poppy Barton, Maura Hurley; Dawn Kingsnorth, freelance reporter working in Kent.

For a fantastic effort to collect used clothes for Suchana children at Puja time, thanks to Mustard Seeds, Kolkata and Calcutta International School.

For gifts of materials and donations: Chand Ghosh and Norman Heindson, David Ruby and LeeAnn Merrill, Dehashish Ganguly, Somen and Manjushri Basu, Patha Bhavan School, Kolkata, Sumona Chakravarty, Kirshore Sinha.

For a joint initiative to produce the new 'Joyful Play' greeting cards, thanks to all at Kolkata shop in Brighton.

For sharing skills: thanks to our volunteers Megan Reynolds and Lucy Owens who did great work in lots of ways and especially with the Activity Groups during July and August, and to Sarah Reeves for accountancy advice and support. Thanks also to John Slaytor for the wonderful Suchana photos which we have used for many purposes including the new greeting cards; and for selling other photos at home in Australia in aid of Suchana.

Can you make a Standing Order to Suchana?

Standing Orders give Suchana security and sustainability. A number of regular, small donations cumulatively makes a very reassuring steady income which, besides running the programmes, can enable us to improve our planning and offer a measure of guarantee to the Suchana children.

Friends of Suchana in UK would be very happy to increase to the number of Standing Orders (monthly, quarterly or annually). If you can help please contact

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Don't worry about our admin costs in the case of small amounts - there are none.

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