



Suchana

The Uttor Chandipur Community Society

Supporting a rural community: creative solutions to education and health



Suchana is a community organisation 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 200 children participate, facilitated by paid and volunteer teachers from within the community.

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

Newsletter Issue 14, October 2011

Buy your Christmas Cards here!

This year we have sets of 'six of the best' cards, available with inside greetings 'With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year' or blank for your own greeting.



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



All cards @ £3.50 for a set of six ... and they're selling fast this year!

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

Thank you for your support.

EVENTS UPDATE:

The mobile library is up and running! With 400 children's books in colour-coded trunks, 150 book bags and a van rickshaw cheerfully announcing its presence, the library set off for its first visits on 15th October.



The Mobile Library on its first visit

The library will be visiting four villages in two trips a week. Two of these are 'new' villages to Suchana, and two are villages from which only a few children, for lack of capacity, come to the Resource Centre. So this is Suchana's first venture further afield, and we hope it will bring us new ideas as well as new readers. Having gained over 100 members in its first week, it seems we may need more books soon!

This was the first of a series of 'high season' events which begin at the tail end of our long monsoon. The rains from June to September are a cool relief after the gruelling summer heat, but they bring their own challenges: broken roads, occasional floods and thriving bugs. Suchana works at a lower gear during these months, but still doesn't stop...

In June, a group of teachers and Suchana trainees attended a **10-day teacher training** at the path-breaking Loreto Sealdah in Kolkata, bringing back lots of new ideas with them. In August, Independence Day was celebrated with a flag-raising event, a **trip to the circus** for the younger children (by popular demand – this is a rare opportunity to see elephants and horses, as well as to collect ideas for Suchana's Annual Show antics), and a DVD showing of 'Chak De India', about a women's hockey team. Our new DVD situation – with a wonderful projector onto a big white bedsheet screen – is a massive improvement on our earlier showings with 30 children watching one computer screen!

Suchana Children's Mela - Friday, 4th 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 children: Steel-glass Skittles; Light-the-Candle; Apple Bobbing; Hari Banga; Tombola; Lucky Dip; Jalmuri; Gugni; Win-a-Chicken; Jol Paisa and more!!

Tickets: Rs 5/- for any 2 games, at the gate.

EVENTS cont ...

During September and October, a series of workshops took place preparing teachers and students for the coming year, bringing stimulating and exciting ideas as well as opportunities for finding and building on common ground with other organisations.

- * Six teachers attended a 2 day **Teachers' Day workshop** organised by Vikramshila, Kolkata and supported by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust.
- * A **story-reading workshop** facilitated by local expert Indrani Barua was attended by teachers involved in the Mobile Library.
- * A 1-day **computer hardware workshop** for teachers and older students run by specialists Gautam, Kaushik, Paul and Subhashish gave a grounding in basic knowledge for computer maintenance and repair – especially useful since Suchana is quite far from technical support.
- * A **reproductive health workshop** for local women, run by Dipti Pal, a government-employed health worker responsible for this area and hosted by Suchana, marked the start of what we hope will be a fruitful way of working in partnership with the public health system.
- * A 2-day **low cost/no cost science workshop** run by pioneer Samar Bagchi brought teachers and secondary school students from a number of local schools to Suchana for intensive physics demonstrations and experiments with simple, everyday materials.

Suchana's eight programmes: the **Pre School**; the **Early Learning Group**; **Tuitions**; the **Computer Courses**; the **Health Project**; the (fixed) **Library**; the **Activity Groups**; and the **Supporting Adivasi Identity** programme have all rolled valiantly through the monsoon, and are developing steadily. The Tuitions and Computer Courses programmes have particularly benefitted from the (very) recent purchase of a **generator** to navigate through our frequent load shedding (power cuts) – for which special thanks to **The Mere Group** of fundraisers.

Supporting Adivasi Identity

This programme aims to make learning materials which celebrate adivasi culture available in first languages. Fruits of much hard work by teachers and children are about to be made available:

- Bhabini Baski and her group of singers has just recorded a collection of Santali songs for children, "Miru Arang" (Cherished Voices).
- Narayan Hembrom has been facilitating children to write stories in Santali, now collected and illustrated for the book "Miru Chere" (The Parrot).
- Santo Kora has been working on a similar writing project with Kora children, for a book of children's stories "Kopai Gada Hanasai" (On the Far Side of the Kopai River).



The Santal children's song group

As always, thanks to everyone who makes Suchana possible:

For sharing skills, and for donations of money and equipment thanks to Samar Bagchi, Soumya Chakravarti, Debbhashish Ganguly, Iype and Anindita Kavoor, Mona Fortune, Kajal Das, Drs Papiya and Subhashish for collecting clothes in their neighbourhood for distribution on Durga Puja, and Mary Byrne for the camera.



For the wonderful latrine block – now beautifully labelled – thanks again to Iiti Sydney

Sponsored Events: As well as a huge thank you to Megan Reynolds, a former volunteer at Suchana, who raised £600 in a cycle ride in the New Forest, we thank the two donors who paid our subscription to www.justgiving.com. Justgiving is an excellent way of supporting personal challenge sponsored events. We have this subscription until September 2012 and would especially welcome others to have a go during this time. **Rob Anderson**, who, because of huge work commitments, is relinquishing his skilled work as Treasurer to Friends of Suchana and who assisted greatly in nursing it through Charity Commission registration. Rob also raised a large sum for Suchana this summer with his Three Peaks Challenge.

UK Fundraising is administered from Kent but Suchana benefits from gifts from all over the country. Fundraising has developed in three particular locations and we are always hopeful that there will be further similar developments elsewhere: **The Mere Group** continues to raise money through regular events: these have recently included coffee mornings, a ceilidh, a one-world fair event, donations, and sale of hand knitting and handmade cards. In **the Kent Group**, people loyally help at stalls, buy items at fairs and fetes, raise money at schools, buy cards, and donate, help with administration, welcome us to sell at their events and support us through their churches and other organisations. **The Worcestershire Group** is in its infancy, and Friends of Suchana would love to hear of any who might like to help it grow, and offer support in small or large ways.

Bank Standing Orders

Thank you so much: Friends of Suchana now receives almost £1000 a year in total by monthly, quarterly or annual standing orders. This steady income gives a really safe, solid feel to Suchana's costs. We would love to increase this form of giving (any size amount!) especially as, with Gift Aid that amounts to around £1,250 a year.

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