

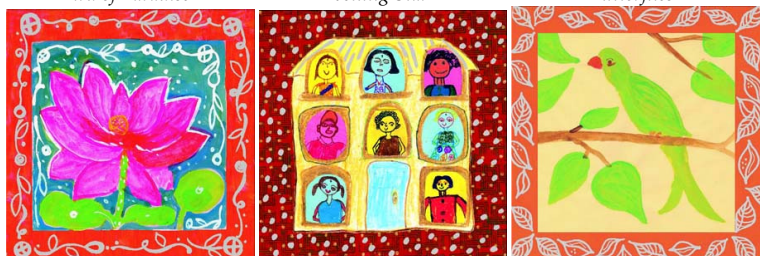
## PURCHASE SUCHANA GREETING CARDS



Bird of Paradise

Evening Star

Butterflies



Lotus Flower

Our House

Parrot

Here are the new designs for our 2008 Greeting Cards - and we think the children have done a great job! This year, we have also made some small spiral-bound memo pads for sale featuring more of the children's beautiful art work on the covers.

The cards come in packs of six, with one of each of these lovely designs. Inside greetings are, 'Season's Greetings', 'With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year', or blank cards. They cost £3.50 for a pack.

Please do support Suchana by buying these cards. Card sales and private donations are our only source of income - we have no institutional funding. We are trying very hard to raise enough to build the Education Resource Centre building.

We want to reassure you that buying these cards directly runs our programme. **At least 80%** of the card money goes straight to Suchana's active work. This is because we pay nothing for card design, marketing or sales, which are done voluntarily - we pay only for printing and postage. Suchana spends only a tiny proportion of its money on administration and management - last year these were less than 1% of expenditure - again because these are done voluntarily. So this 80% is going directly into paying teachers and health workers, providing teaching materials and tiffin for the children. Any money left over helps us build the new Education Resource Centre in which we will run a full-time programme of targeted activities for different age groups (see over).

Please contact Angela Stoddart if you would like to buy cards or if you can help us sell them: [angela@claresforstal.plus.com](mailto:angela@claresforstal.plus.com)

## EVENTS UPDATE

The monsoon period, for practical reasons, is usually a 'quiet' time, but during this monsoon Suchana has not been especially quiet!

The **Early Learning Group's** regular Sunday, Wednesday and Friday sessions have been running at full pitch through July, August and September - despite the rain and mud - and due entirely to the commitment of the children and teachers. Since the beginning of the 'school year' in April, the ELG has run a new timetable catering to 6 class groups at different literacy stages. We were delighted to welcome **Uma Gonrai** as a volunteer to increase our capacity for one-to-one 'remedial' work with children who have difficulties with literacy - developing our work in this area followed a very useful workshop in March run by **Angela Stoddart** on approaches and methods for addressing specific learning difficulties.

The ELG also went on two trips - to watch a local school perform Tagore's classic play 'Tasher Desh', and an Independence Day treat to see 'Ratatouille' on the big screen.

As a result of discussion with parents at Suchana's **AGM** in August, we have also welcomed **Aruna Mahji** as a volunteer parent helper in the pre-school classes. She joined **Shefali Ghosh** who has been helping out informally for some time. The AGM also began a process of formalising ELG parents as 'members' of Suchana. While Suchana has been explicitly accountable to parents since its inception and Committee members have been elected by parents at informal AGMs, this process makes our accountability formal, and clarifies who is entitled to vote for Committee representatives.

**Health work** has continued on a regular twice-weekly programme, with extra inputs in emergencies and a useful ad-hoc check up for children by **Dr Monica Golembiewski**. We very much look forward to being able to expand this work when we have a simple community clinic in place

## THE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE AND COMMUNITY CLINIC

The Education Resource Centre building has made good progress – we dug and filled the foundations over the monsoon, building up to the plinth level for the whole main building. But we still have a long way to go.

### WHAT DO WE PLAN TO DO?

Once this new building is constructed, we plan to:

- Run the existing Early Learning Group sessions and health project from this site
- Start two extra morning sessions a week for the pre-school age group – about 60 children
- Organise after-school group 'tuitions' for those middle school children who cannot get help with schoolwork at home or elsewhere
- Open the library 6 days a week and offer membership to children from more villages
- Arrange a supervised 'quiet room' where children can study independently (with electricity!) and get help when necessary
- Provide basic art materials for independent work on art/craft projects
- Install 3-4 computers and organise group trainings for middle school children
- Employ a full-time health worker based in the clinic building, to provide basic health care, advice, and help with referrals
- Provide basic medicines at cost for those who cannot afford market prices
- Provide space for a qualified doctor to treat local patients at low cost twice a week
- Manage a service for accessing clinical diagnostic tests

### WHY DO WE WANT TO UNDERTAKE THESE ACTIVITIES?

As many of you know, Suchana currently runs an Early Learning Group for 4-12 year olds three times a week, puts health workers in the villages twice a week, runs a children's library and organises a number of ad-hoc educational excursions and events for local children who are almost all firmly placed at the bottom of the social ladder, and whose parents struggle just to feed and clothe them. These inputs have had a tangible effect on literacy and numeracy levels, and a less measurable but equally important effect on how these children relate to education: for many, learning has become something to enjoy, in which they can make their own inputs, and which is relevant to their lives.

But most of these are children of parents who barely went to school themselves and who can help them little through the school system.



*Outdoor classrooms...*

To provide the foundation for them to negotiate this system, which is demanding and very competitive, they need more support.

Up until now, to keep costs low, Suchana has worked in a borrowed building much too small to accommodate the 150 children of the ELG. As a result, most of our classes are outdoors – which for the 7 months a year when it is either very hot, very wet, or surprisingly cold, can seriously compromise learning. Inadequate infrastructure also makes it impossible to expand the programme. This feels like a missed opportunity of frustrating proportions, as the children are motivated, engaged and ready for more. The team of teachers, too, has come a long way in developing a child-centered and happy learning experience which is all set to for more consistent implementation.

We really need to get this building up! We need to put in place these few additional stepping stones to enable these children to survive our newly globalised world on their own terms.

*Your continued support means a lot to us*

## Thank you...

**We always have many people to thank. This time we would like to especially acknowledge:**

- **AmbouduMonde** who made an extremely useful contribution to the expenses of our Annual Show, way back in February.
- **Steven Wauters** for his donation after his visit.
- **Séamus Hennessy**, Calcutta International School, and **Rita Cooney** for their generous donation in September.
- **Mohana Bhattacharjee** of Calcutta International School for organising the Puja Fair so competently and for welcoming the Suchana teachers.
- **Leticia Olivares** and **Annika Sundberg** for leaving Suchana their laptop when they went home in May.
- **Caroline Goodall** for thinking of Suchana when she came across an unused laptop back home

We would also like to extend a big welcome to **Susie Travis** and **Alex Brown**, two students from the UK, who have just arrived to help out with English teaching and other tasks for a month.

## THE LIBRARY

The ELG library is really flourishing, and we would be very grateful for specific help in supporting this extremely effective literacy resource.

We welcome book donations – young children's Bengali books are most needed, but simple English books are also useful. The books we 'manage' are read by many, many children!

If you have books you could give us, please contact [milward.bose@gmail.com](mailto:milward.bose@gmail.com)  
We can easily collect from Kolkata.

**Suchana: The Uttor Chandipur Community Society**

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